

**THE STATUS OF KHOSA AND COMMUNICATIVE  
COMPETENCE IN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SCHOOLS**

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## ABSTRACT

The empirical survey of Xhosa amongst Standard 10 pupils in Cape Education Department Schools (CED) sought to verify or negate two central concerns which surfaced in a pilot study of five Western Cape schools.<sup>1</sup> This thesis contends that little has changed throughout South Africa's colonial and apartheid history with regard to the status of African languages within South Africa and particularly in CED schools. The second contention is that various factors, including the lack of second language expertise and contact with mother tongue speakers, continue to undermine the potential development of pupils' communicative competence in Xhosa.

Separate questionnaires which included categorical and open ended questions were posted to Xhosa teachers, Standard 10 non-mother tongue Xhosa pupils and their parents.<sup>2</sup> The Xhosa teachers administered the questionnaires. There was an 80% response from the total population of CED schools offering Xhosa. The number of subjects included 169 Xhosa pupils, 154 parents and 26 Xhosa teachers. STATGRAPHICS and BMDP were the statistical packages used in the analysis. Chi-Squared tests with the Yates correction for continuity were used to compare frequencies between categorical variables. ANOVA and t-tests were used with continuous variables.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pilot study conducted by Dugmore (1989)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B

Findings indicated the deteriorating status of Xhosa in schools. The low number of CED schools (13.0%) offering Xhosa and a 0.5% growth rate in Standard 10 pupils doing Xhosa between 1988 and 1991 are an indication of this. The lack of encouragement and support for Xhosa from schools and the CED, coupled with problematic subject choice options, the Xhosa syllabus and the examination system, has affected the status of Xhosa and the motivation of pupils adversely.

In the survey, pupils had low levels of perceived communicative competence in Xhosa due to the lack of informal, natural acquisition environments and the over-emphasis of grammatical aspects in the classroom and in examinations. Furthermore, the lack of quality primary and secondary education based on second language theory has negatively affected pupils' attitudes, motivation and communicative competence levels in Xhosa.

The recognition of the importance of African languages in a future non-racial South Africa in the current language debate has highlighted the contradiction that exists today. This contradiction necessitates the urgent re-assessment of language and education policies, strategies and teaching methodologies in order to uplift the status of African languages and improve the levels of competence in the target language amongst school pupils.

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
ANOVA	-	Analysis of Variance
AZAPO	-	Azanian Peoples Organisation
BCM	-	Black Consciousness Movement
CED	-	Cape Education Department
CNE	-	Christian National Education
CPH	-	Critical Period Hypothesis
D.E.I.C.	-	Dutch East India Company
DET	-	Department of Education and Training
ELP	-	English Literacy Project
HSRC	-	Human Sciences Research Council
LiCCA	-	Language in Contact and Conflict in Africa
LWC	-	Language of Wider Communication
MDM	-	Mass Democratic Movement
NECC	-	National Education Crisis Committee
NEPI	-	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLP	-	National Language Project
PTA	-	Parent Teacher Association
RESA	-	Research on Education in South Africa
RG	-	Research Group
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	ii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	iv
<b>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</b>	x
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	xii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	13
0.1 Motivation	13
0.2 Chapter outline	14
<b>CHAPTER ONE: Language Policy in South Africa:                   a brief history</b>	16
1.1 Introduction	16
1.2 The Dutch arrival	19
1.3 Missionary and colonial influence on indigenous languages	22
1.4 Colonial language policies and the rise of Afrikaans	30
1.5 Issues affecting language from 1948 - 1990	35
1.5.1 Policy affecting Black education	38
1.5.2 Policy affecting Coloured education	46
1.5.3 Policy affecting Indian education	46
1.5.4 Policy affecting White education	47
1.6 Xhosa as second language in South African education	48
1.6.1 Xhosa at universities	49
1.6.2 Xhosa at secondary schools	50

	<u>Page</u>
1.6.3 Xhosa at primary schools	51
1.7 Conclusion	52
<b>CHAPTER TWO: Theoretical aspects of second language acquisition</b>	<b>53</b>
2.1 Introduction	53
2.2 Communicative competence	54
2.3 The importance of neurological factors	58
2.3.1 Lateralisation and cerebral dominance	58
2.3.2 Accents	61
2.3.3 Relevance of the neurological debate	61
2.4 Influence of 1st language processes on 2nd language acquisition	63
2.4.1 Processes in second language acquisition	63
2.4.2 Errors and interference	66
2.5 The "Acquisition/Learning" distinction	68
2.6 Attitude and aptitude	72
2.6.1 Psychological aspects of attitude and motivation	73
2.6.2 Integrative and instrumental motivation	75
2.7 Personality factors	77
2.7.1 Self-esteem	78
2.7.2 Anxiety and inhibition	78
2.7.3 Extroversion and introversion	79
2.7.4 Empathy	80
2.8 Social and environmental factors	81
2.8.1 Linguistic factors	82
2.8.2 Social and cultural factors	84
2.8.3 Historical and political factors	84

	<u>Page</u>
2.8.4 Geographical factors	85
2.8.5 Material factors	85
2.8.6 Educational factors	86
2.8.7 Formal and informal environments	87
2.9 Conclusion	88
<b>CHAPTER THREE:      Xhosa in Cape Education Department</b>	<b>90</b>
Schools	
3.1 Introduction	90
3.2 An overview of Xhosa in CED schools	93
3.3 Statistics on Xhosa proficiency	101
3.3.1 Discussion	109
3.4 Statistics on the teaching and learning of Xhosa	118
3.4.1 Discussion	120
3.5 Statistics on attitude, motivation and the future of Xhosa	126
3.5.1 Discussion	129
3.6 Conclusion	135
<b>CHAPTER FOUR:      Current debate on language policy</b>	<b>136</b>
for a future South Africa	
4.1 Introduction	136
4.2 South Africa's history	136
4.3 Important issues in the language debate	143
4.3.1 Status of languages in a future South Africa	143
4.3.2 Important variables in language planning	144



	<u>Page</u>
4.3.3 A lingua franca for South Africa?	145
4.3.4 The case of African languages	150
4.3.5 Literacy and Adult Education	151
4.4 Some proposed language policy options	155
4.4.1 The Black Consciousness Movement	155
4.4.2 The African National Congress	156
4.4.3 Other proposals on future language policy	159
4.5 Brief comments on the policy proposals	161
4.6 Practical considerations	163
4.6.1 Teachers	164
4.6.2 Universities and teacher training colleges	166
4.7 Conclusion	167
 <b>CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion</b>	 169
5.1 Introduction	169
5.2 Summary of findings	169
5.2.1 Communicative competence	170
5.2.2 Attitude and motivation	171
5.2.3 The future of Xhosa	172
5.3 Lessons from recent educational policies	172
5.4 Current concerns about Xhosa in CED schools	173
5.4.1 Issues affecting the CED	173
5.4.2 Addressing the lack of communicative competence	174
5.4.3 Providing in-service training in CED schools	175
5.4.4 The problem of schools not encouraging Xhosa	175
5.5 A three tier dilemma in Xhosa education	176
5.5.1 The role of tertiary academic institutions	178
5.5.2 Teacher training	179

	<u>Page</u>
5.6 Literacy and Adult Education	179
5.7 Conclusion	180
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	181
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	193
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	195
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	196

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>FIGURES</u>	<u>Page</u>
Figure 2.2 .....	56
Figure 2.4.1 .....	65
Figure 2.5.a .....	70
Figure 2.5.b .....	70
Figure 2.8 .....	82
Figure 3.1 .....	90
Figure 3.2.a .....	93
Figure 3.2.b .....	97
Figure 3.2.c .....	98
Figure 3.2.d .....	101
Figure 3.3.a .....	102
Figure 3.3.b .....	103
Figure 3.3.c .....	103
Figure 3.3.d .....	104
Figure 3.3.e .....	104
Figure 3.3.f .....	105
Figure 3.3.g .....	105
Figure 3.3.h .....	106
Figure 3.3.i .....	106
Figure 3.3.j .....	107
Figure 3.3.k .....	107
Figure 3.3.l .....	108
Figure 3.3.m .....	108
Figure 3.3.1.a .....	116

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 3.3.1.b .....	117
Figure 3.4.a .....	118
Figure 3.4.b .....	119
Figure 3.4.c .....	119
Figure 3.4.d .....	120
Figure 3.5.a .....	126
Figure 3.5.b .....	127
Figure 3.5.c .....	127
Figure 3.5.d .....	128
Figure 3.5.e .....	129
Figure 3.5.f .....	129

**TABLES**

Table 1.5 .....	36
Table 4.5 .....	162
Table 4.6.1 .....	164

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## INTRODUCTION

### 0.1 Motivation

In 1989 I conducted a pilot study in five Western Cape schools that offered Xhosa at Standard 10 level. The motivation for this pilot study stemmed from a concern that some secondary schools, including my own alma mater, had phased out or were in the process of phasing out Xhosa from their subject choices. The study investigated attitude and motivation in the hope that an explanation for the low status of Xhosa could be found. On completion of the study it was apparent that attitude and motivation were only two of the numerous variables contributing to the problem.

Political developments in South Africa have caught both governmental and extra-parliamentary groupings off-guard. The recent policy of selected "open schooling" has raised problems that were not anticipated by the educational authorities or the schools involved. An important example of this is the inability of schools to deal with the language question. A dilemma exists where schools can only admit pupils with adequate levels of communicative competence in English or Afrikaans. In effect, this policy excludes the majority of black pupils who have been subjected to inferior apartheid education. Similarly, schools are not able to cope with the teaching of African languages as first languages.

The current language debate in South Africa on policy for a future non-racial South Africa clearly emphasises the necessity to uplift the status of African languages. To accomplish this would require primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to play an important role in teaching African languages. The motivation for this thesis stems from a concern that these educational institutions are not ready to deal with the potential needs of language education in a future South Africa.

This study is an attempt to establish the present condition of Xhosa teaching in all CED schools. Through the study I hope to accurately assess the potential that CED schools have in coping with possible language education demands in a future South Africa. It is hoped that this study might provide a comprehensive insight into the teaching of Xhosa and possibly other African languages in South African schools.

## 0.2 Chapter outline

Chapter One considers South Africa's colonial and apartheid history and its effect on different languages. The chapter includes the influence of the missionaries and successive colonial governments on language. Language issues and policies under the apartheid government from 1948-1990 are also covered. The final aspect of the chapter deals with the teaching of Xhosa as a second language in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions.

Chapter Two is a discussion of theoretical aspects related to second language acquisition. The significance of neurological factors and second language variables such as communicative competence, attitude, motivation and the "learning/acquisition" distinction are discussed. The relevance of psychological, sociolinguistic and personality factors are also considered.

Chapter Three is an empirical study of 26 Cape Education Department (CED) schools offering Xhosa at Standard 10 level. The analysis considers the status of Xhosa and the levels of communicative competence amongst pupils in these schools. Other variables analysed include attitude, motivation and the problems and ideas expressed by the teachers, pupils and the parents in relation to Xhosa.

Chapter Four is a summary and brief assessment of the current language policy debate for a future non-racial South Africa. The chapter highlights some of the important principles for a future language policy. The future role of African languages is also contextualised.

Chapter Five is the conclusion in which the important issues in the preceding chapters are briefly summarised. The chapter closes with various suggestions as to how some of the problems facing Xhosa in CED schools can be addressed in both the short and long term.



## CHAPTER ONE

### Language policy in South Africa: a brief history

#### 1.1 Introduction

The historical development in South Africa of the different languages and the policies associated with them provides an interesting background against which to assess and understand the present status of languages in the country.

As O'Barr says:

Language is the mirror, the vehicle, and the means for expression of many political relations.... This perspective on the relation between language and power requires us to look beneath the surface and ask questions about the relations among parts of society, especially how power is distributed with regard to the social structure. When we begin to understand this, we also begin to see more clearly how language serves as a major means of expressing, of manipulating, and even transforming power relations.

O'Barr 1984:260

Kramarae et al. correctly remark that only since the last half of the 20th century has the study of language meant a "simultaneous concern with society" (1984:9). The authors refer to contemporary societal relations as opposed to historical linguistics and its concern with "old" societies. To understand the language situation in South Africa, the relationships over time between language, society, economics and political forces, need consideration.

Kramarae et al. raise the idea that language has the potential to perpetuate the ideology of those in power (1984:16). This concept should be borne in mind when assessing the South African situation. Equally important, however, is the need to define what is meant by power. Kramarae et al., in discussing power, caution against a restricted view (1984:10-12). For example, many believe that power is synonymous with politics and the government. On the other hand, Kramarae et al. (1984) quote Wrong (1979), who defines power as,

... the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others.

Kramarae et al. 1984:11

These intentions, according to Wrong, may be accomplished through authority, manipulation, persuasion and force. Kramarae et al. note that all these, excepting physical force, may be achieved to a large extent through language. The relationship between language and power is not static and should never be viewed as such. South African colonial history, as will be shown later, clearly indicates the ever-changing relationships between language and power.

Kramarae et al. believe that language can reach a prestigious status in two ways (1984:18). The first way necessitates the existence of a well-established literature, as was the case with Latin in Western Europe. The second, and more common way, is when a language is imposed by a ruling group upon others. This can be achieved by a conquering power from the outside or through the rise to

power of a language group or class from within. These observations are very pertinent when applied to the South African context. For example one can consider the forces at play with the rise and fall of the Dutch language, the rise of Afrikaans and English as well as the factors influencing the status of the indigenous languages. All these relationships have culminated in the contemporary language situation in South Africa.

In America, Smitherman points out how the history of the slave trade and the subsequent emancipation of the slaves has not resulted in the transformation of attitudes or the changed status of Black English (1984:102). Instead she maintains that the educational, social, economic and political systems in America have helped to perpetuate Black oppression and linguistic difference. She says,

Thousands of children and youth in America have been failed by the same education system, which after the Civil War so quickly took up the cause of Black literacy in order to supply a technological capitalist economy with the necessary literate labour pool.

Smitherman 1984:115

The above passage reveals how Black English in American schools has been ignored. Language and educational policies have also been employed in the black classrooms of South Africa as tools for the creation of a workforce to meet the specifications of the apartheid policy. Advancement in the workplace for the black labour force still depends to a large extent on the level of acquisition of English or Afrikaans. Apart from discriminatory laws in the work

environment, the apartheid system stresses education in African languages and the late introduction of both the official languages. The effect of this is inadequate acquisition of English or Afrikaans and the inability of the predominantly black workforce to advance in the workplace. To understand the language situation and the current status of the various languages and their speakers in South Africa today, it is necessary to adopt a diachronic approach. This will allow an assessment of the attitudes and policies that prevailed during the Dutch, missionary and British colonial periods as well as the subsequent governments in South Africa.

## 1.2 The arrival of the Dutch

The arrival of the Dutch from the Dutch East India Company (D.E.I.C.) under the leadership of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652, is regarded by Coetzee as the beginning of the language "problem" in South Africa (1937:86). According to Behr, the sick comforter Wijnant and Jan van Riebeeck himself made attempts at spreading the Word of God to the Khoisan people soon after the Dutch arrival in Table Bay (1988:90). It is interesting to note that in their endeavours to convert the Khoisan to Christianity, Wijnant and van Riebeeck opted for the use of Dutch as a medium of instruction. It is tempting to ask whether the eurocentric decision to use their own language, was the first seed sown which would result in the entrenchment of the high status of colonial languages and the low status of the indigenous languages in South Africa.

Alexander points out that the officials of the D.E.I.C. were completely dependent on the linguistic skills of Autshonoa (Harry), Krotoa (Eva), Damon (Anthony) and a few others (1989:12-13). He quotes Wilson and Thompson as saying the Europeans found the Khoikhoi phonetics impossible to pronounce. He continues to say that the D.E.I.C., in an attempt to minimise costs, decreed that "the natives should learn our language, rather than we theirs" (1989:12).

This trend of colonial domination with regard to language and religion continued in the years that followed. Behr mentions that the first public school opened in Cape Town in 1658, was intended primarily to educate the slaves of the Dutch East India Company (1988:90-91). With the advent of this school, the Dutchification of the slaves intensified. Dutchification involved the slaves having to learn the Dutch language and furthermore, receive religious instruction therein. Behr highlights this process by quoting a decree passed in 1671 which obligated all slaves, irrespective of age, to attend religious services every evening and twice on Sundays. The Dutch colonists were expected to ensure that their slaves were provided with religious instruction and had the opportunity to be baptized into the Christian faith. The home languages of the slaves were believed to be unimportant and hence not considered.

Alexander is of the belief that the dramatic change in the need to communicate with the indigenous population of the Cape was due to increased trade and colonisation (1989:13).

This resulted in the settling of the first free-burghers along the Liesbeeck River in 1657. This and consequent settling caused the progressive migration of the Khoisan people in an attempt to avoid enslavement. Their languages effectively disappeared with them to the remote regions of Namibia and Botswana.

Another area where Dutchification was evident in South Africa's early history was the arrival of 160 French families in the years 1685 and 1690. In what Coetzee terms a "drastic solution", the French families were settled amongst the Dutch, causing the gradual disappearance of French and the emergence of Dutch as the spoken language amongst future generations of the French settlers (1937:86). Similarly, as pointed out by Alexander, the D.E.I.C., in their rivalry with other colonisers from Europe, prevented the establishment of Malayan Portuguese as the lingua franca of the Cape by ensuring that Dutch was taught to the slaves in the earliest schools (1989:14-15). Valkhoff emphasises the extent to which the Dutch Colonial Government suppressed what appeared to be a very popular Creole Portuguese (1966:154). He says,

... the Dutch Colonial Government ... tried to combat the Portuguese influence through a threefold policy: by funding Dutch schools, by rewarding the slaves who had learnt Dutch (e.g. by allowing them to wear hats), or by punishing those who stuck to Portuguese.

Valkhoff 1966:154

Dutch continued to be the language of government and public life throughout the 18th century. It remained the official

language of the Cape until the British took over the government in 1806. This was followed by the proclamation of Lord Charles Somerset in 1822 that English become the official language of the Cape (Behr 1988:99). Although the Dutch outnumbered the English by eight to one, this decision illustrates how political power has been used in South Africa's colonial history to impose foreign languages on people. In this case, the English were forcing a policy of Anglicisation on the languages of the the Dutch settlers, the French Huguenot families and the vernacular languages of the indigenous population.

### 1.3 Missionary and colonial influence on indigeneous languages

It is necessary to look at the role of the missionaries in issues relating to language in Southern Africa. Alexander succinctly points out that a lot of attention has been given to the developments of language policy concerning English, Afrikaans and Dutch while little attention has been given to developments in connection with the indigenous languages (1989:17). Alexander defines the role of the missionaries as being "decisive" (ibid. 17).

The first European contacts with the indigenous population according to Spencer, were essentially mercantile and restricted to coastal areas for almost four centuries after the Portuguese first reached Cape Verde in 1445 (1974:163). Spencer continues:

During these centuries Europe's knowledge of the continent remained one of ignorance, and its attitudes to its peoples, cultures and languages was marked by an almost total indifference. The extremely multi-lingual composition of Africa was only dimly apprehended until European missionaries in the 19th century began seriously to investigate its languages.

Spencer 1974:163

In his inaugural address of 1921 at the University of Cape Town, Norton recalls a personal experience on his arrival in 1903 in South Africa. Norton relates the sentiments of the Bishop he was under:

He expressed to me a view, ... namely, that it is hardly worth while to fash oneself about the Native tongues very deeply, because they are doomed to die out soon through adoption by all of English.

Norton 1921:1

Norton comments informatively on government and missionary policy when he says:

In governmental and in missionary work with Natives, we ever find this fallacy recurring, namely that if your intentions are kindly, that is all that is required. This is a most dangerous snare.... A Native ... to all intents, [is] born and held a subject of the government without his wishes being consulted.

1921:6

These relatively enlightened views clearly contradict earlier attitudes where even William Boyce, the author of the first Xhosa Grammar in 1837 had this to say about African languages:

these dialects ... abound in these peculiar and barbarous sounds called clicks, and from their harshness, and the limited nature of their vocabulary, appear to be barriers in the way of religious and



intellectual culture, and as such, doomed to extinction by the gradual progress of Christianity and civilisation....

Fivaz 1974:12-13

In line with this "progress in Christianity", Zotwana discusses Boyce's belief that the only advantages of communicating in African languages were to promote trade and to check the spread of Islam from various commercial ports between Delagoa-Bay and the Red Sea (1987:117).

According to Reagan, the missionaries were not bound by any language policy and were "relatively free to pursue whatever language policies they saw fit" (1987:163). He adds that missionary language policy was often informed by pragmatic considerations rather than political ones of conquest. There is some amount of truth in this, although it would be unwise to believe that the religious intentions of the missionaries were devoid of ideology. On the contrary, as Reagan points out, the mission schools throughout the 19th century had identified, together with evangelisation, the acquisition of a European language (normally English) as their primary objectives (1987:2). Although one of the main objectives of the missionaries was evangelisation, Alexander is correct in saying:

... because of their [the missionaries] position on the side of the ruling class, it is impossible to expect that they would do anything to undermine the system. Indeed, they inevitably facilitated the conquest, dispossession and subjugation of the indigenous people.

Alexander 1989:19

Furthermore, it should be remembered that although mission schools were autonomous in many respects, the advent of state funding in 1841 changed their independence to a certain extent. The reason for this was that when state funding became available, English was identified as the desirable medium of instruction in the Cape. Behr and Macmillan say:

✓ In a large number of Bantu schools very little or no attention was given to the teaching of the vernacular. It was the aim of the teachers to use English as the medium of instruction as early as possible, and to devote a great part of their energies to the instruction of English as a subject.

1966:332

Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa some missionaries have in fact attempted to recognise the importance of the vernaculars. Spencer explains how the Church Missionary Society in 1816 drew attention to its mission at Freetown in West Africa to,

✓ ... the advantage, and indeed the necessity of teaching the children to read their own language in order to their being useful to their parents and their countrymen, by reading the scriptures and religious tracts.

Spencer 1974:163

Nkondo points out that there were also individuals who held positive attitudes to African languages and he quotes Rev. J.A. Wookey as saying about Setswana:

Their folklore is interesting and well worth studying. The language indicates that they once possessed a higher civilization and culture than they had when they first came into contact with the Europeans.

Nkondo 1982:51

Despite the suggestion made by the Church Missionary Society and the fact that certain individuals saw the importance of African languages, history has shown that the development of African languages as languages in their own right, have never been encouraged to the extent of the colonial languages. In discussing the role of the missionaries in defining the "Tsonga Tribe", Harries reveals how the missionaries' linguistic endeavours were often based on "... human constructs that were in no way scientifically objective" (1989:88). He continues by saying:

Unlike microbes or river mouths, the Ronga and Thonga/Shangaan languages were not awaiting discovery; they were very much the invention of European scholars and, perhaps even more so, of their African assistants. The linguistic borders determined by the Europeans conformed to a certain preconception of what they expected to find.

Harries 1989:88

It is possible therefore, in the light of the above quote, that African language grammars might to a certain extent have been "invented" and moulded to suit the expectations of the various missionaries. The result of this is that certain linguistic errors were perpetuated for many years. This could be an additional factor in explaining the low status and underdevelopment of African languages today. Spencer attributes the low status of African languages to the ignorance of missionaries with regard to indigenous languages at the time (1974:163). He sums up the colonial contribution to African languages thus:

The degree to which the languages of Africa were encouraged and utilised, therefore, was always limited; and the metropolitan language dominated the

educational, administrative and mercantile colonial structures, irrespective of any concern shown to the vernaculars. Colonial educational systems, whatever rationalisations European powers used to justify them, and in spite of the humane and disinterested service which many European educationalists gave to them, subserved in their various ways the political, economic and cultural aims of the colonial government.

Spencer 1974:164

Spencer continues to say that colonial powers either totally rejected the indigenous languages or alternatively, attempted to find some place for selected languages to be given limited encouragement. In summarising a point made by Nyerere (1967), Spencer explains how the colonial powers wished to produce a small African elite who would have the value of the colonial society inculcated into them so that they could be of service to the colonial state (Spencer 1974:164). Alexander shows how these policies were used to undermine the development of the indigenous languages. He asserts:

For the colonised people themselves, this meant that the English language and the English cultural traits acquired an economic and social value that was treasured above all else while their own languages and many of their cultural traits were devalued and often despised. A typical colonised mind or slave mentality became one of the most potent weapons of colonial policy, a programme built into the consciousness of black people (and of many whites) that ensured the status quo was, by and large, accepted as good and just.

Alexander 1989:20

Behr mentions a report from 1839 of a mission in Griquatown run by Isaac Hughs and John Fortuin which taught both Dutch and Setswana (1988:92). Reagan notes how the Natal Council of Education in 1884 proved to

be the exception rather than the rule when it required in its curriculum, the reading and writing of English as well as Zulu in schools (1987:2).

The missionaries continued to administer education throughout the 19th century. It was only in the 20th century that serious government intervention into education became apparent. Alexander explains that although the Anglicisation policies were chiefly directed at the Dutch, English as a medium of instruction was also promoted amongst blacks since the government and the farmers needed a workforce with whom they could communicate (1989:19). Apart from this, history has shown that governments attempting to secure loyalty will try to ensure that the people governed acquire the language of the ruler. The Phelps-Stokes Commission which was set up by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, investigated East, Central and South Africa in 1924. According to Spencer, the results of the Commission included the finding that colonial powers had forced their languages onto the colonised and had discouraged the use of the vernaculars (1974:165). The Commission noted that the French and Portuguese colonies were still using their own languages exclusively.

Subsequent to the Commission's recommendations of using vernaculars in primary school years and then switching to English in secondary school, the British Secretary of State set up an Advisory Committee on Native Education which in turn, in 1927, endorsed the recommendation made by the Phelps-Stokes Commission.

The above recommendation of using the vernacular in primary education, did not mean a shift in favour of upgrading the status of these vernaculars. Instead, according to Reagan, the use of the vernacular in the first decade of the 20th century served no other purpose than as a pedagogical approach to the ultimate objective of ensuring the acquisition of English (1987:2).

Nkondo, like many others, has acknowledged the growing resistance over time to the vernacular as a medium of instruction (1974:3). During the missionary period the advice given by the States Advisory Committee in 1927 to the British Secretary of State was the "encouragement" of the dominant vernacular in education and the unification or standardisation of dialect clusters. The most notable success arising from this advice was the establishment of an orthography which over sixty vernacular languages within the British colonies had adopted by the year 1955 (Spencer 1974:166). However, there was considerable controversy surrounding the proposal of standardisation of dialect clusters. Doke (1931) was the first to propose the unification of the Shona group in Central Africa. This suggestion, together with other suggestions like the formation of a unified language (Akan) in the Gold Coast was never acceptable to the speakers of the various dialects. Although it can be argued that such unification could strengthen language groupings as a whole, it can also be seen as yet another example of colonial linguistic

imperialism which undermined the various indigenous languages and dialects.

Spencer remarks that the missionaries controlled education to a large extent. They also had a vested interest in teaching children to become literate in their mother tongue. He says this was in line with a resolution taken by the Council of the International African Institute in 1930 which maintained:

It is a universally acknowledged principle in modern education that a child should receive instruction both in and through his mother-tongue, and this privilege should not be withheld from the African child.

Spencer 1974:168

Despite this, the preceding discussion has highlighted the extent to which the indigenous languages in South Africa and elsewhere have been manipulated by the missionaries or the colonial governments in order to achieve preconceived objectives such as evangelisation or Anglicisation. As Nkondo points out, the effect of government intervention in 1841, was very significant (1974:51). The Colonial Treasury made it clear that one of the conditions for state funding was that English became the medium of instruction as well as the colloquial language of the schools. This undoubtedly set the scene for the future domination of the indigenous population in terms of language.

#### 1.4 Colonial language policies and the rise of Afrikaans

As was previously mentioned, the official language in the Cape until 1806 was Dutch. English replaced Dutch after the

British took over government in 1806. Behr states that many Scottish teachers were imported to assist in the process of Anglicisation in schools and churches (1988:99). By 1865, the law demanded that English be the sole medium of instruction in European schools. Coetzee points out that the reaction against the Anglicisation policy was the formation of "Die Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners" under the leadership of Rev. S.J. du Toit (1937:86). At the same time, a movement known as Christian National Education (CNE) emerged. This movement, which spread to the two Boer republics, was based upon a Calvinist world-view with Dutch being used as the medium of instruction. According to Behr, Rev. du Toit was also an ardent member of the CNE movement, a founder member of the Afrikaner Bond and the editor of a newspaper known as Die Patriot (1988:97). All these organisations were formed with the purpose of mobilising support against Anglicisation. Concomitant with this mobilisation was the emergence of the struggle for the recognition of the Dutch language.

In 1892, Dutch was recommended as an optional medium of instruction after it had been legalised a decade earlier by Parliament. Coetzee observes that although parents were given the choice of English or Dutch as a medium of instruction, this right was never exercised until Union in 1910 (1937:86).

South Africa witnessed yet another drastic language policy after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Milner's policy of the



Anglicisation of the two Boer republics after the war proved to be a failure. This policy helped to strengthen the rise of Afrikaner nationalism to the extent that the language issue became a national concern (Malherbe 1977:3). He quotes the well known words of ex-president Steyn concerning Milner's policy:

The language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered, is the language of slaves.

Malherbe 1977:3

Prominent Boer leaders such as General Botha, Smuts, Hertzog, De Wet, Abraham Fischer and leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church were involved in setting up approximately two hundred private schools under the banner of Christian National Education (CNE) as a result of Milner's Anglicisation policy (Malherbe 1977:3). In 1905 Lord Selborne, realising the damage being done to the desired reconciliation policy after the war, issued a statement which effectively relaxed Milner's rigid policy. On the granting of responsible government to the two Boer republics after the war, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State adopted the Smuts and the Hertzog Education Acts respectively (Malherbe 1977:6). Both these Acts provided for either Dutch or English in initial instruction after which a system of equality with regard to the use of these languages would be adopted (Behr 1988:100). These acts might well have been the forerunners to the 50:50 policy which was adopted by the Nationalist Party after coming to power in 1948.

A few years later, the South Africa Act of 1909, under Article 37 of the Union constitution declared that,

Both English and Dutch shall be the official languages of the Union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality and possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights and privileges.

Malherbe 1977:8

According to Davenport the Dutch language had lost status both after the war and since the implementation of Milner's policy of Anglicisation (1966:252-253). By 1901, proficiency in Dutch was no longer an entry requirement for the civil service. Furthermore, the standard of Dutch teaching in the schools had deteriorated. Davenport adds that the Boer leaders were forced to recognise their political "impotence". After the formation of what Reagan terms, "the single most important event in the history of language planning in South Africa namely, "Die Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners", there was a definite struggle for the recognition of what was later to become known as Afrikaans (1986:2). Leaders in this struggle believed that,

God had ordained that there should be an Afrikaner nation with a land and language of its own and a religion based on orthodox Protestant-Calvinist principles.

Behr 1988:98

A point with far-reaching implications to the status of languages and their present-day speakers in South Africa was raised by Malherbe who recognised that Afrikaans is not the language of white Afrikaners alone. Instead, the coloured people as well as the slaves during the course of two centuries played a significant role in the creation of what was then known as Cape Dutch and is now known as Afrikaans. Malherbe correctly points out that it was only a matter of

pigmentation which led the Afrikaner to disregard and estrange themselves from the co-creators of the Afrikaans language (Malherbe 1977:2).

Hartshorne sums up the inherited tradition with regard to language in education at the time of Union in 1910:

In the Cape and Natal the practice in Government-aided Native schools had ... come to be that English was made the medium of instruction from a very early age of the child's school-life, and continued to be the medium in all his school education from that stage onwards; that in these Colonies the teaching of English as a subject was regarded by all concerned as most important, probably the most important, part of the teacher's work; that in the two ex-Republics ... English was given the same prominent position both as a subject and medium...; and that except in Natal, where the teaching of Zulu was from 1885 onwards definitely prescribed for all Native pupils, comparatively little attention was in general devoted in any of the Colonies to the teaching of the vernacular as a subject.

Hartshorne 1987:84-85

In 1914 Afrikaans replaced Dutch as the medium of instruction in Afrikaans churches and schools in South Africa. According to Malherbe, the writer C.J. Langenhoven played a prominent role in this achievement (1977:11). In 1925 Afrikaans was legally ratified in Parliament as the other official language to be used in the civil service and schools.

The language situation has changed little since Afrikaans and English became the official languages of the Union. The only significant change has been the attempt to bring Afrikaans onto a par with English by the Nationalist Party since 1948. It is interesting to consider at this stage that nowhere are African languages prevalent or even part of

the discussions. Poulos has said that black people have had to rely on both English and Afrikaans for their very survival which has necessarily required considerable motivation for them to learn English and Afrikaans, regardless of their own home languages (1986:12). As Nkondo has argued, blacks have come to believe that English is synonymous with education (1974:2). Even the universities have employed the official languages in the teaching of African languages. It is not surprising therefore, that African languages have an almost non-existent status. It has not been uncommon for mother tongue students studying an African language to be criticised by their contemporaries for taking a "soft option". This in itself is an indication of the stigma that has been attached to the study of African languages. The indigenous languages have been ignored, neglected and undermined by various powers in control of the country since the first Dutch settlers at the Cape.

#### 1.5 Issues affecting language from 1948-1990

History, as outlined in the preceding pages, shows the extent to which language and education policies have been used to undermine the vernacular languages and their speakers with the effect that the status of both the people and their languages has never progressed. More importantly, however, have been recent language and education policies. Since 1948, the Nationalist government has systematically used language and education to entrench apartheid. The degree to which this separatist policy has succeeded is seen

in the existence of nineteen education departments which cater for the so-called different "races" and their languages.

The Research on Education in South Africa (RESA) source on South African statistics for 1988 indicates the home languages of the total South African population (see Table 1.5).

TABLE 1.5

Home languages of the total South African population

Home language	No. of Speakers	Percentage
African languages	23 160 000	72.8%
Afrikaans	4 954 000	15.9%
English	2 779 467	9.3%
Indian languages	117 697	0.8%
Other languages	246 676	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31 258 202</b>	<b>100%</b>

Fradet 1990:2

If one were to disregard the history of South Africa, it would be surprising from the above figures that not one of the African languages is an official language. Instead, two minority languages in South Africa enjoy official status.

The South African government has used language as a means to justify the division of people. The "homelands" and various ethnic groupings have been justified by the government according to the linguistic differences apparent in the country. The government has also used the UNESCO findings which advocate mother tongue instruction, to lend support to

its segregationist policies. Language has become such an important issue in South Africa that one's race can be decided on the grounds of one's mother tongue.

Fradet indicates that since the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, the policy of bilingualism was adopted by the white parliament so that Afrikaans could be elevated to the level of English (1990:6). The degree to which this has been successful is evident from figures quoted by Fradet from the Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa 1977/78. No less than 96.5% of the white population speak either Afrikaans or English while languages like French and Dutch, which were spoken at the beginning of South Africa's colonial history, have drifted into obscurity (Fradet 1990:4).

The uplifting of the status of African languages in South Africa has therefore never been placed on the agenda of the South African government. Fradet succinctly summarises some of the reasons for the lack of status of South Africa's indigenous languages:

Only a small minority of whites speak an African language and although they regard it as important to be bilingual, that is to speak English and Afrikaans, very few bother to learn an African language. White attitudes toward English, particularly in the predominantly Afrikaans section have changed dramatically over recent years. These days, it is not uncommon for Afrikaans-speaking families to send their children to English-speaking schools and universities, because of the dominant status, power and access it apparently lends in a racist, class-conscious South African society. By contrast, foreign languages such as French, German and Italian are offered as school subjects, further suppressing and entrenching negative attitudes towards African languages.

### 1.5.1 Policy affecting Black education

In order to give further detail to the language policies in apartheid South Africa, a brief summary of policies pertaining to the various "race" groups as identified by the South African government will be given. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was one of the cornerstones used by the Nationalist Party to entrench apartheid education and its accompanying linguistic policies. Reagan mentions two central aspects identified by Hartshorne (1981) with regard to this Act (1987:3). The first is the mother tongue principle which, at its peak, was extended to the first eight years of education. The government justified this by alluding to world opinion, UNESCO and the Eiselen recommendations which favoured mother tongue instruction. Through this policy the government purported to be protecting the cultural rights and heritage of the various language groups. The second aspect is the establishment of the primacy of Afrikaans. In essence there was a concerted effort to move away from the routine of converting to English after the initial years of mother tongue instruction. Hartshorne, quoting from a Transvaal Education document, highlights one of the syllabus objectives for teaching Afrikaans to Blacks:

(c) Met die nodige liefde en toewyding moet die leerling gelei word tot daardie stadium waar hy die AFRIKAANSE GEDAGTE, die AFRIKAANSE KULTUUR wat aan hierdie taal ten grondslag lê, sal intiem aanvoel, begryp, waardeer. Hierdeur sal die verhouding tussen hom en die draers van hierdie kultuur veruim en veredel word. En hierdeur sal die naturel self 'n beter kultuurmens word.

[(c) With the necessary love and devotion the pupil should be guided to that stage where he will be intimately attuned, understand and appreciate AFRIKAANS THOUGHT and AFRIKAANS CULTURE. Through this the relationship between him and the carriers of this culture will be expanded and improved.]

Hartshorne 1987:87-88

This policy of promoting Afrikaans, as Malherbe said, provided a vehicle for the "entrance to the hearts and minds" of all black South Africans who formed part of the education structures in South Africa, (1977:2).

Is there agreement on the justification for resistance to mother tongue instruction? Reagan believes that this resistance in South Africa is not well founded (1986:3). He says that empirical research has shown, be it ambiguously, that the initial use of mother tongue instruction in dominated societies has proved to be the most effective and humane. Bamgbose (1976), according to Reagan (1986:3), states that the developing countries, from an ideological basis, have supported the vernacular as a medium of instruction in order to counteract Western cultural and linguistic imperialism. Reagan supports his statement by quoting the recommendations of UNESCO in 1953 as well as the Jos Conference in 1962. He also points to the examples of Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe which all pursue a policy of initial mother tongue instruction culminating in a shift to English later on.

Despite these observations detailed by Reagan, the historical and contemporary conditions in South Africa cannot escape detection. As was pointed out in the beginning



of this chapter, language is integrally related to political, socioeconomic and cultural power. It is important to bear this in mind when looking at what Coetzee observed about the 1910 Union solution on language:

Our first aim must be to maintain the Union solution of the official equality of both English and Afrikaans. Each section of our bi-racial nation must maintain not only its own language but also its other language. Both languages must be the languages of government, commerce, industry, science, education and social intercourse.

Coetzee 1937:89

Further back in history, Spencer (1974:169) reveals how Lord Hailey recognised the way in which Britain and Belgium in their colonial language policies emphasised, "however remotely or unstated", separate development which helped to maintain a social and cultural gap between European and African. The above quote clearly reveals the intentions to subjugate and ignore anyone outside "our bi-racial nation".

There are a number of factors which lend support to the resistance to mother tongue instruction. Initially, the language policies adopted from the arrival of the Dutch right up to Union in 1910 might have been an "entrance to the hearts and minds" of the indigenous population (Malherbe 1977:3). In other words, the perceived advantages of acquiring the colonial language rather than the vernacular, were far greater. Spencer quotes Cecil John Rhodes as saying, "equal rights for all civilised men" (1974:169). It is clear, however, from the words of Coetzee above, that the different "races" were not necessarily given equal opportunities to attain these "equal rights" as

espoused by Rhodes. The fact is that very few Africans in colonial history had the right to equal opportunity. Spencer notes that,

In Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea, one of the required qualifications for obtaining the advantageous status of "assimilado" is the ability to write and speak Portuguese.... In Portuguese Guinea, out of a total population of a half a million or so, the 1950 census recorded only 1,478 Africans who had attained this status. Mozambique, with a population of over five and a half million, is shown in the same year to have a "populicada civilizada" of 92,619, but of these only 4,353 are Africans....

Spencer 1974:169

Sections of the indigenous population aspired to "assimilado" status and therefore rejected mother tongue instruction. Reagan summarises a number of criticisms which have been levelled at mother tongue instruction. These criticisms include:

1. In the South African context, mother-tongue instruction necessarily entails racially segregated schools.
2. Mother-tongue programmes seek to deny black children access to English which functions as a lingua franca in the multi-lingual black community of South Africa, and as the "language of wider communication" that provides access to the international community.
3. Emphasis on mother-tongue instruction is, in essence, an attempt to "divide and conquer", and seeks to retribalise black South Africans.
4. The various black languages are not adequate for educational purposes, and their use in schools will create "intellectual barriers" for their users.
5. Blacks themselves are overwhelmingly opposed to mother-tongue educational programmes, which have been forced upon them by whites.

Reagan 1986:4

Reagan tries to draw a parallel between African and other Third World countries and South Africa where mother tongue policy has been adopted as an anti-imperialist measure (1986:5). The political conditions in South Africa, especially since 1948, make comparisons with other African states inappropriate. Various racist policies in language and education such as the mother tongue principle and the 50:50 system, have sparked off widespread resistance. This resistance to the mother tongue principle cannot be divorced from the broader liberation struggle of the black population in South Africa. Hobson Nabe, a former chairperson of the Xhosa Language Committee bears testimony to the resistance to the mother tongue policy when he says,<sup>4</sup>

The teachers, parents, and pupils never accepted the principle of mother-tongue instruction throughout primary school. The teachers openly ridiculed the whole exercise. Many teachers left the profession with the introduction of Bantu Education and opted to train afresh as lawyers and doctors etc.

Reagan also loses sight of the realities in South Africa by arguing about whether or not mother tongue education necessarily means segregation and retribalisation (1986:5). Looking at the "homelands" and the various schools based on ethno-linguistic criteria, it is easy to understand the extent to which South Africans have been segregated in schools. Reagan believes that it is "patently false" to imply that blacks are being denied access to English because of the mother tongue principle. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that the education of the oppressed people

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<sup>4</sup> Letter received from Hobson Nabe, 15 January 1991

in South Africa has always been based on Verwoerdian policy which envisaged black education as satisfying the demands of white capitalist labour requirements.

The opinion that African languages are not adequate for educational purposes is also attacked by Reagan. Many linguists expressly emphasise the potential that all languages have to become adequate for all communicative purposes. In quoting Peter Strevens, Sebego and Monoto (1988) adequately portray the sentiments arising from the initial criticism:

There is overwhelming evidence that any language is potentially able to be developed so as to express all the communicative needs of the people who speak it, including scientific discourse of all kinds. But that is a statement of potentiality and not actuality.

Sebego and Monoto 1988:22

It is evident that throughout South Africa's colonial history the indigenous languages in South Africa have been ignored and neglected to such an extent that their potential has not been realised. With the knowledge of hindsight, current feelings surrounding the mother tongue issue are not as clear-cut as has been professed by Reagan (1986:6).

The promotion of Afrikaans through the 50:50 system became an important political issue amongst the black youth of South Africa. Fradet outlines how Act No. 47 of 1953 made the Department of Native Affairs responsible for black education until 1958 after which the Department of Bantu Education took charge (1990:6-7). Fradet continues to explain how the 50:50 policy required all school subjects

apart from religious instruction, music and physical education to be divided and taught in English and Afrikaans respectively.

The problems experienced with the implementation of the 50:50 policy are dealt with by Fradet (1990:8). Many schools applied for concessions due to the lack of qualified teachers which made the teaching of various subjects in the two official languages impossible. In discussing the 50:50 policy, a former chairperson of the Xhosa Language Committee, Hobson Nabe, says that,<sup>5</sup>

This caused a great uproar amongst the teachers as there were hardly any Xhosa speaking teachers who were proficient in Afrikaans let alone using it as a tool to teach any subject. Attempts to do so were pathetic to say the least.

Large sums of money were used in an attempt to overcome these problems in order to ensure the continuation of government policy of entrenching English and Afrikaans. After two decades, in reviewing the 50:50 policy in 1973, the Bantu Education Department resolved to continue with the implementation of this policy. The extent to which parents, teachers and students were "consulted" on this issue is summed up well in a statement made by the Deputy Minister of Bantu Education in 1976. Dr. Andries Treurnicht is quoted by Fradet as saying:

In the white area of South Africa, where the government pays, it is certainly our right to decide on the language division.

Fradet 1990:9

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<sup>5</sup> Letter received from Hobson Nabe, 15 January 1991

Fradet explains how the issue of the 1976 uprising did not only centre on the choice between English and Afrikaans (1990:9). Although parents, teachers and educationists were demanding that only one of the official languages be used, the main point of concern according to Fradet was the undemocratic adoption of the 50:50 policy and the fact that academic achievement had suffered since the implementation of this policy.

After widespread popular resistance in 1976 the main demand of students was met. Fradet quotes the Department of Bantu Education after this resistance as saying:

The medium of instruction at most secondary schools is English in all subjects excepting Afrikaans Language and the Vernacular, while Religious Instruction, Music and singing classes are conducted in the mother-tongue.

Fradet 1990:9

In quoting Hartshorne, Alexander explains that the use of Afrikaans was,

... limited to 1.46% of the pupils in Standard 3 and upwards in schools of the Department of Education and Training and the national states and then not exclusively but alongside English.

Alexander 1989:25

The Department of Bantu Education became the Department of Education and Training (DET) in 1978. The Education and Training Act No. 90 of 1979 repealed all legislation relating to black education passed between 1953 and 1978, (Fradet 1990:10). This Act provided for the use of the mother tongue until Standard 2 after which the parents could choose the language of instruction. This was a "sham"

according to Fradet since the white Minister of Education could veto any decision made by the school board. In effect therefore, both English and Afrikaans remained on the core curriculum regardless of any decision by parents to the contrary.

It should be noted at this point that apart from being segregated on ethno-linguistic grounds, black students are forced to learn three languages, two of which are the official languages of South Africa. This illustrates the extent to which the government used its power to promote the status of the official languages at the expense of the vernaculars or home languages of black students.

#### 1.5.2 Policy affecting Coloured education

Fradet, in discussing language policy pertaining to coloured people, mentions that both English and Afrikaans are the home languages of people classified as coloured (1990:14). Fradet continues by explaining how Act No. 52 of 1968 provided for most coloured schools to adopt Afrikaans as their medium of instruction due to the historical dominance of Afrikaans amongst the coloured people. Where English is dominant, as it is in Natal, the medium of instruction would be English in coloured schools. The other official language would be introduced as a second language in Sub-A in both the above scenarios.

#### 1.5.3 Policy affecting Indian education

Indian Education, according to Fradet, from 1894 to 1966 in Natal and 1913 to 1967 in the Transvaal, fell under the

control of the white provincial councils (1990:16). This changed after the Nationalist government passed the Indian Education Act No. 61 of 1965. This Act provided for the Department of Indian Affairs to take control of Indian education in Natal in 1966 and in the Transvaal in 1967. On 6 October 1980 the Department of Indian Affairs fell under the auspices of the Department of Internal Affairs in terms of the "new constitutional dispensation". Language policy concerning Indian Education is similar to that found in coloured education (Fradet 1990:17). The medium of instruction would therefore depend on the dominant official language of the region. Apart from the Cape, English is almost exclusively the medium of instruction. For instance, Fradet quotes a figure of 84.4% of people classified Indian who speak English as their mother tongue (1990:5).

#### 1.5.4 Policy affecting White education

The language policy for people classified white was informed by the Nicol Commission of 1939 which proposed separate medium schools for fear of one of the official languages swamping the culture of the other (Fradet 1990:18). The Nationalist Party implemented this policy in 1948 and all the provinces, excepting Natal, provided for the mother tongue as a medium of instruction up to Standard 4 while the other official language was introduced during Sub-A. Natal maintained the policy of parental choice of the medium of instruction. This choice was abolished, however, by the Nationalist government in 1967 (Fradet 1990:19).



The National Education Act No. 39 of 1967 which took effect from 1 January 1968, had a Christian National character which was designed to instill amongst white pupils the belief that they would always enjoy superior positions and status to blacks. The Director of the Transvaal Education Department once said:

The school is increasingly becoming a fortress to our self-preservation: teachers in our schools are standing firm against the demoralisation of youth as manifested in other countries.

Fradet 1990:19

This "self-preservation" obviously included the preservation and entrenchment of the status of the official languages and their accompanying "cultures" and speakers. Amongst the white population, Afrikaans is clearly the dominant medium of instruction. Fradet quotes percentages of 37.0% for English and 63.0% for Afrikaans as medium of instruction (1990:20).

#### 1.6 Xhosa as second language in South African education

Recent work done by Zotwana (1987) helps to contextualise the effects of South Africa's colonial and apartheid history on the status and development of one of the African languages (Xhosa) in the field of education. A look at the position of Xhosa as a second language in South African universities, secondary schools and primary schools from its introduction to the present day is very interesting.

### 1.6.1 Xhosa at universities

Since the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, more than two and a half centuries elapsed before Xhosa, one of southern Africa's indigenous languages, was officially offered at a white university to non-mother tongue speakers. It took many years to persuade the government to establish an African Language Department at a South African university (Zotwana, 1987:118). It was only after the Coleman Departmental Committee reported to the government and the fact that the University of Cape Town had decided to create a post regardless of a government decision to the contrary, that the government conceded. The School of African Life and Languages at the University of Cape Town was thus opened in 1921. Other universities followed suit although Rhodes University, which ironically is situated in a predominantly Xhosa-speaking area, only offered its first course in Xhosa in 1941 (Fivaz 1974:4).

According to Zotwana, the universities were under no pressure to train and supply teachers of African languages for schools since the schools did not offer African languages. Instead, the emphasis lay on scientific rather than functional knowledge of the vernaculars (1987:126-7). This is indicative of the status accorded to the vernaculars. To date the scientific study of African languages has always overshadowed the urgent need to teach the functional aspect of African languages to non-mother tongue speakers. Currently, structural concerns tend to overshadow sociolinguistic studies of African languages.

### 1.6.2 Xhosa at secondary schools

The Joint Matriculation Board, according to Zotwana, had a syllabus for Xhosa as a Third Language in 1936 (1987:128-9). He adds, however, that it was not until the late 1960's that Xhosa was first examined officially at Standard 10 level. The first known school to introduce Xhosa officially was Paarl Gymnasium (Zotwana 1987:129). This occurred in 1964, and ironically enough, was the result of a march by blacks in Paarl during the political uprisings in the early 1960's. The white community only saw the importance of having their children learn Xhosa because of this march by the black inhabitants of Paarl. This is revealing with regard to the status of African languages. It appears that the initial reason for the white community of Paarl wanting to learn Xhosa was out of a sense of fear, rather than being motivated by positive attitudes towards African languages or their speakers.

In the case of secondary schools there was a lapse of over three centuries after the Dutch arrival before an African language was taught as an examination subject. It is important to note, however, that African languages have never been a compulsory option in secondary school curricula. Zotwana noted that a decade after the establishment of Xhosa at Paarl Gymnasium, there were six schools which entered candidates for the Xhosa examination at Standard 10 level in South Africa (1987:130).

The problems of teaching Xhosa as a second language in secondary schools are numerous. The empirical research in

Chapter Three will deal with these problems which invariably revolve around the retarded development of the status of African languages at secondary school level.

### 1.6.3 Xhosa at primary schools

With regard to the primary schools, Zotwana states that the Cape Education Department wanted to introduce Xhosa as a non-examination subject from Standards 3 to 5 (1987:134). In a questionnaire sent to the primary schools, the Cape Education Department learnt that 73.3% of the schools were interested in the experiment although only 7.0% of the teachers had any knowledge of Xhosa. The result was that 45 schools were selected for the experiment (Zotwana 1987:137). According to a personal communication with a member of the Cape Education Department,<sup>6</sup> the number of primary schools offering Xhosa in 1991 is 138. This is a comparatively large number of schools when compared to the number of secondary schools offering Xhosa. The reason for this apparent growth of Xhosa in primary schools is due to a recent (1990) decision to make the subject compulsory in the senior primary standards. The extent to which this decision has been implemented in primary schools is unclear. Despite making the subject compulsory, it should be noted that the status of the language has remained unchanged. This is illustrated by the fact that Xhosa is not an examinable subject. Furthermore, only one hour per week is allocated to the teaching and learning of the language. As a result, it has been reported that many pupils do not take the subject

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<sup>6</sup> Letter received from the CED, 4 April 1991

seriously. Xhosa as a subject in primary schools has clearly not reached the level of importance that has been attained by the two official languages in South Africa.

### 1.7 Conclusion

The above discussion illustrates how political relationships between groups have impinged on the linguistic development and the recognition of the indigeneous languages. Colonisation has had a profound effect on the languages of South Africa. The exalted status accorded to Dutch, English and Afrikaans by successive governments is evidence of this. African languages on the other hand have been consistently ignored. These languages have no apparent status when compared to English and Afrikaans. However, as consistently as African languages have been ignored in the past, it should be remembered that these languages have continued to defy their often predicted extinction. Instead, a growing need is emerging for the recognition, promotion and indeed, the learning of these languages.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Theoretical aspects of second language acquisition

#### 2.1 Introduction

In South Africa today there is a growing awareness of the need to communicate across the language spectrum. The previous chapter has outlined the factors which have made communication in multi-lingual South Africa so problematic. The fact that only 25.0% of South Africa's total population speak either of the official languages as a home language means that 75.0% of the South African population are forced to acquire a certain level of communicative skill in one or both official languages (Fradet 1990:2). More often than not, this acquisition is motivated by the need to secure employment. The minority of the population who speak the official languages as home languages have little perceived need for learning the languages of the majority as they believe there is inherently little to be gained from this. Growing awareness of African languages indicates a shift in perception with regard to the importance of learning African languages. What this shift in perception entails is an interesting question. Although some schools presently offer African languages, it is clear from Dugmore (1989), that many problems exist concerning the status of these languages. These problems have made the realisation of stated objectives in Xhosa language teaching very difficult.

Of interest in Dugmore's study are the prevailing attitudes in governmental, parental and student sectors towards the learning of African languages.

This chapter will attempt to address a number of theoretical aspects of second language acquisition. From the theory, an attempt to analyse the present system of teaching African languages, and particularly Xhosa in South African schools, will be made. The theory will allow a realistic assessment whether or not teaching African languages in South African schools is, or can, in fact, hope to achieve the objective of ensuring communicative competence for language learners.

## 2.2 Communicative competence

In defining communicative competence Stern says:

The intuitive mastery that the native speaker possesses to use and interpret language appropriately in the process of interaction and in the relation to social context has been called by Hymes (1972) and others, "communicative competence",.....

1983:229

This view concerning communicative competence reveals a second, and indeed, a subsequent approach to the idea of communication. Stern identifies the first approach as being the linguistic approach which was based on the structuralist ideas of researchers like Bloomfield in the 1940's (1981:134). The product of this could be seen in the analytical and formal approach in language teaching of the audiolingual period between 1950 and 1965.

Stern also points out that, apart from Hymes who developed the theory of communicative competence between 1967 and 1971, there were also linguists like Firth and Halliday who were leaders in this field in Britain (1981:134). The very essence of this change in thought was contrary to the linguistic competence as espoused by Chomsky and other transformational generative grammarians. Stern points out that Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence was confined to the internalised rules of syntax (1983:229). In other words, as indicated by Corder (1981:91), the grammar of a language in a linguistic sense is evidence of the speaker's competence. He adds that according to Chomsky's view, grammar is the characterisation of the ideal speaker in a homogeneous society. Corder draws attention to the weakness of this theory by stating that individuals in a society vary slightly in their application of rules and for this reason, a grammar cannot hope to predict the rules followed by any particular individual. It follows therefore that the emergence of the concept of communicative competence unveiled Chomsky's linguistic competence as being both idealist and abstract.

The idea of linguistic competence should, however, not be discarded as a result of emerging and contrasting ideas. Stern says clearly that the concept of communicative competence implies the combination of both linguistic competence as well as the "intuitive grasp" of the social and cultural rules involved in appropriate utterances (1983:229). He goes a step further by advocating a



"strategic competence" (a term coined by Carole and Swain 1980) which will compensate for the second language learner's imperfect command of both the rules for linguistic and sociocultural competence.

In this vein Stern mentions how Allen (1980) suggested three components which could be used to diversify the structural approach of the 1960's in a more semantic and pragmatic direction (1981:142). These components include a structural, functional and a new experiential aspect. Stern (1981:143) has modified this approach by adding a sociocultural aspect to the language curriculum (see fig. 2.2 below). By doing so, the definition of communicative competence has been modified to include not only the use of linguistic knowledge but also variables such as attitude, motivation and various other sociocultural factors.

**FIGURE 2.2**

Fourfold curriculum framework for second language teaching

Structural aspect	Functional aspect	Sociocultural aspect	Experiential aspect
mainly analytical (involving language study and practice)			mainly non-analytical (involving language use in authentic contexts)

In Stern 1983:262

According to Stern (1981:138), the emphasis on communication as forming part of language pedagogy was initially advocated by people like Jakobovits (1972) and Savignon (1972). He

mentions how the French immersion programmes in Canada since the mid-1960's, the Council of Europe Project and the idea of Community Language Learning (Curran 1976) all moved towards the incorporation of a communicative approach to language teaching.

In South Africa the idea of a communicative approach to African language teaching in schools is only a recent development. The new syllabus introduced in 1982 for Xhosa in Cape secondary schools is an example. The extent to which this new communicative approach in African language teaching to non-mother tongue speakers in South African schools has been successful, has yet to be thoroughly assessed. The study undertaken by Dugmore (1989) in five Western Cape schools, however, has revealed that this new system has failed to promote communicative competence as portrayed in Stern's definition above.

In order to address these problems and meet the growing demands for communication and understanding in South Africa, it is necessary to look at factors such as language acquisition, attitudes, motivation and a host of sociocultural variables before a more realistic approach to achieving communicative competence in African languages for non-mother tongue speakers may be achieved.

### 2.3 The importance of neurological factors

It has become increasingly important for language teachers to know the facts about neurological issues relating to language acquisition for the simple reason that this knowledge can help teachers adopt a more viable approach to language teaching. Krashen remarks that research on neurological aspects of language acquisition has increased rapidly in recent times (1988:70). A closer look at aspects of this research will help to clarify the extent to which neurological findings can be beneficial to the understanding of second language acquisition and teaching.

#### 2.3.1 Lateralisation and cerebral dominance

The exponents of the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), for instance Lenneberg (1967), have advocated that children acquire a language by simply being exposed to it between the age of two years and puberty (McLaughlin 1984:46). This was based on the idea that the brain has not yet developed the capacity required for language acquisition before two years, while after puberty, it is believed that cerebral dominance comes about through the loss of plasticity in the brain which causes the lateralisation and localisation of the language function. This theory has been widely supported. It adds weight to the idea that children acquire languages more quickly and with less difficulty than adults. McLaughlin continues to say that Lenneberg noted that "Language-learning blocks" tended to increase rapidly after

puberty which therefore makes automatic acquisition for adults impossible. Lenneberg also believes that although the left hemisphere is more active in child language learning, the right hemisphere is not passive. When the child grows older, however, the language function is polarised due to lateralisation. The left hemisphere then commands the language functions while the right hemisphere predominates over other functions. McLaughlin reveals evidence used by Lenneberg to substantiate his claims (1984:47). Evidence from Bassler (1962) shows that injury to the right hemisphere in children causes a significantly greater disturbance to speech than similar injuries do for adults. Data on right hemispherectomies also indicate that children experience 35.0% disturbance as opposed to only 3.0% disturbance in adults. In the instance of left hemispherectomies (McLaughlin 1984:48), children are able to transfer the speech function to the right hemisphere while this is not possible in adults. Krashen quotes Russell and Espir (1961) as reporting that 97.0% of adults who received injuries to the left hemisphere, experienced aphasia (1988:71). Medical evidence therefore supports the idea that with age, the plasticity of the brain is reduced and lateralisation of the language function occurs in the left hemisphere.

Based on Witelson's (1977) review, Krashen argues that the preconditions for lateralisation are present at birth (1988:73). Krashen reports that Witelson's review on known dichotic listening experiments showed right ear superiority to be common in children well before puberty. Krashen does

accede, however, that a few studies using different stimuli, have yielded results which are consistent with Lenneberg's CPH theory. Krashen also alludes to studies on motor skills (Caplan and Kinsbourne 1976; Witelson 1977) which suggest clearly that cerebral dominance is established significantly earlier than puberty (1988:74). Further evidence given by Krashen, and supporting early lateralisation, is research by Gardner and Walker (1976) which reveals clear left-right differences at the age of five months.

McLaughlin indicates that split-brain research has shown the minor hemisphere capable of comprehending some simple sentences and phrases (1984:50). He continues by suggesting that evidence from this research does not support the strict lateralisation as espoused by Lenneberg and Penfield. Krashen is careful not to rule out Lenneberg completely, although he believes that adults are able to acquire a second language subconsciously (1988:77). He accedes to child-adult differences in second language acquisition but refutes the idea that these differences can be attributed to a biological barrier as postulated by Lenneberg (1988:81). A significant amount of evidence exists therefore to warrant the early introduction of a desired second language. It would appear that the lateralisation process might occur earlier than previously thought. The possibility of subconscious adult second language acquisition is not ruled out as a result of this research, however.

### 2.3.2 Accents

According to McLaughlin (1984:57), Scovel (1969) went as far as postulating that adults cannot acquire a second language without an accent due to the loss of plasticity and lateralisation of the language function. McLaughlin acknowledges both confirming and contradictory evidence with regard to this assumption. He adds that even if one were to accept Scovel's argument, the Critical Period Hypothesis is increasingly being opposed by authors who are now directing their attention towards a sociocultural approach rather than a biological one. While some evidence might favour Scovel's idea concerning accent, there exists a strong case against the idea of strict lateralisation. In other words, the argument by McLaughlin raises the question of the existence of differing critical periods for various aspects of language acquisition of which accent is one.

### 2.3.3 Relevance of the neurological debate

The importance of the neurological debate on language acquisition is that it can provide language teachers and planners with valuable insight regarding biological factors influencing language acquisition. Recent debate has led researchers like McLaughlin and others to expose common misconceptions (McLaughlin 1984:216). One of these misconceptions is the belief that children learn a second language more easily and quickly than adults. McLaughlin points out that controlled tests have shown adults to

perform better while children appear to have more authentic pronunciation (1984:217). An interesting fact to note is that, apart from receiving a phenomenal amount of exposure, a child is often more motivated by peer pressure to acquire a second language than would normally be the case for adults. Furthermore, the demand on children's language is far more elementary than that which might be expected from an adult. It is evident that factors outside biological controls influence the acquisition of a second language by adults and children.

The second misconception according to McLaughlin (1984:218), is that the younger the child, the more competent it will be in second language acquisition. McLaughlin, with reference to Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979), points out, however, that the rate of acquisition appears to be faster amongst older children while younger children tend to attain higher standards ultimately. He also indicates that non-linguistic factors tend to favour younger children but that older children would achieve accordingly if exposed to similar language learning situations. It would appear to be incorrect therefore to believe that younger children possess superior skills.

For the present discussion it is important to note that other factors, apart from biological ones, play an important role in second language acquisition. Due to this, it is necessary to take cognizance of biological factors with which one should combine both psychological and sociological

factors in order to create the optimal environment in which both adult and child second language acquisition is thought to occur.

#### 2.4 Influence of 1st language processes on 2nd language acquisition

Of great importance to the teaching of second language is the extent to which research has highlighted the processes involved in first and second language acquisition. A knowledge of research in this field can be very useful in the formulation of approaches with regard to the teaching of African languages.

##### 2.4.1 Processes in second language acquisition

Although McLaughlin admits to the shortage of data on the subject of phonological development and acquisition in a second language amongst children, he believes that research carried out by Ervin-Tripp (1974) and Wode (1978) correctly shows that children use strategies which are similar to those used in first language acquisition (1984:114). He says that Wode (1978) believes it possible that children use their knowledge of their first language phonology in order to acquire particular sounds in their second language.

With regard to the strategies employed in syntactic processing, McLaughlin is of the opinion that there are numerous similarities between first and second language



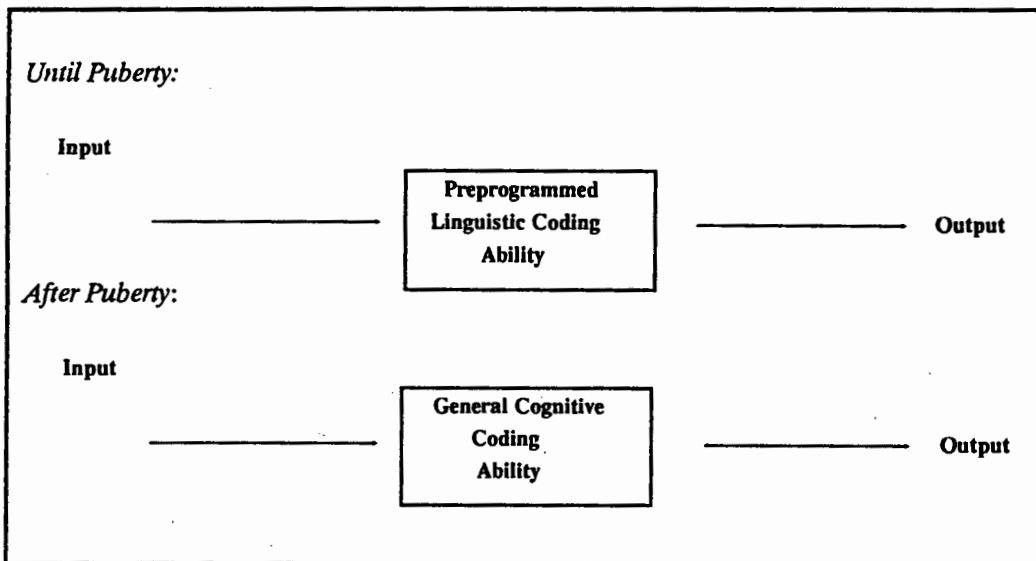
learning (1984:117). He claims that in both cases, word order will progress from an initially simple to a more complex strategy. This he substantiates by quoting the works of Stern and Stern (1907), Tits (1948) and Politzer (1974). He continues by saying that there is no evidence to support the idea that children learning a second language repeat the cognitive development process which occurs in first language acquisition. For this reason older children are thought to undergo the same processes of acquisition at a faster rate than younger children (McLaughlin 1984:119). Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann (1974, 1975) have also pointed out that there are individual differences and variations amongst learners despite some evidence supporting the existence of specific developmental sequences (McLaughlin 1984:119).

According to Krashen (1988:51), Brown's (1973) morpheme studies, which are supported by the cross-sectional studies of De Villiers and De Villiers (1973), show significant similarities in the order of attainment of grammatical morphemes in second language acquisition. These findings which include both children and adults, have been confirmed by Krashen, who reviewed all morpheme studies and found significant uniformity in the results (1988:57). The criticisms levelled at these studies are not backed by any counter-evidence (Krashen 1988:61). In alluding to research on cross-sectional studies, McLaughlin points out how Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a, 1974c) concluded that common sequences of second language acquisition pointed to

universal cognitive systems in acquiring second languages (1974:120). They believe too, that differences in these sequences can be accounted for by the varying ages and cognitive abilities of their subjects. Fig. 2.4.1 is a representation of the Critical Period Hypothesis with regard to the differences in learning acquisition between children and adults.

FIGURE 2.4.1

Models of language acquisition before and after puberty (Echeverria 1974)



In McLaughlin 1984:60

McLaughlin points out that Stern (1970) believes in qualitative differences when comparing first and second language acquisition (1984:60). The reason for this line of thought is the belief that structural changes will cause the second language to be filtered through the first language system which will subsequently result in interferences. McLaughlin continues by showing that the opposing view

adopted by other authors also acknowledges differences although these are regarded as quantitative rather than qualitative. McLaughlin explains that, according to Ervin-Tripp (1973a, 1981), the input conditions for children in most cases, are vastly different to those experienced by adults. In other words, children normally experience second language learning more directly and naturally than do adults. Despite these two obvious differences, Ervin-Tripp believes that the basic features involved in language acquisition are the same.

#### 2.4.2 Errors and interference

The debate concerning interference of the first language during second language learning/acquisition has also yielded contradictory viewpoints. Error analysis has been employed in an attempt to determine the extent to which the first language can be held responsible for particular errors found amongst learners of a second language. Krashen reports that initial studies by Lado (1957) regarded the first language as being the principle cause of syntactic errors (1988:64). Subsequently, however, it has become apparent that only a minority of errors can be traced back to first language influence. McLaughlin also supports this idea by alluding to studies done by Dulay and Burt (1972) on the subject (1984:67). He adds that the majority of studies never indicate that more than one third of the errors in second language learning can be the result of interference from the first language.

Krashen (1988:65), in reviewing research findings, believes it is possible to generalise that the first language influence appears to be strongest when complex word orders are encountered in the second language. This idea is also supported by Ervin-Tripp (1974) according to McLaughlin (1984:125). The degree of interference by the first language is related to the degree of difficulty of the task encountered in the second language. Ervin-Tripp points out that interference tends to be greatest when the second language does not form an integral part of the learner's social environment. For this reason, it is possible to explain why Taylor (1975) found that interference tends to dominate in the early stages of adult second language acquisition after which there is progressively less interference (McLaughlin 1984:67). Although this is less likely to occur with children, Krashen suggests that should children receive less intake or experience a high affective filter, then first language interference will be greater (1988:67).

McLaughlin believes that errors are best described in "strategy terms" (1984:228). He believes that instead of ascribing errors to interference, they should rather be seen as strategies used to master difficulties and discover the rules of the second language. He makes this assumption based on findings that people with different first languages make similar mistakes in the second language and are therefore undergoing similar strategies in uncovering the structures of the second language.

Although authors acknowledge first language interference, there seems to be general agreement that it is not the main cause of errors in second language learning (McLaughlin 1984:67). The significance of this debate will become evident later in the thesis (see par. 3.4.1). It will suffice at this stage to point out that creating the correct language learning environment is vitally important in ensuring natural acquisition and diminishing interference from the first language.

## 2.5 The "Acquisition/Learning" distinction

Literature dealing with second language acquisition is bound to produce the terms *acquisition* and *learning*. The distinction between these terms has helped to clarify the different dynamics and approaches operating in the second language learning arena. The distinction has furthermore provided the basis from which new pedagogical approaches to second language teaching have been developed.

Stern mentions how Krashen aroused much interest with his "Monitor Model" theory in the 1970's in which he clarified the distinction between acquisition and learning (1983:331). Stern explains that *learning* is associated with the conscious aspect of second language learning (1983:391). In other words, learning refers to the formal, deliberate and controlled exposure that a learner experiences in a classroom situation. Krashen points out that most traditional language programmes include the traditional

skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening (1988:100). These have traditionally been the components employed in the second language classroom. Krashen believes that *acquisition* is comparable to acquiring one's first language in infancy (Stern 1983:391). It is a more subconscious process motivated by the need to communicate in real day to day situations. Krashen believes that the environment and intake made available to the learner are both critical aspects in the process that leads to acquisition (1988:101). In the classroom therefore, the intake should ideally be what Krashen terms "caretaker" speech. This speech is thought to be employed by parents when communicating with young children. He says "caretaker" speech deals with the "here and now" whilst at the same time, it ensures comprehension through providing adequate extra linguistic support (1988:102). He says that caretaker speech encourages acquisition because it is roughly tuned to the child's linguistic ability and therefore is not too complex. Teachers who are able to employ the concept of "caretaker" speech in the classroom will provide the second language student with the intake necessary for language acquisition. Acquisition is therefore thought to be a subconscious and informal process as opposed to learning. The acquisition/learning concept in first language acquisition has therefore been extended to incorporate second language learning.

Stern's model (fig. 2.5.a) below indicates the rough distinction between learning and acquisition relative to the

conditions of learning. Krashen maintains that both these components are important to the second language classroom. He sees them as integral to the second language teaching programme as indicated in fig. 2.5.b below.

**FIGURE 2.5.a**

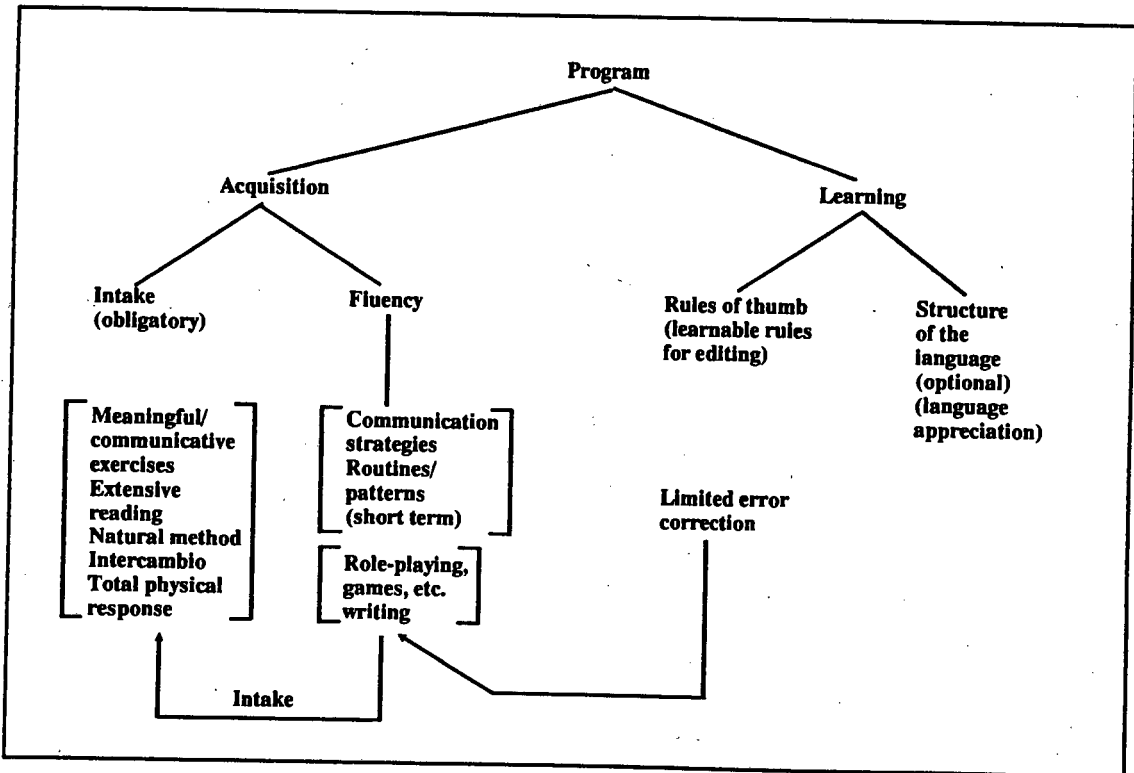
The learning/acquisition distinction relative to conditions of learning

	Classroom	Target language environment
'Learning'	More likely	Less likely
'Acquisition'	Less likely	More likely

In Stern 1983:392

**FIGURE 2.5.b**

A second language teaching programme



In Krashen 1988:101

The distinction between learning and acquisition has had the effect of transforming traditional approaches to language teaching classrooms. This transformation has meant the emergence of a new communicative era in language teaching. The emphasis has shifted to the acquisition of language rather than the learning of language. Krashen notes the importance of this when he says,

... the major function of the second language classroom is to provide intake for acquisition. This being a very difficult task, one could also say that the major challenge facing the field of applied linguistics is to create materials that provide intake.

Krashen 1988:101

A particularly relevant point made by Stern is that,

... educational treatment ... can most readily be modified and adjusted to different social and language environments and to individual learner factors.

Stern 1983:393

Of importance therefore is to note that it is both possible and desirable to make the educational changes in the teaching of African languages as second languages to suit the change of emphasis in the language classroom from one of learning to one of acquisition. To date this change has not been realised with regard to the teaching of African languages in South African schools. As will be seen in Chapter Three, traditional methods of language teaching in the schools are still prominent. This has the effect of counteracting rather than enhancing the communicative skills of pupils.



## 2.6 Attitude and aptitude

According to Krashen (1988:19), the acquisition/learning hypothesis helps to explain the differences and similarities between *attitude* and *aptitude*. He believes that both attitude and aptitude are related to achievement in the second language while apparently being unrelated to one another. Krashen proposes therefore, that *aptitude* is associated with conscious learning as opposed to *attitude* which is associated with the more subconscious act of acquisition. Carroll (1973) says that foreign language aptitude appears to be more closely related to general intelligence (according to Krashen 1988:21). On the other hand, however, Stern notes that,

Intelligence tests and achievement tests in the native language have accordingly been used as predictors of second language aptitude. But the correspondence is far from perfect.

1983:368

Stern continues that despite the progress made by Carroll (1981) and Wesch (1981a), the isolation of a "language aptitude" has not been satisfactorily achieved. He acknowledges the improvement of aptitude determining tests since the grammar-translation period of the 1930's. Stern believes that these tests have encouraged a better definition of language aptitude as a learner variable although aptitude,

... is not a single entity, but a composite of different characteristics which come into play in second language learning.

1983:369

This would appear to be a valid conclusion as literature on second language learning reveals a host of other factors which are also linked to the degree of success in second language learning. It is common knowledge as Stern (1983:369) says, that various factors thought to be relevant in the learning/acquisition process, will operate at different levels for different individuals. As mentioned earlier, it is possible to influence certain variables in the language learning arena and therefore improve the ability of learners who are thought to lack the aptitude for language learning. For this reason Stern calls attention to the dangers of the common misconception that people are either gifted in languages or they are not (1983:369).

#### 2.6.1 Psychological aspects of attitude and motivation

Most language teachers will agree that the motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language.

McDonough 1981:142

In discussing basic psychological views on motivation, McDonough rejects the view of psychologists like Hull and Thorndike who believe that motivation in human learning can be likened to the "drive" that mammals have of satisfying their homeostatic needs (1981:144-9). He points out that current definitions of "drive" have moved away from biological needs thus supporting his rejection of the above postulation. Of more significance to McDonough is Kurt Lewin's "Field Theory" which claims that motivation depends on two factors, namely, "valence" and "chances of success".

He refers to a third motivating factor commonly known as "The need for achievement" which, according to Atkinson (1957), depends on the balance between the individual's need to be successful or the need to avoid failure. A very relevant issue is raised by McDonough who explains that society can often undermine the woman's need to achieve in certain subjects (1981:147). He points out that this trend was found to be different in Burstall's report (1975) of a Primary French Project in Britain where girls' achievement was found to be higher than that of the boys'. McDonough believes that this might be due to societal norms which look more favourably on educated girls learning languages rather than mathematics for instance. Through this example it can be seen that sociological factors also play a deciding role in determining levels of motivation amongst individuals in society. The survey undertaken later on in this thesis will consider whether societal factors have affected the ratio of males and females doing Xhosa at school level.

The final theory on motivation which McDonough reviews is known as the "Attribution Theory". He describes it thus:

Attribution theory attempts to describe motivated behaviour in terms of the cause to which the individuals attribute, or ascribe, their own and other people's performance: their own ability, effort, intention or other's ability, effort, or intention, luck and so on.

1981:147

McDonough says that the differences in motivation of individuals can be ascribed to the achievement needs of the individual as well as to attributional tendencies. He draws

attention to the complexity of motivation and the fact that there are numerous factors like parents, school atmosphere and teachers which provide for variation to individual motivation.

#### 2.6.2 Integrative and instrumental motivation

Stern points out that there has been considerable research since the early 1950's on affective and personality factors (1983:375). Two of the most consistent of these researchers have been Gardner and Lambert (1972). Ellis indicates that the distinction between attitude and motivation is not clear cut. Both Gardner and Lambert have conceded that these rather abstract terms overlap considerably (Ellis 1986:116). The terms *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation, which are now common terminology in second language theory, were coined by Gardner and Lambert. Krashen explains that someone thought to be integratively motivated will express the desire to become a valued member of the target language group (1988:22). This attitude is thought to be of extreme significance since it often acts as a reliable predictor of second language proficiency. In other words, as explained by Krashen, integrative motivation is thought to encourage interaction with the target language group. This interaction is enhanced by the need to be accepted by the target language group. It ensures a low affective filter which, in turn, promotes the intake which Krashen believes will result in language acquisition. Krashen notes that Stevick (1976)

referred to this concept of acquisition as "receptive learning" due to the fact that the learner does not feel threatened by the target language group (1988:22).

On the other side of the coin we have instrumental motivation which Krashen defines as,

... the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian, or practical reasons,....

1988:22

People who are instrumentally motivated do not interact with the target language group in the same way or with the same intentions as integratively motivated people would. Interaction does not occur for its own sake but is motivated by the learner's need to fulfill one or another practical need. As a result of this, the learner is thought to have a higher socio-affective filter which will inhibit the more natural intake believed to be experienced by integratively motivated learners. Krashen points out that although integrative motivation might enhance the acquisition process and be a better predictor of proficiency, instrumental motivation may prove to be as powerful a predictor of proficiency in some cases (1988:23).

McDonough refers to Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study of instrumental motivation in the Philippines and to Lukmani's (1972) study in Bombay which both proved to be powerful predictors of success and proficiency (1981:152). He reveals an interesting finding from Burstall's (1975) study of Primary French in Britain (1981:154). It was found that

instrumental motivation tended to become dominant after the age of eleven years since children after that age are more career-orientated. This finding could be valuable to language and education planners in South Africa when dealing with African languages. For instance, it might be more feasible for African languages to be introduced on a more qualitatively based programme in the primary schools. This would enhance the pupils' ability to acquire the language while experiencing the desired integrative motivation.

The debate concerning attitude and motivation is extremely important in the South African context. Dugmore (1989) showed how attitude and motivation amongst the majority of children in his study helped not only to entrench the low status of Xhosa, but also contributed to the failure of many pupils to reach adequate levels of communicative competence. The study also revealed very low enrolment figures (less than 10.0%) for Standard 10 pupils doing Xhosa (Dugmore 1989:19). This is a clear indication of the relatively low status of Xhosa compared to the other school subjects offered.

## 2.7 Personality factors

A number of personality factors have been subject to investigation with the aim of determining their effect on second language acquisition. It is important for teachers to be aware of these factors since some are believed to

inhibit while others appear to enhance the language learning process.

### 2.7.1 Self-esteem

Brown (1980:104), in discussing the importance of self-esteem in second language acquisition, points out how Heyde (1979) found high self-esteem to result in better performance by foreign language students. He continues by showing how Brodkey and Shore (1976) as well as Gardner and Lambert all believe self-esteem to be a very important variable in the second language acquisition equation. As Stern says:

Consequently, the mature and mentally healthy individual who is detached, self-critical, and has a sense of humour, can cope with this demand of language learning better than a rigid or status-conscious individual who lacks self-awareness or humour and who suffers a sense of deprivation in the early stages of second language learning.

Stern 1983:382

### 2.7.2 Anxiety and inhibition

Krashen believes that there is a consistent relationship between anxiety and language proficiency in both formal and informal learning contexts (1988:29). He quotes various studies like Gardner et al. (1976) and Oller et al. (1976) to support the idea that low anxiety tends to encourage language acquisition while high anxiety tends to inhibit language acquisition. Brown discusses the concept of inhibition and the study undertaken by Giuora et al. (1972a)

in which alcohol was used to reduce the inhibition in language learners (1980:105). Giuora concluded that a direct relationship existed between inhibition and the pronunciation of the second language. Subjects who were alcohol induced produced more authentic pronunciation. Brown correctly adds that although contrary arguments exist, Giuora's study nevertheless prompted foreign language methodologists to try and reduce inhibiting aspects in the classroom (1980:106). He also refers to the "language ego" which was coined by Giuora et al. (1972a), by indicating that inhibition may be cultivated by the learner making mistakes which adversely threaten the learner's ego. Once again the importance of creating a learning environment which does not threaten the ego of the learner, is emphasised.

### 2.7.3 Extroversion and introversion

Krashen (1988:31), in discussing introversion and extroversion in second language acquisition, reveals that while a number of studies have shown extroverted students to achieve better than those who are introvertly orientated, Naiman et al. (1978) found no correlation between proficiency and these two variables. Brown (1980:11), however, says that more importantly, there is the need for language teachers themselves to test and incorporate the relative merits of both of these variables in their teaching methods.



#### 2.7.4 Empathy

Stern defines empathy as,

... the ability of the second language learner to identify with the communicative behaviour of users of the target language.... Empathy as a personality variable is allied to the integrative orientation and, negatively to the concept of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism.

Stern 1983:381

Krashen points out that various studies have been conducted in order to ascertain whether empathy can be positively related to better pronunciation in the second language (1988:32). These studies have yielded both confirming and contradictory results. Despite this Schumann (1975), as quoted by Krashen, says that empathy is,

an essential factor in the overall ability to acquire a second language....

Krashen 1988:23

The reasoning behind this, according to Krashen (1981:23), is that Schumann believes empathic people to have lower inhibitions, greater ego flexibility and that they are less anxious. As discussed earlier, these qualities would promote integrative motivation where contact between the target language group and the language learner will provide linguistic input for language acquisition to occur. Stern explains the corollary to this approach by showing how Gardner and Lambert, through their attitudinal studies, found that people who were by nature authoritarian, ethnocentric, Machiavellian or prejudiced, showed a negative

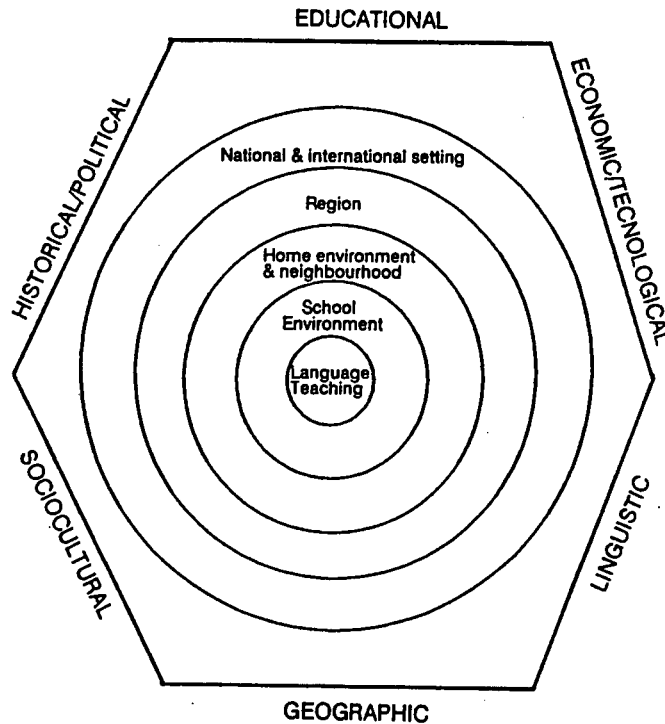
relation to integrative motivation (1983:379). These attitudes would therefore not promote comprehensible input or acquisition.

## 2.8 Social and environmental factors

Social and environmental factors are extremely important variables when analysing the context in which language is being learnt. These factors may have a strong influence on the motivation of learners. Environmental factors, as have been outlined previously, can either enhance or inhibit proficiency in the target language. Stern (1983:269-285) provides a coherent analysis of these variables with the aid of a model (see fig. 2.8) which has been adapted from models by both Spolsky et al. (1974) and Mackey (1970). Stern notes that when analysing the model below, it should be borne in mind that the applicability or effect of certain factors on a particular language situation might differ or be less self-evident in other language contexts (1983:275). For this reason, a brief look will be taken at various factors in the diagram which are relevant to the teaching of Xhosa and more generally, to the teaching of African languages in South Africa.

**FIGURE 2.8**

An inventory of contextual factors in language teaching



In Stern 1983:274

### 2.8.1 Linguistic factors

The learning of an African language in South Africa takes place in a multi-lingual context where only English and Afrikaans enjoy official language status. Stern believes that a linguistically homogeneous country will result in common language learning problems amongst students. The corollary of Stern's view is that problems experienced in a multi-lingual country like South Africa, will be more varied (1983:276). Following from Stern's argument, it can be

surmised that general acceptance by the minority of the official bilingual policy in South Africa, could lead to resistance to learning another language, specifically an African language. In the South African context it can be seen that non-mother tongue speakers of African languages and the South African government have never prioritised or promoted African languages. The above discussion is clearly evident in Dugmore (1989) where the general status of Xhosa was shown to be very low while numerous obstacles were being experienced by both teachers and pupils of Xhosa in the Western Cape schools.

Apartheid education has diminished the possibilities and potential benefits of children learning another language in a multi-lingual environment. This, as Stern points out (1983:276), creates both linguistic and cultural distances in the language learning situation which, in turn, present the possibility of certain learning problems being encountered. The lack of contact between pupils learning an African language and the target language speakers themselves, is a typical problem in South African schools (see Chap. 3). Stern adds that linguistic similarity may possibly affect language learning although the contrary has also been proved. In South Africa there is a marked linguistic difference between the official languages and the African languages of the country. It follows that this situation would further add to the aforementioned impediments to the learning of an African language in South African schools.

### 2.8.2 Social and cultural factors

Concerning social and cultural factors, Stern (1983:277) correctly predicts that socioeconomic and sociocultural differences create particular attitudes which result in the perceived status of different languages. The importance of this lies in the fact that a pupil's motivation to learn another language, whether positive or negative, is often the product of the society in which they find themselves (Stern 1983:277). In South Africa for example, people learning Xhosa as a second language generally come from a privileged minority which holds both economic and political power. The low number of pupils doing Xhosa in the Cape Province (see par. 3.2) is a very good indication of the way in which pupil motivation has been affected by the nature of South African society.

### 2.8.3 Historical and political factors

As has been outlined in Chapter One, historical and political events have shaped the current linguistic situation in South Africa. Successive political powers have bolstered the status of English and Afrikaans in South African education, administration and commerce. This has resulted in the status of African languages being undermined. Stern is of the opinion that languages which have been undermined, often help to expose the irrational basis used by language planners to perpetuate the interests of those in power (1983:278). He advocates that language

planners should rather look toward providing a language policy which is based on "long term national and international considerations." In South Africa's case this might include the recognition of African languages as being integral to the future of the country.

#### 2.8.4 Geographical factors

The question of Geography in the African language learning situation is particularly relevant. The Government policy of creating various "homelands" for people speaking different languages, together with the implementation of the Group Areas Act, has created a situation whereby pupils learning African languages find the target language almost completely divorced from their own social milieu. It is common knowledge that meaningful contact with the target language group provides intake which enhances the acquisition of the target language. Geographical separateness caused by the apartheid policy in South Africa can explain, in part, the low level of proficiency in Xhosa amongst pupils in the present study (see Chapter Three).

#### 2.8.5 Material factors

A spin-off from the language policy adopted by the government in South Africa is that because African languages are not being promoted to the extent that the official languages are, there is little economic support for the development of African language learning. Indicative of this

is the fact that teachers of Xhosa in the Western Cape generally believe that they have been inadequately trained and are experiencing drastic shortages of material support for teaching (see Dugmore 1989 and Chap. 3). It is clear therefore, that government plays an important part in determining the status of any language.

#### 2.8.6 Educational factors

The final variable in fig. 2.8 deals with the educational context in which language learning takes place. As mentioned earlier, African languages are not compulsory subject options in CED secondary schools. This is indicative of the lack of promotion of African languages. Only recently has it been claimed that African languages are now compulsory in all primary schools. Although this is a step forward, the reality is disturbing. Firstly, there is a drastic shortage of qualified teachers to teach African languages as second languages. Many teachers in the primary schools have had no formal instruction in the African language they are expected to teach. Secondly, as pointed out by Stern (1983:280), it is important to determine the amount of time devoted to various subjects. The primary schools only devote one period a week to the teaching of African languages. Finally, the fact that primary schools are not required to examine African languages underscores the insignificant moves towards developing and upgrading the quality and status of these languages in the education system.

### 2.8.7 Formal and informal environments

Krashen raises an additional factor which is thought to be of significance to the language acquisition/learning experience. This debate centres around the relative importance of formal and informal environments in the language learning process. He refers to Upsher (1968) and Mason (1971) who believe there to be little significance in increased formal or classroom teaching time (1988:41). On the other hand, Krashen advocates that exposure to the target language in the informal environment (i.e. outside the classroom) will not be significant unless it is of the "intake type" (1983:47). He also believes that both formal and informal environments can make different but significant contributions to second language competence. It is important to analyse the existence and effectiveness of formal and informal environments in Xhosa language learning in schools. Concerning informal environments, it is already clear that school pupils do not experience the "intake type" informal environment which will enhance the acquisition of Xhosa. The formal environment as surveyed in the present study of Cape schools, indicates the inadequacy of the Xhosa classroom in providing the necessary input for successful language learning or acquisition.

The importance of Stern's model (fig. 2.8) is self-evident.

He says,

... it is evident that sociolinguistics and other social sciences have a major role to play in second language pedagogy, profoundly influencing the



substantive quality of language programmes and the provision of languages in a speech community.

Stern 1983:284

Furthermore, the model provides a solid basis from which to assess current language situations as well as plan for future language developments. The brief analysis of the Xhosa situation in South African schools through this model helps to contextualise its current status as well as highlight the areas of concern.

## 2.9 Conclusion

Chapter Two covers a broad range of issues concerning second language acquisition. With the emphasis on communicative competence in second language learning today, it is essential that prospective teachers are conversant with contemporary research and its possible implications for language teaching. Understanding the neurological factors affecting language acquisition will provide teachers with knowledge which could potentially affect the formulation of approaches to language teaching. Similarly, a knowledge of the learning/acquisition distinction, attitude, motivation, personality factors and social and environmental factors (as portrayed in fig. 2.8), will provide teachers with an holistic understanding of the factors involved in language acquisition. Through this knowledge, the teacher's approach to language teaching is bound to become more scientific and successful.

This chapter will form the basis from which statistical data on Cape schools offering Xhosa will be assessed and evaluated. The theory will hopefully illuminate any shortcomings and provide a grounding for overcoming these, while, at the same time, being sensitive to existing problems and contradictions in the Cape schools and South Africa as a whole.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Xhosa in Cape Education Department Schools

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three is an empirical study of the prevailing conditions in Cape Education Department (CED) schools with regard to the teaching of Xhosa. Of specific importance to the analysis are the status of Xhosa in schools and the level of communicative competence of pupils doing Xhosa.

FIGURE 3.1

**LOCATIONS OF CED SCHOOLS OFFERING STD. 10 XHOSA**

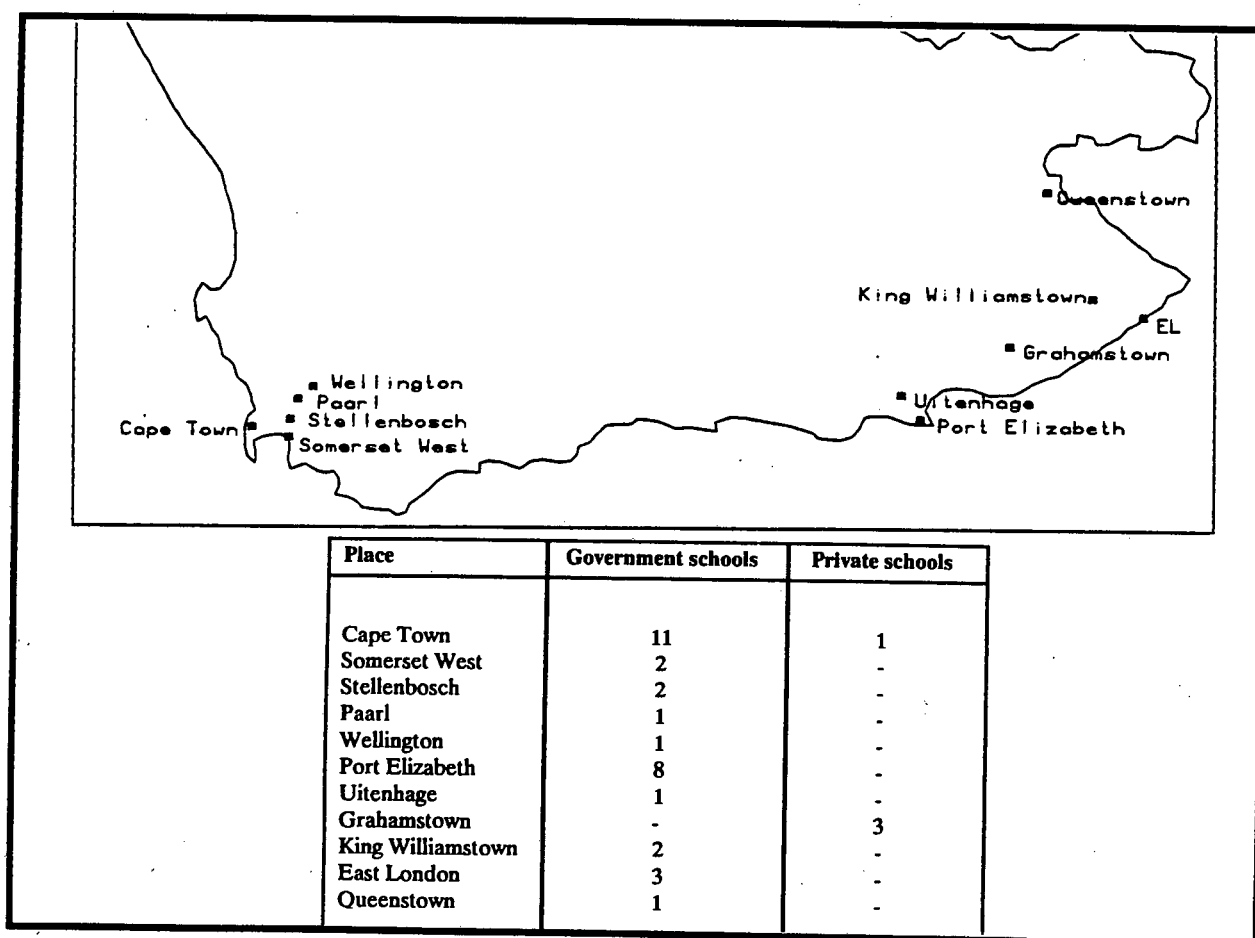


Fig. 3.1 is a representation of the geographical distribution of all schools in the Cape Province under the jurisdiction of the CED that offer Xhosa at Standard 10 level in 1991. The schools are located in eleven cities and towns ranging from Cape Town in the south-west to East London in the east and Queenstown in the north-east. They are located in three regions: the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape and the Border region.

Questionnaires were sent to all 36 schools offering Xhosa at Standard 10 level.<sup>7</sup> Of these schools, 32 were government schools and 4 were private. There was an 80% response to the questionnaires. The high response was an indication of the importance which teachers attached to the survey. The 36 schools offering Xhosa constitute 13.5% of the 267 schools under the jurisdiction of the CED.

The statistical analysis will concentrate on the 26 government schools that responded to the questionnaires. Of the 169 pupils in the survey, 31.4% were Afrikaans speaking and 64.0% were English speaking. The remainder spoke either both Afrikaans and English at home or they spoke Xhosa. The majority of pupils represented in the survey could be classed as coming from white, middle-class backgrounds. Reference will be made to the three private schools that responded although this sample was too small to warrant accurate statistical analysis. The questionnaires sent to

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix A

each school consisted of a questionnaire for the Xhosa teacher, questionnaires for the Standard 10 Xhosa pupils and questionnaires for the parents of these pupils.

The objective of the analysis was to make a realistic and representative assessment of the current status of Xhosa in CED schools and to determine the levels of communicative competence amongst the pupils. Attitude, motivation and problems experienced in the teaching and learning of Xhosa were also dealt with.

A number of statistical tests were employed in the analysis. Chi-Squared tests have been used to compare frequencies between categorical variables. The Yates correction for continuity has been used in cases where the sample was too small. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-tests have been used with continuous variables.<sup>8</sup> The tests were carried out on pupils', parents' and teachers' questionnaires. The parents' questionnaires yielded a number of significant statistics. However, due to the smaller size of this sample, many of the statistics produced a bias warning. For this reason, all potentially biased statistics have been omitted. The statistical packages used in the analysis are commercially known as STATGRAPHICS and BMDP.

The presentation of the statistics has been divided into four areas. The first area deals with general interesting information concerning Xhosa in CED schools. The next three

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B

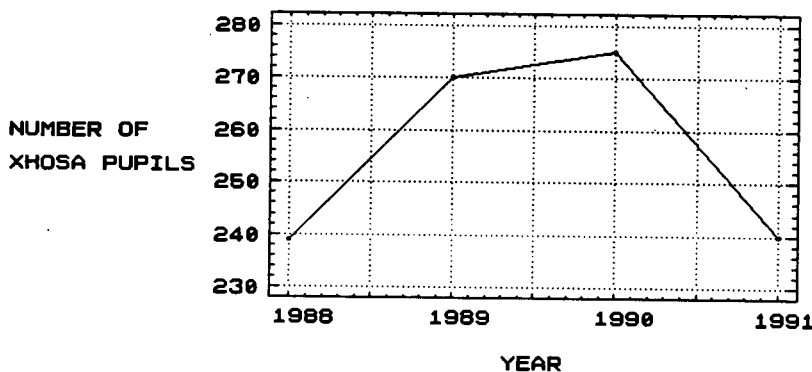
areas are presented in the following manner. Firstly, each area's statistical findings will be presented in the form of graphs with accompanying explanations of their statistical significance.<sup>9</sup> After this the statistical findings will be discussed for each area. This will allow the reader greater accessibility to particular areas of interest.

### 3.2 An overview of Xhosa in CED schools

Fig. 3.2.a indicates the growth rate in Standard 10 Xhosa pupils since 1988. The figure for 1991 has been determined by the responses of teachers from all 36 schools writing the Cape Senior Certificate examination. The figures for 1988 to 1990 were obtained from the CED.<sup>10</sup>

FIGURE 3.2.a

GROWTH RATE OF STD. 10 XHOSA PUPILS IN  
CED SCHOOLS FROM 1988 - 1991



The figures above indicate that there was an increase in the number of pupils doing Xhosa by 11.1% in 1989. The increase

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>10</sup> Letter received from the CED, 4 April 1991

in 1990, however, was a mere 1.8%. The preliminary number for 1991 shows a sharp decline of 12.7%. Therefore, the real growth in the number of Standard 10 Xhosa pupils over the past four years has been less than 0.5%. This illustrates that Xhosa has not yet been accepted as a viable alternative to other school subjects offered. Numerous explanations may be advanced for this.

Apart from the historical reasons for the low status of Xhosa (see Chap. 1), the contemporary situation reveals additional reasons which perpetuate the problems in schools. Xhosa in the primary schools is not an examinable subject despite being compulsory in the senior primary standards. Only one hour per week is allocated to the teaching of Xhosa. The effect of implementing the present policy of compulsory Xhosa in senior primary schools can arguably be a detrimental one (see pars. 3.3 and 3.3.1). The decision to make Xhosa compulsory in primary schools appears to have been made without a realistic assessment of the practicalities involved. Although second language theory advocates the early introduction of the second language, the primary schools fall short of a number of additional requirements. For example, successful second language teaching and learning rest on the assumption that teachers are suitably trained in second language teaching and that they will administer quality tuition in a conducive second language environment. In the primary school situation teachers on the whole are not conversant with the communicative approach to Xhosa language teaching. The fact

that schools are segregated preclude natural contact with the target language group. Teaching efforts are further impeded by the single hour allocated to Xhosa every week and the fact that many of the teachers, apart from receiving a crash course in Xhosa, are not familiar with the language. Second language learning is greatly enhanced when children have significant exposure to the target language. The status of Xhosa is particularly vulnerable at the early stages of learning where young children form attitudes and develop motivations for or against the language. The quotations below portray a number of teachers' attitudes in relation to the teaching of Xhosa in primary schools:

Poor teaching of the language in primary schools discourages the language.

Die vak word in die laerskool "doodgemaak".

[The language is "killed" in the primary school.]

Children hate it (Xhosa) when they finish primary school.

It is very important that these issues affecting the status of Xhosa, as well as the attitudes of pupils towards the language, are urgently addressed.

Only 13.5% of the secondary schools under the CED offer Xhosa as a Standard 10 subject. It is not a compulsory subject, nor is it a compulsory subject option in secondary schools. The procedure for a school to introduce Xhosa is elaborate. The initiative must come from the school as the



Education Department does not encourage or force schools to offer Xhosa. According to Mr De Jager,<sup>11</sup> a retired circuit inspector, the school has to convince the Education Department of the following before approval is given:

- a). that there is a demand for Xhosa
- b). that the teacher/pupil ratio justifies an extra teacher
- c). that there is classroom space available
- d). that there is a reasonable chance of obtaining a teacher

Mr De Jager explains the problems caused by the above requirements. He claims that schools are loathe to introduce Xhosa because of the scarcity of Xhosa teachers and the concomitant administrative problems caused should they resign. He believes that this is a major deterrent for schools wanting to introduce Xhosa.

Dwindling numbers of pupils taking Xhosa have forced a number of schools to phase it out. The teachers questionnaires revealed that 10 schools (approximately 21.0%) have phased or are engaged in phasing out the subject. This illustrates once again the declining status of Xhosa in CED schools.

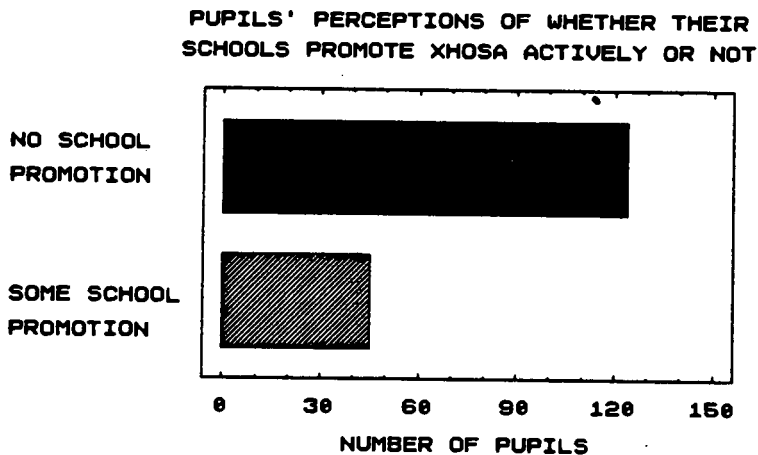
Since the introduction of Xhosa into a school does not depend on the CED, it follows that the welfare and promotion of the subject is the schools' responsibility. Fig. 3.2.b indicates pupils' responses concerning the degree of their

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<sup>11</sup> Letter received from Mr De Jager by Mr Zotwana,  
13 January 1987

school's promotion of the language. The bar chart illustrates that a very small number of pupils (26.5%) consider their school to promote Xhosa while a large majority of pupils (73.5%) expressed the opinion that their school was not actively encouraging Xhosa. Consistent with this view is the fact that only two of the twenty six schools surveyed have established a Xhosa society. It should be noted that the society at one of these schools is not operating. A further indication of the lack of school involvement in Xhosa issues is that only 9.0% of the pupils claimed their schools to have organised contact for them with mother tongue speakers.

FIGURE 3.2.b



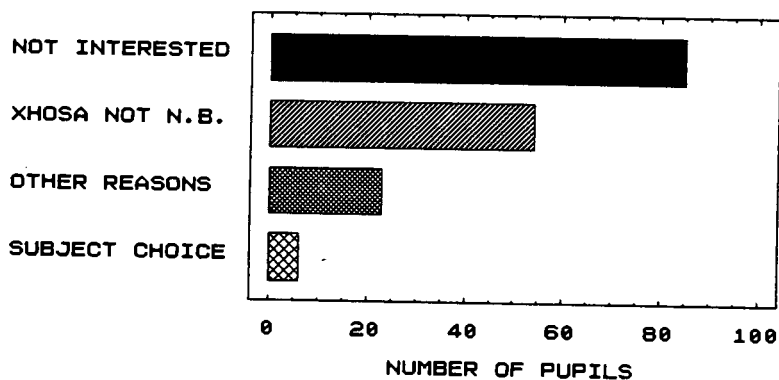
N = 169

An additional obstacle to the promotion of the status of Xhosa in schools is that it has to compete with the official languages (English and Afrikaans) which are already compulsory. Furthermore, it has to compete with various foreign languages and other school subjects. The low status accorded to Xhosa could explain pupils preferring to take

other subjects. Fig. 3.2.c below shows the perceived reasons for not doing Xhosa amongst the peers of the Xhosa pupils. The vast majority of pupils not doing Xhosa have opted for other subjects simply because they are either not interested or they believe that other subjects are more important than Xhosa.

FIGURE 3.2.c

PERCEIVED REASONS OF XHOSA PUPILS WHY  
THEIR PEERS DON'T STUDY XHOSA



N = 168

The statistics above illustrate numerous problems facing pupils studying Xhosa in CED schools. The following responses by teachers also clarify the problems:

The restricted subject choice in Standard 6 and 7.

Its (Xhosa's) low status/use for university entrance and for the business/economic world.

The interest is there but many pupils have timetable clashes and also feel they can get higher marks in other subjects like Accountancy.

Die vak word geidentifiseer as 'n nie-prestasievak.

[The subject is identified as a non-achievement subject.]

The Xhosa classroom environment has very little in common with the ideal second language learning environment. Pupils are severely disadvantaged since their learning environment, which is almost exclusively a formal one, does not lend itself to the natural acquisition as espoused in the theory of second language learning (see fig. 2.5.a). Informal or target language environments on the other hand are thought to enhance the acquisition process greatly. Even within the formal classroom, pupils are exclusively taught by non-mother tongue teachers. Both the formal and informal environments of Xhosa pupils do not therefore provide meaningful contact with the target language group. Although historical factors have enforced segregation and minimal contact between white pupils and mother tongue speakers of Xhosa, it would appear that schools offering Xhosa have made little attempt to address this issue. A common response amongst teachers in relation to the question of contact with mother tongue speakers is adequately summed up by the following quotation:

Time, time, time! Textbooks are not the beginning or the end. I would love to take pupils out especially say for six months into the Transkei. Pupils must talk. Exams to work towards prevent the amount of oral work I would love to do.

A number of negative aspects may result from the inadequacies experienced in the Xhosa classrooms. Firstly, the lack of meaningful contact with Xhosa speakers at primary and secondary school level can be detrimental to the development of pupils' accents in the target language (see par. 2.3.2). Secondly, the vacuum in which pupils learn

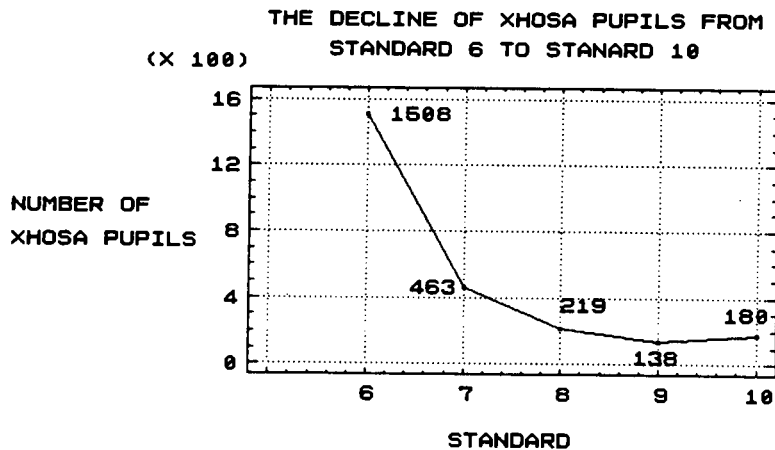
Xhosa may also negatively affect their attitudes and motivation towards the target language and its speakers. Lastly, insufficient contact with mother tongue speakers can potentially cause anxiety and inhibitions, thus affecting the personalities of pupils (see par. 2.7.2). The words of one of the Xhosa teachers highlight the seriousness of the situation:

Ongemotiveerdheid van leerlinge met inagneming van die groot kapasiteit van die leerinhoud. Werklike kontaksituasies is uiters beperk ... dit lei tot skaamheid en die gebrek aan selfvertroue by die leerlinge.

[Lack of motivation of pupils due to the large volume of learning content. Real contact situations are extremely limited ... this leads to shyness and the lack of self-confidence amongst pupils.]

Fig. 3.2.d provides a graphic illustration of the progressive decline in numbers of Xhosa pupils in the schools surveyed. There is a sharp decline in numbers between Standard 6 and Standard 9, after which the curve stabilises. The reason for the stabilisation is linked to the final subject choices made by pupils in their senior years at school. The sharp drop between Standards 6 and 9 can be explained to a large extent by the previous discussion as well as the findings in the rest of the chapter. It would augur well for future studies to monitor changes in the curve as this is often a good indication of prevailing attitudes towards the status and importance of the language.

FIGURE 3.2.d



With the evident lack in the promotion of Xhosa by the schools presently offering the subject, the plight of the language and its students is exacerbated when contemplating the fact that 86.5% of CED schools have not yet taken the initiative to popularise or introduce it as a subject while, at the same time, recent years have witnessed a 21.0% decline in the number of schools offering Xhosa.

### 3.3 Statistics on Xhosa proficiency

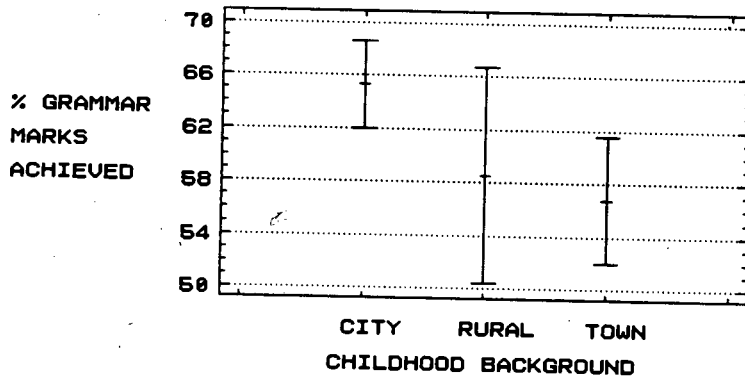
The question of communicative competence has become an integral part of the theory and practice of second language learning and teaching. The extent to which communicative competence has become a reality in CED schools needs to be assessed through a statistical analysis of grammar marks, oral marks and other variables. It should be noted that the grammar and oral marks used in this analysis are the final Standard 9 examination results of the pupils in the survey. Although it would have been more appropriate to use the final Standard 10 Cape Senior Certificate results where a

common examination is written, this was not a practical option. Instead, it was hoped that the Standard 9 marks would nevertheless provide a basis from which to assess the general trends in Xhosa classrooms of the CED. The following significant findings occurred.

Fig. 3.3.a indicates that there is a significant relationship between pupils' childhood background (city, town, rural) and the grammar marks achieved by them.

FIGURE 3.3.a

CORRELATION BETWEEN CHILDHOOD BACKGROUND  
AND PUPILS' GRAMMAR MARKS ACHIEVED

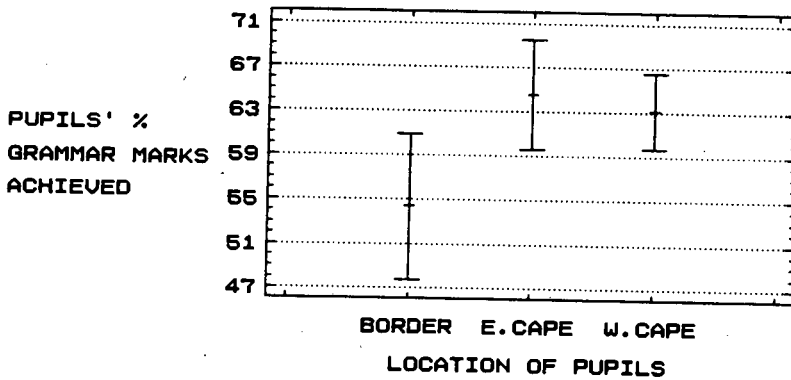


N = 157 ANOVA STATISTIC P = 0.0115

There was a significant correlation between pupils' location (Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Border) and the grammar marks achieved by these pupils (see fig. 3.3.b).

**FIGURE 3.3.b**

CORRELATION BETWEEN PUPILS' LOCATION  
AND GRAMMAR MARKS ACHIEVED

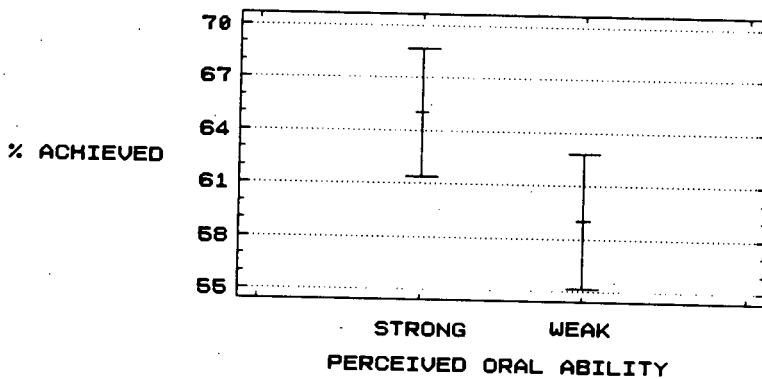


N = 157 ANOVA STATISTIC P = 0.0363

The pupils' perceived ability of communicative competence was significantly related to the grammar marks achieved by them. This is represented in fig. 3.3.c.

**FIGURE 3.3.c**

RELATION BETWEEN PUPILS' PERCEIVED ORAL  
ABILITY AND GRAMMAR MARKS ACHIEVED



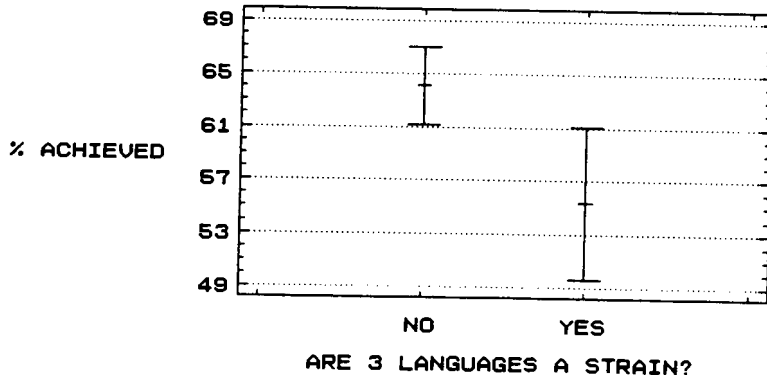
N = 157 T-TEST P = 0.0255

A significant relationship was revealed between pupils' grammar marks and whether or not pupils found learning three languages an academic "strain" (see fig 3.3.d).



**FIGURE 3.3.d**

RELATION BETWEEN GRAMMAR MARKS AND WHETHER PUPILS FIND 3 LANGUAGES A STRAIN

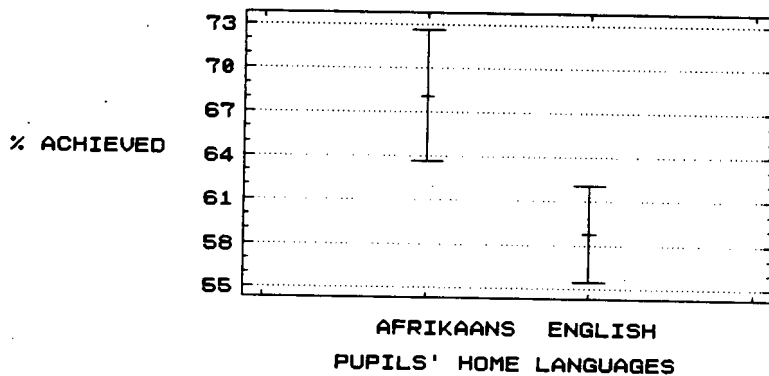


N = 157 T-TEST P = 0.0075

Fig. 3.3.e displays a significant correlation between the grammar marks obtained by pupils and pupils' home languages (English or Afrikaans).

**FIGURE 3.3.e**

CORRELATION BETWEEN GRAMMAR MARKS AND PUPILS' HOME LANGUAGES

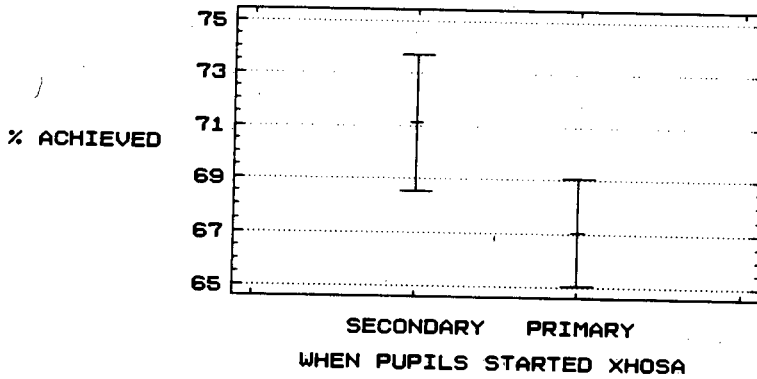


N = 151 T-TEST P = 0.0012

The relationship between oral marks achieved by pupils and whether they started studying Xhosa in primary or high school, is significant. Fig. 3.3.f illustrates this.

**FIGURE 3.3.f**

**CORRELATION BETWEEN ORAL MARKS ACHIEVED AND WHEN PUPILS STARTED STUDYING XHOSA**

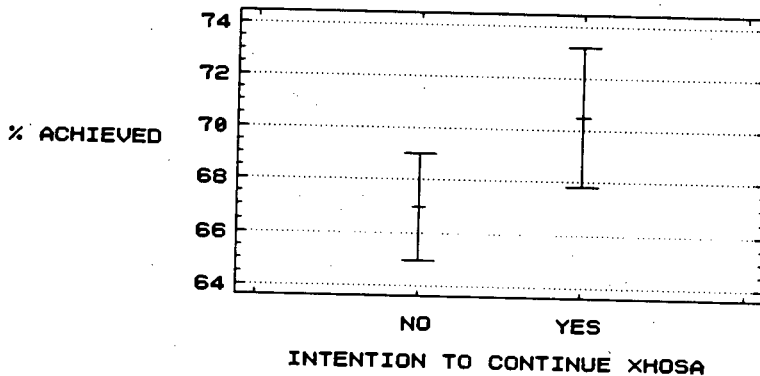


N = 167 T-TEST P = 0.0149

Fig. 3.3.g represents a significant correlation between the oral marks achieved by pupils and whether the pupils intended to continue with Xhosa after school.

**FIGURE 3.3.g**

**RELATION BETWEEN ORAL MARKS AND WHETHER PUPILS INTEND TO CONTINUE STUDYING XHOSA**

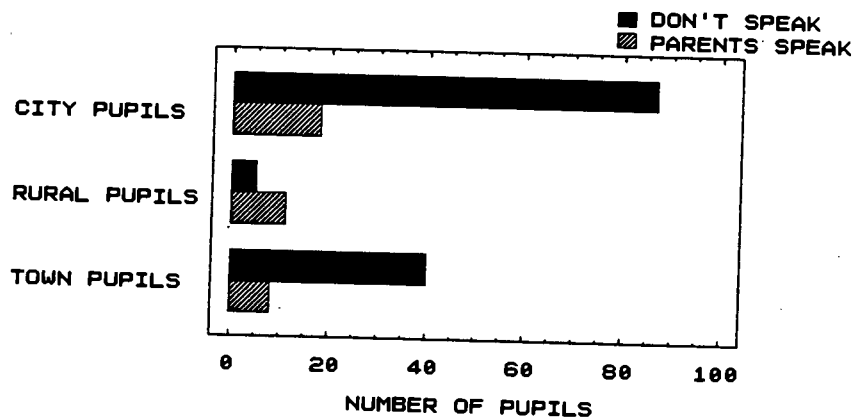


N = 166 T-TEST P = 0.0139

Fig. 3.3.h shows that pupils' oral marks were significantly related to the pupils' perceived communicative abilities.

**FIGURE 3.3.j**

CORRELATION BETWEEN PARENTS WHO SPEAK  
XHOSA AND PUPILS' CHILDHOOD BACKGROUND

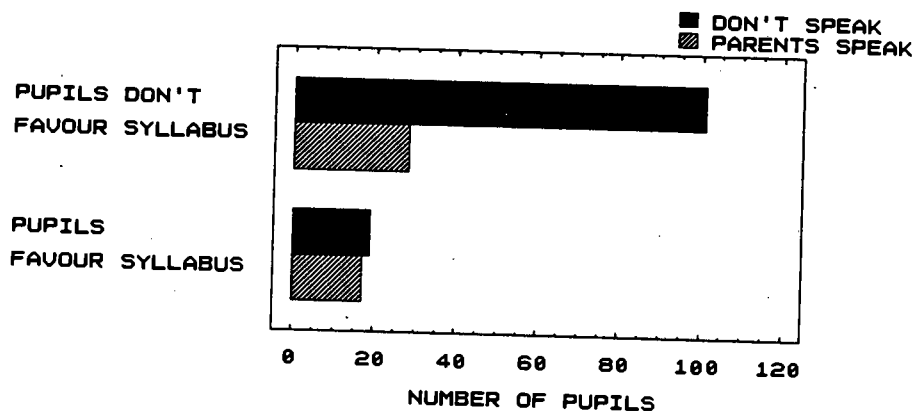


N = 169 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.00001

A further significant correlation was found when comparing pupils whose parents could speak Xhosa and whether or not pupils believed the Xhosa syllabus would make them communicatively competent. Fig. 3.3.k illustrates this.

**FIGURE 3.3.k**

RELATION BETWEEN PARENTS WHO SPEAK XHOSA  
AND PUPILS' ATTITUDES TO XHOSA SYLLABUS

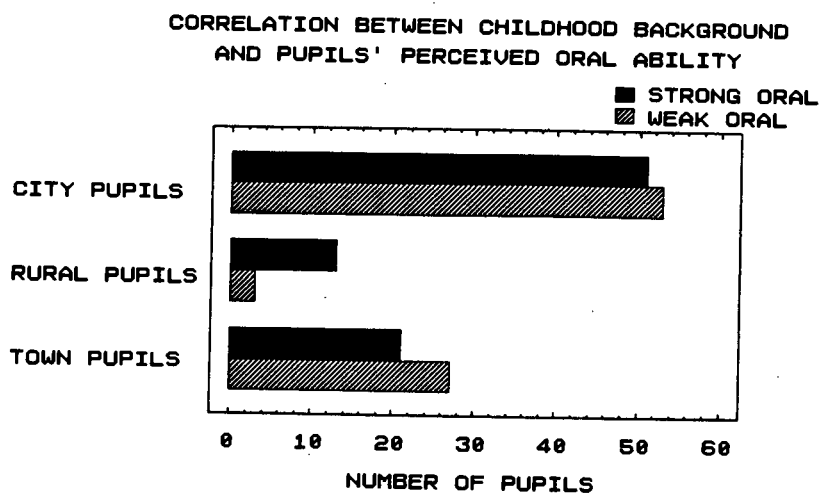


N = 165 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0046

Fig. 3.3.1 represents a significant relationship between pupils' childhood background (city, town, rural) and their

perception of their own communicative abilities in the target language (strong or weak).

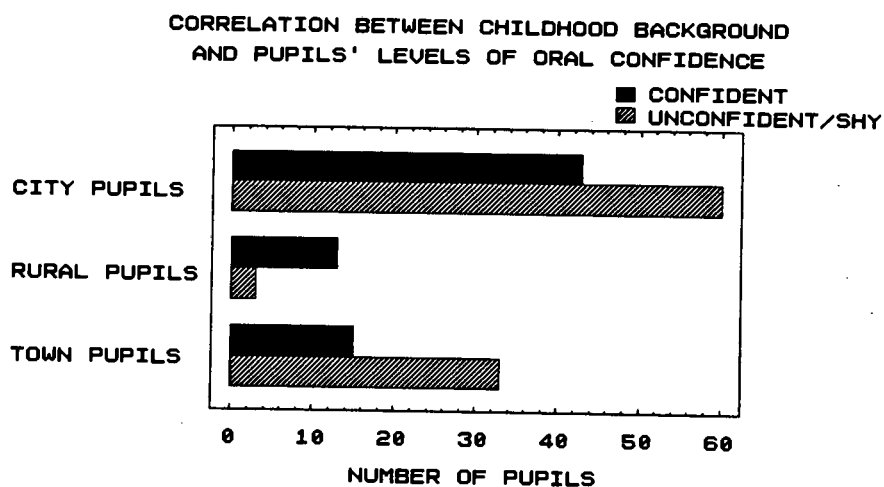
**FIGURE 3.3.1**



N = 168 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0299

A significant relationship was found between pupils' childhood background and whether they perceived themselves to be confident or unconfident when communicating in Xhosa. This is illustrated in fig. 3.3.m.

**FIGURE 3.3.m**



N = 167 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0020

### 3.3.1 Discussion

Fig. 3.3.a shows pupils from the cities to be achieving significantly higher grammar marks than pupils from the towns. A possible explanation could be that city schools have traditionally approached the teaching of Xhosa in an extremely academic way. Many of the Xhosa teachers today are products of a system which was based almost exclusively on the grammar-translation method. As a result, teachers of Xhosa have been equipped with a very technical knowledge of Xhosa grammar. Of the teachers surveyed, 61.0% believed their ability in Xhosa grammar to be "very good". On the other hand only 15.0% of the teachers believed their communicative ability in Xhosa to be "very good". Although the grammar-translation syllabus was replaced by a communicative syllabus in 1982, the legacy of the former is still well entrenched. This is illustrated by the fact that 65.0% of the teachers still contend that there is an over-emphasis of grammar in the current syllabus and examination system. This sentiment is succinctly portrayed in the following quotation by one of the teachers:

Ek kan nie luister- en praatvaardighede by die leerlinge voldoende ontwikkel nie aangesien eksaminering (puntetoekenning) groot klem lê op skryfvaardighede.

[I cannot develop the listening and speaking skills of pupils sufficiently since examining (mark allocation) places great emphasis on writing skills.]

Pupils from city backgrounds are also faced with tremendous difficulties in their efforts to become communicatively competent in Xhosa. Their learning environment has become formalised to such an extent that there is little informal learning environment to speak of. Many teachers expressed the concern about the lack of contact with mother tongue Xhosa speakers for their pupils. For pupils from the cities to achieve a reasonable level of communicative competence in Xhosa, they need to exploit the only realistic option available to them. This option is the learning of grammar in a formal classroom environment. It follows that pupils who have little contact with the target language will not experience natural acquisition. Their dealings with the language involves the conscious learning of grammar. Pupils stand less chance therefore of experiencing integrative motivation due to their limited contact with mother tongue speakers of Xhosa.

Grammar marks in the Eastern and Western Cape were found to be significantly higher than in the Border region. This is consistent with the discussion above since closer investigation revealed that the largest relative percentage of rural pupils come from the Border region. Figs. 3.3.1 and 3.3.m reveal the major differences between the achievements of pupils with city and rural backgrounds. Pupils from rural backgrounds have significantly higher perceptions of their communicative competence than pupils from city backgrounds. Greater communicative competence levels amongst "rural" pupils has resulted in lower anxiety levels than expressed

by "city" pupils (see fig. 3.3.m). As these pupils perceive their level of competence in the target language to be acceptable, it is reasonable to postulate that their motivation to learn grammar, which is often far removed from colloquial speech, is weakened. One of the teachers expresses the difficulty encountered,

... in the teaching of concord to rural background pupils who have acquired bad habits.

In the case of "city" pupils who have little or no prior communicative skills in the target language, the motivation to gain some (grammatical) knowledge in Xhosa is great. The survey revealed that 81.0% of all pupils studying Xhosa under the CED have either one or fewer opportunities a week to communicate with a mother tongue Xhosa speaker. This illustrates that the formal classroom environment constitutes the major part of the learning process for pupils in CED schools.

Statistics show that "rural" pupils are more competent and confident when speaking Xhosa. As one teacher put it:

Pupils from farms ... think they know it all.

The relative numbers of "rural" pupils' parents who can speak Xhosa is significantly greater than "city" or "town" pupils' parents. This is represented in fig. 3.3.j. Second language learning theory supports the idea that contact with the target language in the home environment can enhance the acquisition of language. The relative importance of the

"learning/acquisition" distinction is discussed in par. 2.5 and represented in fig. 2.5.a. Although there is a place for "learning" in the second language programme (see fig. 2.5.b), "acquisition" is considered a very desirable component since it entails the development of communicative skills of the learner.

Access to the target language in the home environment is considered to be an important contextual factor in language teaching (see fig. 2.8). The benefits of having access to the target language in the home environment are indicated in fig. 3.3.k. Of the pupils whose parents are competent in Xhosa, 47.2% believe that the school syllabus will help them to become fluent in Xhosa. Only 21.7% of the pupils without the parental benefit of competence in Xhosa believed that the syllabus would ensure fluency. Despite the apparent benefits for pupils whose parents speak Xhosa, it is important to note that 72.0% of all pupils in the survey had little faith in the Xhosa syllabus ensuring fluency. Of the teachers surveyed, 70.0% expressed similar sentiments.

Figs. 3.3.c and 3.3.h indicate significant relationships between pupils achieving high or low grammar and oral marks respectively, and their perception of their own communicative abilities. Pupils scoring higher grammar and oral marks had higher perceptions of their communicative competence and vice versa. Second language learning theory advocates that achievement in the target language has a positive effect on attitudes, motivation and personal



perceptions. Improved attitudes may give rise to an "integrative" motivation. The discussion in Chapter Two (par. 2.6.2) mentions how integrative motivation is thought to encourage contact with the target language group and provide the learner with the opportunity of "receptive learning". This, in turn, reduces the learner's "affective filter" in Krashen's terms and is translated into higher confidence levels and lower anxiety levels. Hence the greater confidence levels prevalent amongst pupils with higher marks.

A significant relationship between pupils with high or low grammar marks and whether or not they perceived three languages to be an academic "strain", is represented by fig. 3.3.d. This issue was raised by a number of teachers who believed that various factors, including subject choice restrictions, have led to a number of pupils with lower academic abilities taking Xhosa. The frustration experienced is summed up by a teacher who has great difficulty in,

Trying to get below average pupils to learn Xhosa which is not an easy language to understand.

Chapter Two (par. 2.6.1) discusses various psychological aspects of language learning. Achievement is believed to be an important motivating factor in the second language learning equation. Pupils with lower achievements in Xhosa grammar found three languages an academic "strain". This can be explained by McDonough's attribution theory which states that the motivation of individuals is linked to their

achievement needs and various attribution factors such as their own and others' ability, effort, intention, luck and so on. Other factors like parents, teachers and school environment provide additional variables which affect pupils' achievement and motivation.

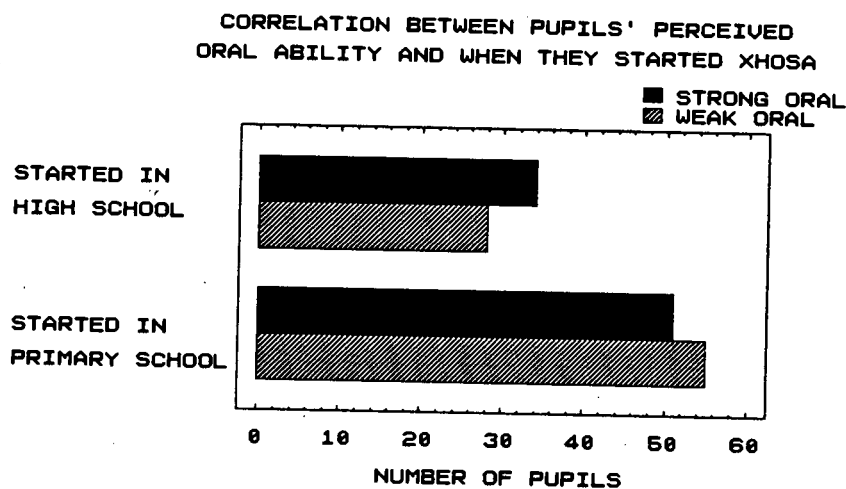
An interesting finding was that Afrikaans pupils recorded significantly higher grammar marks than English pupils (see fig. 3.3.e). Although there was no significant difference between the oral marks of English and Afrikaans pupils, fig. 3.3.1 indicates that Afrikaans pupils are more confident when communicating in Xhosa. A possible explanation for higher grammar marks amongst Afrikaans pupils is the idea that Afrikaans schools are traditionally known for their conservative approach to the teaching of syllabus requirements. Pupils are often encouraged to learn parrot fashion the desired answers for examination purposes. Similar approaches to the supervision of homework in Afrikaans households are also not uncommon. The more liberal approach adopted by English schools attempts to explore beyond the basic requirements of the syllabus. This might be one of the factors responsible for Afrikaans pupils scoring higher marks in grammar during exams. It should be noted that it would be more feasible to compare the marks attained by Standard 10 pupils in their final examination since the marking system is more controlled. However, this survey has revealed that a relationship exists between the higher achievement levels amongst Afrikaans pupils and their concomitant higher levels of communicative confidence. It

would be interesting to see whether similar results are obtained in future research. Second language learning theory recognises that a relationship exists between achievement in the target language, improvement of attitude and motivation and a lowering of anxiety levels. In comparison to English pupils, there is a greater relative percentage of Afrikaans pupils who intend continuing with Xhosa after secondary school. This is an indication that achievement is an important motivating factor in second language acquisition.

Fig. 3.3.f is a very significant finding. It indicates that higher oral marks are linked significantly to pupils who started learning Xhosa in secondary school as opposed to those who started in primary school. Second language theory advocates the benefits of the early introduction of a second language. The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and subsequent theories on second language acquisition all acknowledge that age is an important variable in the learning process. Although there is no consensus on what age is critical to successful language learning, there is mounting evidence to support the concept of a progressive diminishment with age, of various biological language functions (see par. 2.3.1). However, higher oral marks in pupils who started learning Xhosa in high school contradicts the CPH theory which advocates that second language is most successfully acquired prior to, or, around puberty. No significant relationship exists between the grammar marks of those pupils who started Xhosa in primary school and those who started in high school. This is contrary to the strict

lateralisation of the language function after puberty as espoused by the CPH (see fig. 2.4.1). A large discrepancy between the grammar marks of primary and high school starters was not anticipated due to the low quality teaching in primary schools coupled with only one hour of Xhosa per week. Fig. 3.3.1.a indicates that pupils who started Xhosa in primary school don't have significantly better perceptions of their communicative abilities than their peers who started Xhosa at senior school. This highlights a broader and more serious problem. Both senior and primary school syllabi are not equipped with the necessary ingredients and mechanisms to ensure communicative competence for pupils doing Xhosa.

FIGURE 3.3.1.a



N = 168

Fig. 3.3.g shows a strong correlation between pupils who achieve high oral marks and those pupils who intend continuing with Xhosa after school. This could be a further motivation for pupils to pursue their studies in the target

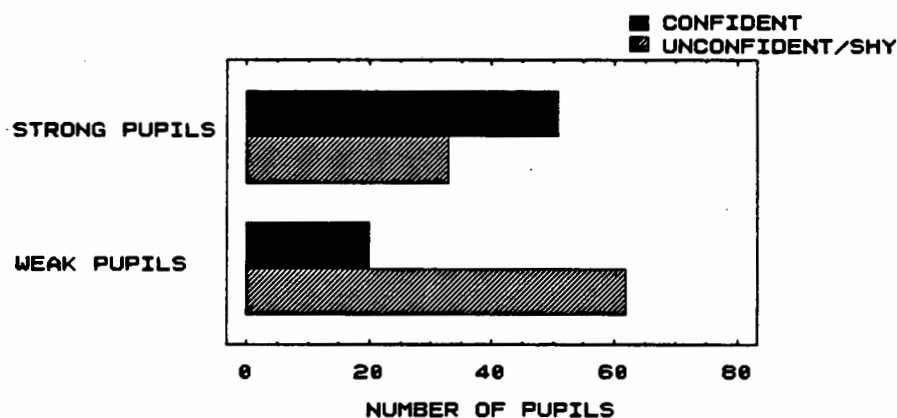
language. Krashen explains that pupils who are integratively motivated tend to get higher marks (1989:26-27). He shows how integrative motivation is thought to provide students with the motivation to pursue their second language studies. Krashen continues to explain how integrative motivation has been shown to affect the classroom behaviour of students. This behaviour includes students volunteering more correct answers with greater regularity in the classroom situation. Fig. 3.3.1.b shows how lower anxiety and greater confidence were found to be related to higher levels of communicative proficiency. Krashen claims that,

There appears to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language proficiency in all situations, formal and informal.

Krashen 1989:29

**FIGURE 3.3.1.b**

**CORRELATION BETWEEN PUPILS' PERCEIVED  
ORAL ABILITY AND PERCEIVED CONFIDENCE**



**N = 166    CHI-SQUARE   P = > 0.0004**

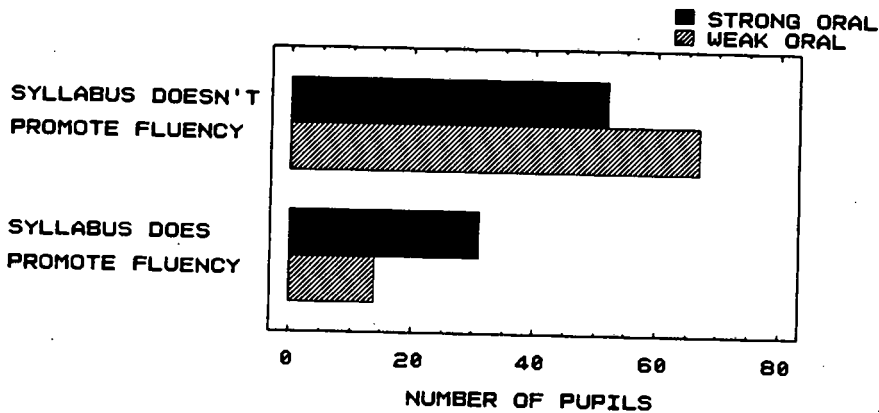
3.4 Statistics on the teaching and learning of Xhosa

Numerous interesting findings were related to the teaching and learning of Xhosa. These findings, which were taken from the responses of Xhosa teachers and their pupils, are presented below.

A significant relationship was found between pupils' perceived communicative abilities (strong and weak) and their perceptions of whether or not the Xhosa syllabus would make them fluent. Fig. 3.4.a illustrates this.

FIGURE 3.4.a

CORRELATION BETWEEN PUPILS' PERCEIVED ORAL ABILITY AND ATTITUDE TO SYLLABUS

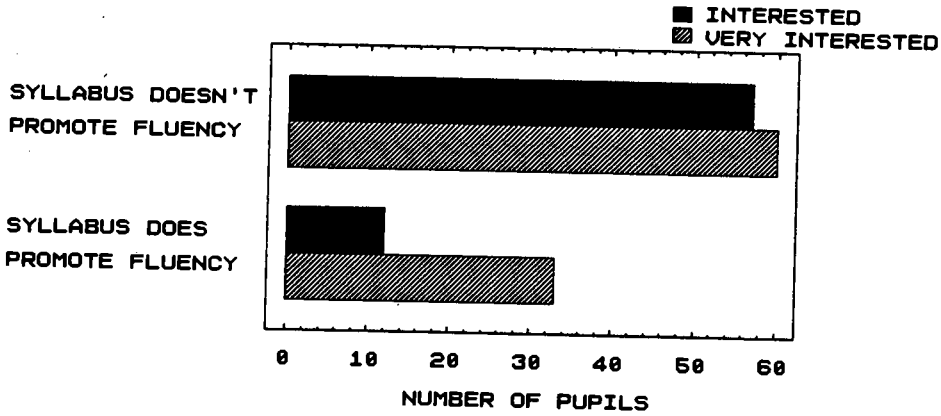


N = 164 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0068

Fig. 3.4.b indicates a significant correlation between the pupils' perceived level of teacher interest (very interested and interested) and pupil perceptions of whether or not the Xhosa syllabus would make them fluent.

**FIGURE 3.4.b**

RELATION BETWEEN TEACHER INTEREST AND PUPILS' ATTITUDES TO THE XHOSA SYLLABUS

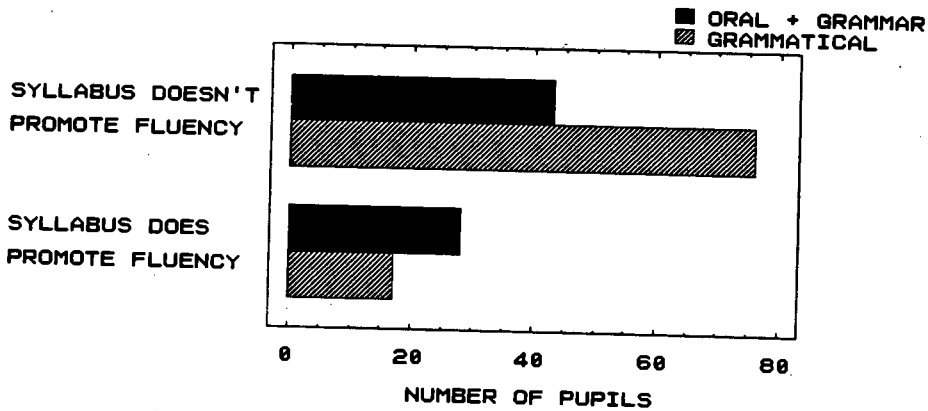


N = 162 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.018

A very significant correlation was found between pupils' perceptions of whether or not the syllabus was capable of ensuring communicative competence and the nature of their Xhosa classes (grammatical or equally mixed). This is illustrated by fig. 3.4.c.

**FIGURE 3.4.c**

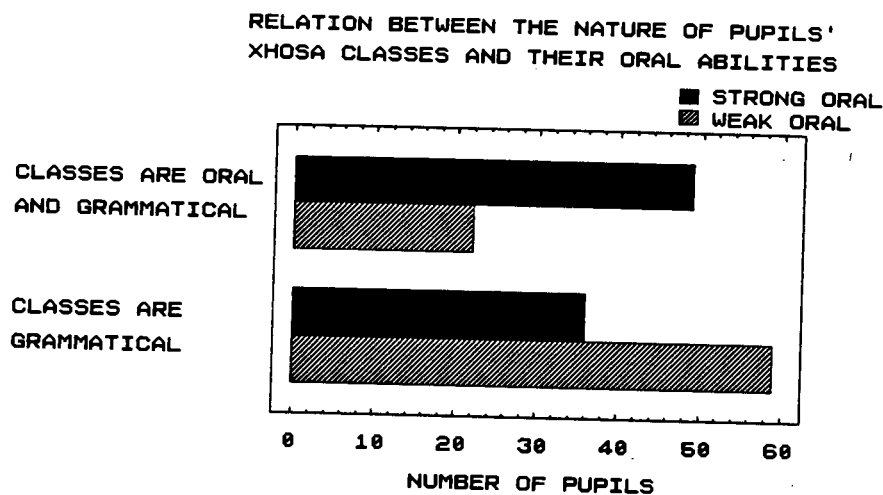
PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF XHOSA SYLLABUS AND THE NATURE OF THEIR XHOSA CLASSES



N = 164 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0046

Fig. 3.4.d below indicates a strong relationship between the nature of pupils' Xhosa classes (grammatical or equally mixed) and pupils' perceptions of their communicative abilities (strong and weak).

**FIGURE 3.4.d**



N = 166      CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0001

### 3.4.1 Discussion

The above findings involving variables such as teacher interest, pupil ability, teaching methods and perceptions of the Xhosa syllabus, are very interrelated. From fig. 3.4.a it can be deduced that pupils who communicate better in Xhosa believe that the syllabus will make them fluent. A grammatical or balanced approach (oral and grammatical) to the teaching of Xhosa is significantly related to pupils' perceptions of their communicative abilities. Fig. 3.4.d indicates that pupils exposed to grammatically dominated classes have lower perceptions of their communicative competence. One of the teachers in the survey explained that



the syllabus is too prescriptive while the examination system requires questions to be answered with specific grammatical constructions. The teacher believes that the prime objective of the syllabus should rather be one of communication. She adds that prescriptiveness implies that there is only one correct way to communicate or answer examination questions. This is a dangerous assumption since there are numerous ways in which the same idea can be articulated. For this reason, restrictions placed on pupils by a syllabus and examination system which only emphasises grammatical and linguistic processing, is believed to be counter productive to the communicative development of pupils. This sentiment is backed by Krashen's "Monitor Theory" of second language acquisition. In this case, particular mention should be made of the "monitor overuser". Krashen explains that a "monitor overuser" is someone who has been trained only in the formal environment of the target language classroom where the emphasis has been on the accumulation of conscious grammar (1988:16). This formal knowledge of the grammar is prioritised to such an extent that very little natural "acquisition" of the target language is possible. Krashen continues to explain that "monitor overusers" are characteristically hesitant and overcareful when communicating in the target language for fear of making errors as well as their consistent search for the correct rules (1988:16). He also raises the point that in order to use the "monitor" effectively, a speaker needs time to formulate rules (1988:3). This is generally impossible in the communicative process where the message

takes precedence over the form in which it might appear. Krashen adds that it is almost impossible for a learner to master all the grammatical rules and their applications. For this reason it is espoused that a purely grammatical approach to language learning does not provide the learner with the necessary intake associated with language acquisition.

In this survey, it appears that the classes of Xhosa pupils are dominated by the grammatical approach. Limited contact with the target language forces pupils to learn the language in the formal environment. Since the acquisition environment has not been encountered by pupils, they tend to consciously employ their grammatical knowledge of the target language as a "monitor" when faced with a communicative situation. In so doing, they become hesitant for fear of making mistakes and employing the wrong rules. They become "monitor overusers". It is also likely that these pupils will resort to grammatical rules in their first language if the communicative task is complex. This often causes errors in the target language. As a result, pupils have lower perceptions of their communicative abilities. Fig. 3.4.d therefore illustrates how pupils whose classes have been dominated by grammar have lower perceptions of their communicative ability as opposed to those pupils who have had a more balanced approach in the classroom. Pupils whose classes consist of a considerable communicative component are more inclined to be exposed to meaningful intake and acquisition. It should be remembered that the few classrooms

that have a more balanced approach to the teaching of Xhosa, still represent the formal environment in which pupils learn Xhosa. A more balanced approach, however, helps to reduce the disadvantages associated with "monitor overusers". It allows the learner to concentrate on the message rather than on the grammatical form of the message when communicating. Communication tends to be more successful which, in turn, creates a better perception of communicative ability for the learner.

When Xhosa teachers use both grammatical and oral methods to teach Xhosa there is a related improvement of pupils' perceptions with regard to communicative competence. This can be interpreted within the theory of second language learning. The second language classroom or programme should ideally consist of both the "learning" and "acquisition" component. A classroom that is dominated by the grammatical or "learning" component only is detrimental to the potential of natural acquisition in the second language. This explains the low levels of communicative competence amongst Xhosa pupils as seen in fig. 3.4.d. In fig. 3.4.c the advantage of balanced Xhosa classes is illustrated. The illustration clearly shows that pupils whose classes are grammatically dominated tend to have negative attitudes to the syllabus. On the other hand, pupils whose classes were more balanced (oral and grammatical), displayed positive attitudes towards the syllabus.

Teachers' attitudes, as perceived by their pupils, are significantly related to pupils' perceptions of the Xhosa syllabus. Fig. 3.4.b shows that teachers who were perceived to be "very interested" had a significantly higher percentage (35.5%) of their pupils believing that the syllabus would ensure fluency. Only 17.4% of pupils who had "interested" teachers believed that the syllabus would allow them to become fluent. Although the teacher is only one of the variables in the second language learning equation (see fig. 2.8), he/she is believed to be extremely important. The importance of teachers being able to differentiate between individual learning styles, affective factors and the personalities of their pupils, is highlighted by second language theory (Stern 1983:387). Teachers with the above capabilities are believed to have the potential to significantly enhance integrative motivation, positive attitudes and the achievement levels of their pupils.

Of the teachers surveyed, 96.0% strongly believed in the necessity of teacher training to address the inadequacy of the practical and theoretical preparation of prospective teachers with regard to second language teaching. On completion of their teacher training 76.0% of the teachers felt inadequately prepared to teach the CED Xhosa syllabus along communicative lines. This is a further explanation for pupils' negative attitudes to the syllabus and their low perceptions of their communicative abilities. An additional factor to the poor preparation of teachers is that 92.0% of the teachers surveyed felt material support and advice on

Xhosa issues from the CED was inadequate. Of the three private schools surveyed, two schools highlighted the difficulties encountered with Xhosa classes which are dominated by mother tongue speakers. Teachers explained the worthlessness and frustration of teaching mother tongue Xhosa speakers the present CED Xhosa syllabus. Furthermore, teachers expressed their lack of expertise in the first language teaching of Xhosa. They highlighted the need for first language teachers of Xhosa. The problems raised by the teachers in private schools are being echoed by teachers in CED schools. It is clear therefore, that teachers in CED schools, as is the case with pupils, are faced with tremendous disadvantages when it comes to the teaching and learning of Xhosa.

Every teacher in the survey believed that their pupils need more contact with mother tongue speakers of Xhosa. Despite this, 90.0% of the teachers have not established links with mother tongue Xhosa speakers from the local township schools. Although apartheid education has made the establishment of contact for teachers and pupils with mother tongue speakers extremely difficult, the desperate need for meaningful contact with Xhosa speakers remains an unaddressed problem in CED schools. This has led to feelings of inadequacy amongst both teachers and pupils of Xhosa. As one teacher put it:

I'm not fluent in the language and this undermines one's confidence.

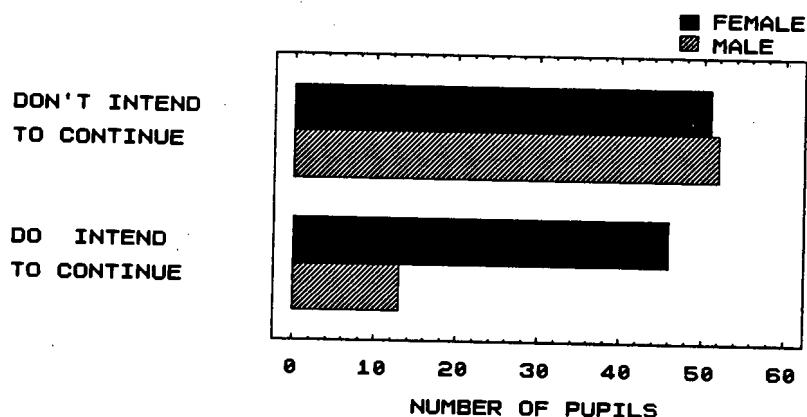
### 3.5 Statistics on attitude, motivation and the future of Xhosa

Attitude and motivation are two central variables in the second language learning/acquisition equation. This section reveals a number of interesting attitudes and motivations expressed by teachers, pupils and parents.

Fig. 3.5.a illustrates a significant relationship between gender and whether or not pupils intend to pursue their studies in Xhosa after secondary school.

**FIGURE 3.5.a**

RELATION BETWEEN THE SEX OF PUPILS AND WHETHER THEY INTEND TO CONTINUE XHOSA

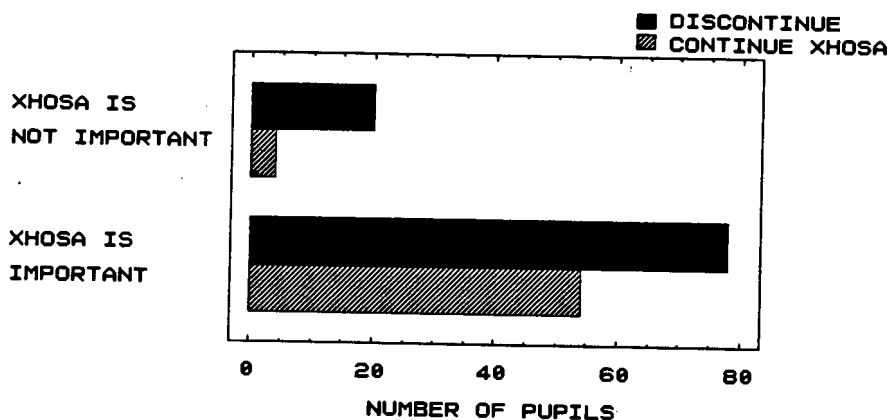


N = 162      CHI-SQUARE   P = 0.0007

A significant correlation was found between pupils intending to pursue their studies in Xhosa after secondary school and their perceptions of the relative importance of Xhosa to languages like French, German and Latin. Fig. 3.5.b displays the results.

**FIGURE 3.5.b**

IMPORTANCE OF XHOSA IN RELATION TO OTHER  
LANGS. AND PUPILS' INTENTION TO CONTINUE

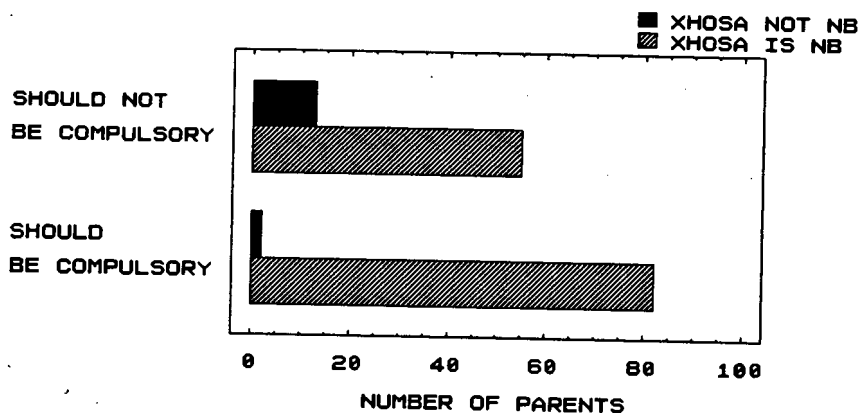


N = 156 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0422

Fig. 3.5.c illustrates the strong relationship between parents' perceptions of the relative importance of Xhosa compared to French, German and Latin and whether or not they felt Xhosa should be made a compulsory subject alongside English and Afrikaans in CED schools.

**FIGURE 3.5.c**

PARENTS' VIEWS ON COMPULSORY XHOSA AND  
ITS WORTH IN RELATION TO OTHER LANGUAGES

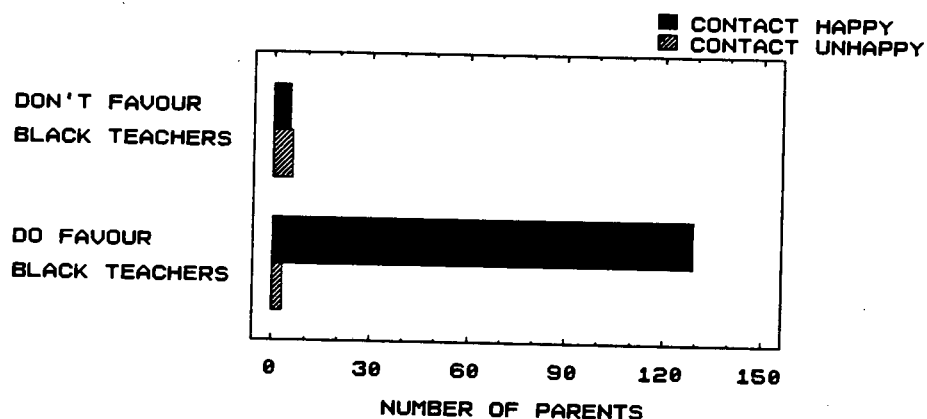


N = 152 CHI-SQUARE P = 0.0015

Fig. 3.5.d indicates that parents whose children study Xhosa have very positive attitudes with regard to their children having contact with mother tongue speakers from the local township schools. Similarly, the majority of parents are happy with the idea of allowing mother tongue Xhosa speakers to teach in CED schools.

FIGURE 3.5.d

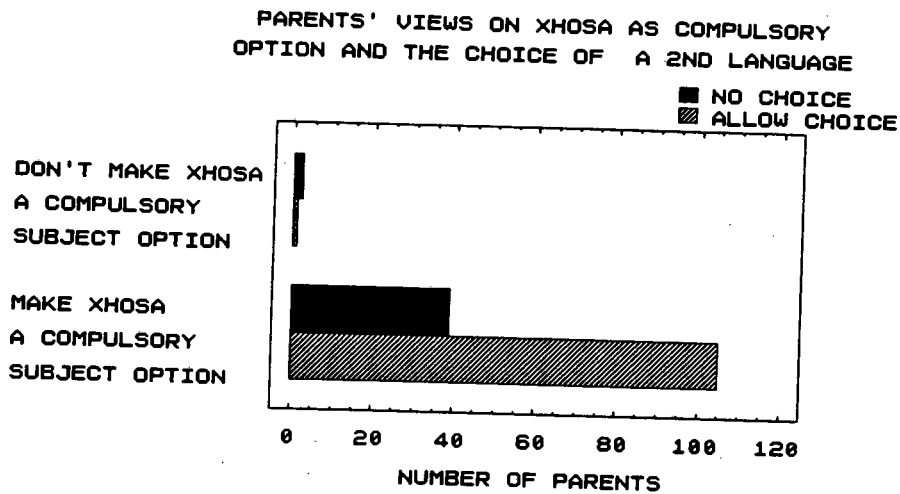
PARENTS' ATTITUDES TO CONTACT WITH XHOSA  
PUPILS AND BLACK TEACHERS IN CED SCHOOLS



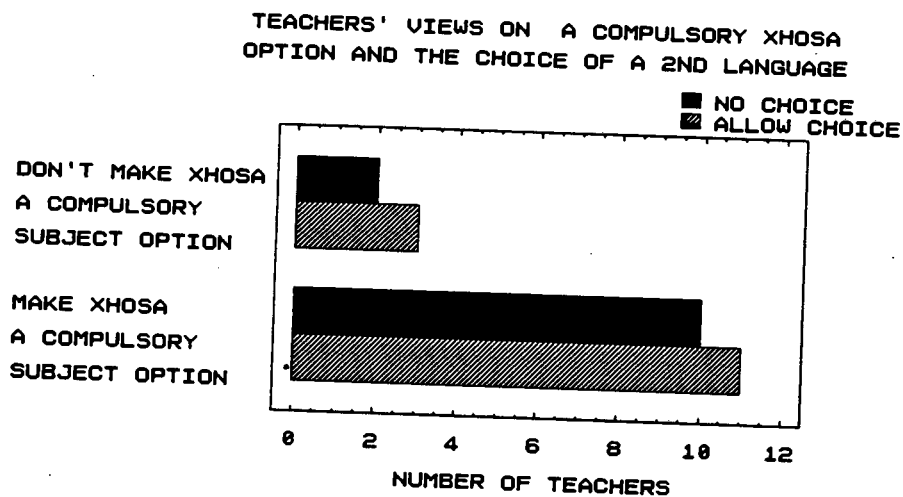
N = 143

Figs. 3.5.e and 3.5.f show the attitudes of both parents and teachers, respectively, with regard to two questions. The first concerns the opinion of whether or not Xhosa should become a compulsory subject option in all CED schools. The second is the opinion concerning the desirability of pupils being given the right to choose their second language.



**FIGURE 3.5.e**

N = 147

**FIGURE 3.5.f**

N = 21

### 3.5.1 Discussion

Fig. 3.5.a indicates that almost 50.0% of all female pupils studying Xhosa intend continuing with the subject after school. The figure for male pupils is only 20.0%. Closer examination of the gender ratio of teachers in all 36 schools offering Xhosa as well as the gender ratio of pupils

in the schools surveyed, reveals the predominance of female teachers and pupils in the Xhosa classrooms. This is an interesting finding since it brings to mind a study carried out by Burstall in 1975 of the Primary French Project in Britain (see par. 2.6.1). Although there is no significant relation between the gender of pupils and their achievement levels, McDonough's point remains an interesting one. He claims that society exerts considerable pressure on its individuals. He specifically mentions societal norms which look favourably on educated females learning languages as opposed to a subject like mathematics. It can be argued that these societal attitudes are still prevalent today, not only in South Africa, but in many other parts of the world. Although there are obvious differences between Burstall's study and the present one, the gender ratio of Xhosa pupils and teachers remains significant. It is quite possible that societal norms in South Africa could go a long way towards providing an explanation for these ratios. However, to gain more clarity on this issue, future studies should continue to monitor the pupil and teacher gender ratios in Xhosa classrooms. Furthermore, an in-depth examination into the general subject choices of pupils doing Xhosa, as well as the subject choice options offered by the schools, could prove to be a worthwhile exercise for two reasons. Firstly, it may throw more light on the current domination in numbers of female pupils doing Xhosa. Secondly, the status of Xhosa in comparison to other subject choice options could be highlighted. This exercise was not possible as the relevant information could not be obtained from the CED.

There was a significant relationship between pupils who intend to pursue their studies in Xhosa after school and their perceptions of the relative importance of Xhosa to other foreign languages offered by CED schools. Fig. 3.5.b shows that apart from an overwhelming majority of pupils who believe Xhosa to be more important than languages like French, German and Latin, the pupils intending to continue with Xhosa expressed extremely positive attitudes concerning the importance of the subject. Some of the pupils displayed "integrative" motivations for learning Xhosa:

I think improvements in the relationship between black and white people in South Africa can only be made if more white people learn to speak black peoples' mother tongues.

They (the peers of Xhosa pupils) don't realise how exciting it (Xhosa) is or how important it's going to be.

Apart from the "integrative" motivations expressed above, the majority of the pupils expressed the less desirable motivation known as "instrumental" motivation. This implies that pupils wanted to learn Xhosa for the purpose of future employment. As mentioned previously (par. 2.6.2), this can be explained by older pupils being more career orientated. Although instrumental motivation has been known to be a good predictor of proficiency, it is believed that learning a language for purely instrumental reasons will limit natural acquisition and empathetic attitudes towards the target language group. On the other hand, pupils with integrative motivation display empathetic attitudes and as a result ensure meaningful contact and intake from the target

language and its speakers. Positive attitudes towards the importance of Xhosa in relation to languages like Latin, French and German were also expressed by both teachers and parents. Of the parents surveyed, 90.0% felt Xhosa to be more important than the languages mentioned above. Of the teachers surveyed, 96.0% expressed similar sentiments. It should be remembered that the attitudes of pupils not doing Xhosa (see fig. 3.2.c) sharply contradict those expressed above.

Positive parental attitudes are displayed in fig. 3.5.e where a significant majority feel that the importance of Xhosa warrants it being made a compulsory subject option in all CED schools. Although the survey excludes parents who don't have children studying Xhosa, this is an important finding. It highlights the necessity for competence in Xhosa or an African language in the future. Some of the positive attitudes expressed by parents were:

With the majority of South Africans being black, it's going to be necessary to be able to converse both socially and on the business front in their own language.

Keeping abreast of political developments in the New South Africa.

These attitudes recognise the need to uplift the status of Xhosa so that it can become an important South African language. As one parent put it:

Fluently speaking the language that will most definitely be a third compulsory language for children white and black....

The idea of making Xhosa a compulsory subject option is well supported by the parents in the survey. This is an important issue concerning language planning since a step of this nature will undoubtedly uplift the status of Xhosa.

Fig. 3.5.d indicates that the majority of parents also expressed positive attitudes to their children having contact with mother tongue speakers of Xhosa from the local township school. A few parents expressed fears about their childrens' safety but still remained in favour of contact with Xhosa speaking pupils. The following quote sums up this sentiment:

Contact of this nature is a must if our children are to coexist with different ... groups. I, however, at this stage forbid my children entering townships in view of the current unrest situation.

The survey showed that 90.0% of the parents favour the allowing of mother tongue speakers of Xhosa to teach in their child's school. Teachers were unanimous in their support for the admittance of mother tongue Xhosa teachers although a few teachers stressed the importance of teachers being suitably qualified. This is an important consideration when taking into account that 76.0% of the teachers in the present survey felt ill equipped to teach Xhosa along communicative lines on completion of their studies. The future training of Xhosa teachers, whether they be mother tongue or non-mother tongue, will have to address the differences of teaching Xhosa as a second/third language as opposed to a first language.

Apart from the fact that 73.0% of the parents believed open schooling would enhance their child's ability to become fluent in Xhosa, figs. 3.5.e and 3.5.f show the favourable attitudes displayed by both teachers and parents in terms of making Xhosa a compulsory subject option in all CED schools. These figures provide interesting information about teacher and parent attitudes with regard to language at school level. The figures illustrate that 72.0% of the parents and 53.0% of the Xhosa teachers felt that pupils should be allowed to choose their second language. There is an apparent contradiction in the attitudes of the teachers, however. On the one hand 80.0% of the teachers believe Xhosa should become a compulsory subject option while, on the other hand, only 53.0% believe that pupils should be allowed to choose their second language. This is contradictory since a subject option implies the right to choose. It would appear, however, that teachers would be happier with the idea of pupils having to learn Xhosa in conjunction with the current official languages (English and Afrikaans). Of the teachers in the survey, 60.0% favoured this option. The above discussion provides some important considerations concerning attitudes towards possible language policy options for a future South Africa. It would appear that the preservation of the official languages is an important issue to 50.0% of the teachers in the survey, while the majority of parents were happy with the idea of their children being bilingual and having the right to choose their second language.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted a few of the major concerns facing Xhosa in both CED schools as well as in South Africa. The status of the language within the education system is very low and to all intents and purposes, deteriorating. Levels of communicative competence in Xhosa amongst pupils in CED schools is a particularly serious problem. The lack of contact that pupils have with mother tongue Xhosa speakers remains a burning issue. Problems with the Xhosa syllabus and examination system, the lack of material support for teachers and the lack of interest in the subject all add to the low status of Xhosa. The general recognition of the importance of Xhosa in a future South Africa, coupled with the apparent dilemma it faces (as discussed above), is adequately summed up by the following statement by a teacher in the survey:

Here we are! Open school and Xhosa phased out this very year!! Crazy!!

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Current debate on language policy for a future South Africa

#### 4.1 Introduction

Debate concerning a future language policy for a post-apartheid South Africa has gained momentum over recent years. By considering various contributions to this debate, I hope to establish a more concrete understanding of the possible role African languages might play in a future South Africa. In order to accomplish this it will be necessary to consider possible roles of the other languages as well.

#### 4.2 South Africa's history

From the outset of this discussion it is important to consider the historical events which have moulded the existing language situation in the country. In this way it may be possible to take cognizance of previous mistakes so that similar errors may be avoided in the future. As suggested by Michael Gardiner, caution should be exercised when thinking of deriving a new language policy from elsewhere (1991:4). This warning includes the danger of adopting language policies from within the African continent as well as adopting policies from outside African borders. The reason is simple. South Africa, with its colonial and apartheid legacy, finds itself in a unique situation. This situation includes the existence of many different



variables, each of which has a unique role to play in the formulation of a new and equitable language policy for South Africa.

Most of the current literature and thinking on the language question raises the issue of ideology in language planning as being an unfortunate inevitability. South African history certainly bears testimony to this. Heugh (1985) illustrates this by alluding to the example of Lord Milner who used political power to impose his ideological Anglicisation policy on the rest of the population. She explains how this, coupled with the economic depression suffered by the rural Afrikaners, contributed to the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism (1985:46). Language played an integral role in the struggle of Afrikaner Nationalism. By 1925 Afrikaans had been recognised as an official language. After the coming to power of the Nationalist government in 1948, a similar policy to that of Anglicisation was introduced whereby the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner ideology were promoted through what is known as Christian National Education (CNE). The Nationalist government managed to wrest control of education from the missionaries, whose role had till then allowed English to play a predominant role in education. As pointed out earlier, this policy was also destined to fail. The student uprisings of 1976 were the culmination of dissatisfaction with the above-mentioned policy. The outcome of this popular protest was that the Nationalist government was forced to capitulate and relax its 50:50 policy which required half the school subjects to be taught in Afrikaans

and half in English. History clearly highlights the dangers of ideologically based language policies. In quoting Jernudd, Harlech-Jones stresses the importance of good language planning theory:

Good language planning theory (therefore) explicitly recognises the supremacy of the expressed preference of a defined political community.

Harlech-Jones 1987:71

The "homelands" provide a very sobering example of this "expressed opinion of a defined political community". According to Heugh, the Nationalist government, acting on the segregationist Sauer Report in 1948 and later on the recommendations of Eiselen (Native Education Commission), sought to segregate the African population by providing individual "homelands" for them (1985:53). This was done on the pretext of preserving and protecting their cultural heritage and languages, amongst other things. Hartshorne explains how the "homelands" in effect delivered the first major blow to apartheid policy from "within the system" (1987:92). He outlines how the Department of Bantu Education set up the Cingo Commission in 1962 to enquire into language policy in the primary schools of the Transkei. This was done with the hope of influencing language policy decisions in the Transkei. Hartshorne shows, however, that the first Transkei Assembly in 1963 implemented its "limited legislative autonomy" and disregarded the recommendations of the Cingo Commission (1987:93). In essence this meant reducing the use of the mother tongue to the first four years of schooling, after which English would be used.

Hartshorne continues by highlighting the fact that from 1967 onwards, the other "homelands", on gaining their so-called independence, began to follow the language policy pattern adopted in the Transkei (1987:93). There was a significant and almost confrontationist shift in "homeland" policies whereby English was adopted as the medium of instruction while Afrikaans, with its negative political associations, was relegated to relative insignificance.

Unfortunately it must be accepted that any future language policy in South Africa will be derived from one or another ideological base. Concomitant with this is the following consequence as outlined by Gardiner:

Now we know that every model, every scenario and every option that we devise for just and equitable answers to questions of language in the future will probably operate to the disadvantage of some people and to the advantage of others. Difficult as it is to accept, we have the legacy of our history and constraints upon our resources.

1991:1

This should, however, not be used as an excuse for not criticising language policies of the past which have been designed to segregate people and maintain political, economical and linguistic superiority over them. On the contrary, the language debate, especially that which is emanating from the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) today, is aiming for a solution which will be acceptable to the majority of South Africans.

Ndebele, in synthesising the position of the ANC's working group on language, pointed out that a future language policy should be based on the principle of uniting all South Africans while, at the same time, recognising the linguistic diversity which exists (1991:2). He adds that this diversity should be perceived as positively enriching and rejects the much publicised idea of the Nationalist government that the diversity of languages is inherently problematical and complex. Ndebele continues by stressing the importance of empowering people through a new language policy. This will give people access to the fullest participation in the democratic process (1991:3).

Ralph Fasold emphasises a common sentiment being articulated in the language debate with regard to the need for a bottom-up strategy to language planning. He says:

It is still true, in my own opinion at least, that the forces acting on language change in society are so strong as to make official planning actions seem quite puny by comparison.

1991:1

A popular sentiment expressed at the recent Language in Contact and Conflict in Africa (LiCCA) Conference held in Pretoria was the desire for any future language policy to emanate from and be acceptable to the wishes and aspirations of the majority of South Africans. Alternatively, the people should decide for themselves in order to avoid the type of injustices experienced from oppressive language policies in the past. Although Mawasha says he is unaware of any written

documentation (over approximately one hundred years during what was predominantly an oral literary period) which attests to blacks having warded "off English in favour of the indigenous languages", he draws attention to the word *Lekgowa* (1987:109). This word, used for "European", can be roughly translated as, "One who - shame on him - bullies others (who are weaker than him)". Although Mawasha extends and links this argument rather tenuously to include attitudes towards English, the anecdote provides a subtle warning with regard to future language planning and the importance of a consultative and democratic process.

In his inaugural lecture, Mtuze raises the issue of attitudes and how important it is that these should become more positive. Referring to Dr Gerrit Viljoen as saying the question of Afrikaans was not negotiable, Mtuze quotes Popkass in order to support his contention of the need for positive attitude change:

In die tweede instansie voer ek aan dat die wyse waarop die Afrikaner Afrikaans om ideologiese redes gemanipuleer het, en steeds doen, die taal meer kwaad as goed doen. Die geskiedenis van Afrikaans is deurspek met voorbeelde waarop die taal in die naam van Afrikaner-nasionalisme gepropageer en beheer is. Die illusie oor die besitreg van Afrikaans begin al duideliker blyk uit hoe die Afrikaner as "bewaker" en "baas" van Afrikaans, eintlik, die gevangene daarvan is. Taal word immers nie besit nie, maar besit self." (original emphasis).

[In the second instance, I contend that the way in which the Afrikaner has manipulated Afrikaans and continues to do so for ideological reasons, has done the language more harm than good. The history of Afrikaans is interspersed with examples whereby the language has been propagated and controlled in the name of Afrikaner Nationalism. The illusion concerning the possession of Afrikaans emerges more clearly from how

the Afrikaner as "guardian" and "master" of Afrikaans, actually is the prisoner thereof. Language is not possessed though, rather, it is language which possesses.]

Mtuze 1990:6

Similarly, Mtuze quotes Professor Olivier as saying:

M.a.w. nie net moet Afrikaans sy wit velletjie afskil nie, maar moet hy ook deel hê aan die hele proses van die vernietiging van Apartheid.

[In other words, not only should Afrikaans shed its white skin, but it should also be part of the whole process of the destruction of Apartheid.]

Mtuze 1990:7

Related to this is the conclusion reached by Heugh that the importance of Afrikaans is likely to decline in relation to the other languages in South Africa (1987:218). It should be noted, however, that the intention of a future language policy should not be to marginalise Afrikaans or any other language but rather to influence attitudes. As quoted by Mtuze, Sachs says:

In principle, there is no reason at all why Afrikaans should not once more become the language of liberty, but this time liberty for all, not just liberty for a few coupled with the right to oppress the majority.

Mtuze 1990:7

The language debate at present is essentially an academic one. It is also a debate which tends to be rather rhetorical and often idealistic. While all might agree with the principle of Afrikaans being given the opportunity of becoming a language of liberation, there is a danger of

losing the distinction between what is ideal on the one hand and what the historical realities are on the other. The current position of Afrikaans, despite the recent emergence of "alternative" Afrikaans, does not hint at shedding its political past overnight and then emerging as the language of liberty for all in the morning.

#### 4.3 Important issues in the language debate

There are a number of important issues in the language policy debate for a new South Africa. These issues, as discussed below, highlight the central concerns and principles involved in the current language debate.

##### 4.3.1 Status of languages in a future South Africa

There appears to be consensus within the present debate on language policy that all South African languages be granted fundamental linguistic rights. This would mean that the indigenous languages, which have been subjugated together with their speakers, will have their status elevated. These languages will be recognised and placed on an equal footing with all other languages in South Africa. For this to be accomplished, it would be necessary for the state to assume responsibility for developing the indigenous languages. Schuring quotes the ANC as follows:

The state shall act positively to further the development of these (eleven) languages, especially in

education, literature and media, and to prevent the use of any language or languages for the purpose of domination or division.

Schuring 1991:5

The idea of recognising African languages, developing them and bringing them onto a par with languages like English and Afrikaans is being echoed by many people (see Schuring 1991; Mtuzze 1990; Ndebele 1991; Haacke 1987; Alexander 1989).

#### 4.3.2 Important variables in language planning

Kennedy, in discussing the criteria for the choice of an official language in Namibia, highlights a number of issues which could be invaluable to the choice of an official language in South Africa (1989:74). He discusses a broad range of variables which include both national and international considerations. The first variable discussed is the one of *unity* and the obvious need for an official language which will unify the nation and,

... neutralise any competitive or disruptive sociolinguistic forces likely to emerge if one language were chosen amongst others.

Kennedy 1989:74

The second point raised is one which has already been discussed. This is the need for an official language policy to be *acceptable* to the majority of the people. *Familiarity* is the third criterion mentioned. Kennedy contends that it is very important that the chosen language has been part of



the short and long-term educational system (1989:75). He also mentions the question of *feasibility*. In other words, will the cost of implementing, the effort involved and the material support available, make the proposed language choice feasible? Kennedy asks the question whether or not the new language will be equipped to cope with the *modern technological* era which the country might wish to be part of (1989:75). He also raises a variable under the heading of *Pan Africanism* and the need for an African country like Namibia to have a language which will facilitate diplomatic and trading relations with its progressive neighbours. Looking more broadly, Kennedy raises the issue of the need for an official language to be a *language of wider communication* (LWC) so that it may be used internationally (1989:76).

What is important about the above variables as perceived by Kennedy, is the fact that these variables and possibly many more, in the case of South Africa, should form part of the process in the identification of a new language policy for the country.

#### 4.3.3 A lingua franca for South Africa?

Heine, in his paper delivered at the 1991 LiCCA conference in Pretoria, draws attention to the importance of identifying a lingua franca when planning a future language policy for a post-apartheid South Africa. In developing his argument, Heine refers to Sango, *Ewondo populaire* and

Cikopabeeluti which are the lingua francas in the Central African Republic, Cameroon and the Copperbelt in Northern Zambia respectively. He notes that these languages have all developed spontaneously and independently of government planning and have, as a result, overtaken any attempts at standardising local languages by adapting themselves very effectively to new ideas and technology (Heine 1991:8). He points out how the governments of the Central African Republic and Cameroon have ignored the rise of Sango and Ewondo populaire by continuing to allow French to dominate all official contexts. This has been done despite the fact that the majority of the population in these countries speak Sango or Ewondo populaire. The shortcoming of enforcing French in these countries has, according to Heine, undermined the potential that these types of lingua franca have to bridge linguistic and ethnic barriers (1991:5). South Africa should therefore be aware of the potential of a lingua franca to unite the South African population while, at the same time, contributing to the social and economic needs of both the country and its people.

The necessity of careful fact finding in the language planning exercise is also emphasised by Olshein, who says:

During the fact finding phase of the policy making process, the data gatherers are concerned with the identification of both overt and hidden language problems. A complex picture of the linguistic situation is built up from factual data on: societal needs, group and individual attitudes, and political, national and economic considerations relating to the use of the LWC.

Olshein 1989:54

The role of English in a future South Africa has been prophesied by many to be an important one. Meerkotter (1987) is also of the opinion that English is to become the lingua franca in South Africa. He bases this assumption on the idea that English is increasingly being used as the language of liberation while Afrikaans, due to its negative political connotations to the majority of South Africans, is being used less frequently. He contends that a prolonged struggle for a post-apartheid South Africa will make English a greater certainty as the lingua franca while, at the same time, being detrimental to the growth of Afrikaans and the indigenous languages (1987:143). Although Meerkotter prophesied this in 1987, it should be remembered that other factors apart from the struggle for liberation will determine the relative positions and status of English, Afrikaans and African languages. Despite the scrapping of apartheid legislation, it would appear that the struggle for liberation and a non-racial, democratic South Africa continues. It is true that English has established a dominant position within the structures of the liberation movement. However, in the long term, as seen in other African countries, the indigenous languages are bound to play a more significant role than they have in the past. Meerkotter contends that should liberation come sooner,

Afrikaans ... would then have the opportunity to rid itself of the stigma of being the language of the oppressor.

Meerkotter 1987:143

This idea is at best a speculative one since the nature of a political solution in South Africa is uncertain. A political solution in South Africa will not necessarily guarantee the rapid erosion of the stigma attached to Afrikaans.

In addition to the idea of English becoming the lingua franca in South Africa, Norton Peirce (1989), in her article entitled "Toward a Pedagogy of Possibility in the Teaching of English Internationally: Peoples' English in South Africa", outlines very clearly the ideal role that English should play. She argues against the emphasis on teaching communicative competence in English as opposed to the implementation of a "pedagogy of possibility" which, to her mind, will provide people with the means to challenge the inequalities in society rather than to perpetuate them (1989:403). However, it is difficult to contemplate the acquisition of a "pedagogy of possibility" to the exclusion of communicative competence. A "pedagogy of possibility" could arguably depend to a large extent on communicative competence. Therefore, of importance to note is that both pedagogies should be playing a complementary role (Norton Peirce 1989: 403). The concept of a "pedagogy of possibility" ties in very neatly with the ANC's idea about decolonising English and making it South African (ANC Report 1991:15). Quoting Cronin, Mtuzo shows a different way of putting it:

The Queen in Queen's English will have to be dethroned and beheaded in favour of English in the mouths of the majority of people.

Mtuze 1990:9

The above quote is not devoid of reverse prescriptivism although it could be justified to a certain extent as being part of the transformation of the apartheid legacy. There is an element of contradiction in the sense that many of the people sympathetic to the above position have been simultaneously reluctant to consider the Alexander-Nhlapho proposal. Although the issue of South African English and the standardisation of the Nguni and Sotho languages (the Alexander-Nhlapho proposal) are not wholly comparable, the complexity of the debate is certainly highlighted.

What is being espoused, therefore, is the need for the recognition of South African English which has a unique South African flavour and will be more accessible to the majority who, according to Mtuze, will be able to use this to transmit popular aspirations (1990:8). Norton Peirce highlights this by explaining the difference between People's English and apartheid English. She says that People's English looks at political issues and provides a counter discourse to the dominant one in the country which is apartheid English (1989:413). It is important to recognise the fact that various social factors have given rise, and will continue to give rise to a number of different dialects within the same language. The question which should be asked, therefore, is whether it is feasible to standardise one variety of South African English as

opposed to any of the others. Whatever transpires from a new language policy for South Africa will hopefully be devoid of any prescriptivism and also recognise the need to make English, in whatever form, accessible to the majority of people.

#### 4.3.4 The case of African languages.

Evidence of the position of the indigenous languages in other African countries reveals that after the initial period of independence and a reliance upon the language of the ex-colonial power, greater significance is attached to the former.

Alexander 1989:71

Despite the apparent probability of the indigenous languages coming to the fore after liberation in South Africa, the debate on the role of African languages is necessarily concerned with ensuring the legal equality of all languages as well as their development. As Mtuze says:

I strongly believe that African languages must not be relegated to an inferior role in a new South Africa. In fact, if the new South Africa is truly going to be part of the African continent at all, it should start putting on the colour of Africa, the shape of Africa, and the culture of Africa.

Mtuze 1990:9

In view of the fact that the majority of South Africans speak an African language as their mother tongue and that these are the oppressed people leading the struggle in the country, Mtuze rightly calls for the promotion of these languages as well as the need for whites to learn an African language (1990:10). This Mtuze regards as a long overdue

necessity when considering that the white settlers first came into contact with African languages in 1652. He correctly notes that it was the black population who showed "tremendous adaptability" by learning the languages of the whites (1990: 10-11). Although figures are not available, the present study (see Chap. 3) is an indication that the proportion of whites who are competent in an African language has not changed significantly over the last three centuries.

#### 4.3.5 Literacy and Adult Education

No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and has a profound practical grasp of the movement.... Complacency is the enemy of study.... Our attitudes towards ourselves should be "to be insatiable in learning" and towards others "to be tireless in teaching".

Mao-Tse Tung quoted in Brown 1983:43

This quote indicates that every country should recognise the important role it has to play in the provision of literacy and adult education for its population. The questions of literacy and adult education are extremely important issues in the current language policy debate. The ANC workshop in Harare recommended that all people should have access to mother tongue and/or English literacy (1990:13). One of the reasons for this is the fact that many students have, under the present apartheid education system, been forced to leave school without obtaining basic literacy. The report continues by pointing out the important role to be played by

the government and the private sector in promoting and funding literacy in the language of wider communication. The report also raises the issue of the labour movement implementing language and literacy campaigns in both English and African languages with the support of their respective employers.

The International Conference for Adult Education Consultation which was held in Windhoek, Namibia from 14 - 21 October 1990, provided a few valuable contributions which could be borne in mind when considering literacy and adult education in a future South Africa. The Consultation, according to a report by Lyster in the Language Projects Review (Vol 5 No. 4 April 1991), says that South Africa has many problems that have been experienced by other third World countries and therefore, is not in as "unique" a position as often claimed.

Lyster reports that the Consultation also recognised that large scale literacy programmes, whether provided by the state or by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), led to highly structured materials and bureaucratisation as opposed to teacher-produced materials and learner-centred methods (1991:7). An issue of concern was raised as to whether literacy should be provided in the mother tongue or a language which would promote national unity (Lyster 1991:8). This decision will depend on the needs of the majority of South Africans as well as various other factors such as the resources available to literacy development. Norton, from



the English Literacy Project (ELP), advocates the need for a national syllabus for adults in South Africa since the National Literacy Co-operation, which is a progressive organisation, does not at present have any formal syllabus of its own (1991:24). She notes that this state of affairs is problematic since literacy organisations are struggling to gain recognition from both trade unions and management structures (1991:25).

Lyster reports that most countries represented at the Consultation on literacy in Namibia had associations which consisted of both NGOs and government departments (1991:8). She adds that there are advantages and disadvantages to a set-up of this nature. Furthermore, she points out that very few of these associations were formed along ideological lines and that only South Africa, Quebec and Latin America have based,

... membership on adherence to a set of ideological principles about literacy.

1991:8

Brown (1991), who takes a more critical look at common assumptions about literacy, warns that literacy is not always associated with upward social mobility. He discusses how Street (1984) is of the opinion that the meaning of an ideological approach to literacy depends on the "social institutions in which it is embedded" (1991:2). In analysing the history of literacy work in South African mines, Brown shows how literacy has been used to undermine social

mobility amongst black workers. He mentions how the mines promoted Fanakalo with the aim of developing the industry and promoting production (1991:6). The teaching of Fanakalo to mineworkers appeared to be largely an instrumental strategy by the mining companies rather than an attempt to promote social and economic equality. Brown continues to explain how literacy in Fanakalo had no effect in providing black labour with access to blasting certificates and other promotion which, apart from being racially exclusive until 1987, required literacy in one of the official languages (1991:9). In reporting on two mines in the Rand Mines Group, Brown says,

... there was no direct relationship between leadership amongst unskilled workers on the mines and levels of literacy. In other words, an illiterate migrant worker could be a team leader in charge of a number of men.... Thus refuting the commonsensical axiom between literacy and social advancement.

Brown 1991:15

The above discussion outlines just a few of the considerations concerning literacy work as well as pointing out some of the decisions that will have to be made before implementing literacy and adult education policy and programmes in a future South Africa. The benefit of, and the need for a literacy policy which is informed by an acceptable ideology in a new South Africa, is obvious. Communication between all sectors of the South African population will be enhanced and all South Africans will be

given access to the means of being able to participate equally in the democratic processes of a future South Africa.

#### 4.4 Some proposed language policy options

A brief look will be taken at the various policy options being proposed across the political spectrum in South Africa. The summary of the proposals does not pretend to be exhaustive while at the same time discussion and comments on these proposals will be brief.

##### 4.4.1 The Black Consciousness Movement

In discussing language policy from the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) viewpoint, Heugh quotes from the only specific policy statement from within the ranks of the National Forum. The extract taken from the AZAPO (Azanian Peoples Organisation) Educational Policy document recognises the need to,

Implement a national project to teach the English language to all black people. This will ensure that Azania will not be isolated from the rest of the world and will play an integral part in nation-building. English as a lingua franca allows for communication across so-called tribal, racial and ethnic barriers.

Heugh 1987:215

Heugh continues by pointing out that Alexander, who is a member of the National Forum Committee, has been involved in the establishment of the National Language Project (NLP)

which originally concerned itself with the teaching of English and now has broadened its scope to include the teaching of some African languages as well as Afrikaans.

Alexander (1989) has made two proposals on a future language policy in South Africa. Firstly, he advocates that English will be the lingua franca in South Africa while other languages will enjoy official status on a regional basis. His second proposal is one which has been revived from a proposal made by Nhlapho in 1944:

English, "Nguni" and "Sotho" are official languages, with Afrikaans, Venda and other languages understood by relatively few people in certain parts of the country enjoying regional status.

Alexander 1989:54

#### 4.4.2 The African National Congress

In reviewing policy of the African National Congress (ANC), Heugh quotes the following from the Congress of the People in 1955:

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;  
All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs....

Heugh 1987:210

The ANC held a language workshop in Harare from 21-24 March 1990. Although the report does not reflect ANC policy per se, it does reveal certain ideas within ANC circles with respect to a future language policy in South Africa.

According to the language workshop report, the debate on education emphasised the importance of English as the medium in education after initial mother tongue instruction (ANC report 1990:11). The report contends that, should English be decolonised and made South African, it could become the lingua franca for a post-apartheid South Africa (1990:15). At the same time the report stresses the importance of developing the indigenous languages to the same level as other languages for the purposes of medium of instruction (1990:15). This concept is translated into a policy recommendation providing that all South African languages be elevated to regional official status. A further recommendation was that every South African should learn an African language by the end of high school. Multilingualism would thus be encouraged. The practicalities of elevating all South African languages to regional official status should not be ignored, however. The resources involved and the effort needed to accomplish this will be great. It is a sobering reminder to all involved in language planning that the final solution will probably be one in which equitability and practicality have been compromised to some extent.

It should be noted that the above discussion does not constitute official ANC policy. The Harare report clearly emphasises the need for,

Consultation to be as broad as possible: debates, workshops, collection of information at grassroots and across the political spectrum.

ANC Report 1990:13

Heugh's summation of ANC policy in 1987 still holds:

... the policy of the ANC towards language has, as yet, been expressed in a rather tentative manner where practical matters are concerned. In principle, the rights of all language groups will be upheld so long as these do not interfere with the process of national unity.

Heugh 1987:213

Despite the ANC not having a detailed policy on language planning in a future South Africa, it has taken comprehensive steps through the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) to address this issue. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), under the auspices of the NECC, was launched on 10 December 1990 after approval from the NECC National Conference held in December 1990 (NEPI:2). NEPI has established many Research Groups (RGs) in an attempt to explore policy options in the educational arena which will be representative of the democratic movement perspective. For this reason, involvement in NEPI is not restricted to ANC members. Instead, expertise in NEPI has been gleaned from a broad range of persuasions on the left of the political spectrum. The RGs include the following areas:

- \* Planning, System and Structure
- \* Literacy and Numeracy
- \* Adult Education
- \* Human Resource Development
- \* Curriculum

- \* Post-Secondary
- \* Early Childhood Educare
- \* Administration and Control
- \* Language Policy
- \* Support Services

NEPI:7-9

The objective of the RGs is to consider current policies in South Africa, policies in other countries and policy proposals that have been made by the South African government and various private organisations. These policies will all be examined in terms of their political, social and economic implications in a future South Africa. NEPI aims to formulate well defined policy options with which to arm the democratic movement in the negotiation process (NEPI:1).

The above discussion reveals therefore, a serious attempt by the ANC, through its structures, to involve the broad democratic movement in the quest for the formulation of representative and acceptable language policy proposals for a future South Africa.

#### 4.4.3 Other proposals on future language policy

Prinsloo, at the 1991 LiCCA conference in Pretoria, had the following contribution to make:

Along with English and Afrikaans, as the present official languages the (evolutionary) opportunity could be created for the promotion of African languages as regional official languages if the speakers of the African languages would choose to have it this way. In

the course of time one of the African languages or a standardised Nguni or Sotho, or English or Afrikaans could grow to become the major official language of the whole country.

Prinsloo 1991:8

In the same paper, Prinsloo outlines the proposal made by Schuring on a future language policy for South Africa. Schuring advocates,

A pluralistic model, implying that a regional government will be free to choose its own official language(s). The central government will likewise have the right to prescribe its own official language(s) for the use at national level.

Schuring quoted in Prinsloo 1991:9

Schuring is of the opinion that the number of official languages in any local or governmental authority should not exceed three. He continues by saying that the number of official languages could be reduced to two by an authority provided one of these languages is either Afrikaans or English (Schuring 1991:8-10).

A very recent proposal made by Professor Du Plessis as reported in The Argus,<sup>12</sup> advocates the acceptance of four national official languages. These four languages, which he says are based on the language reality in South Africa, would be English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Tswana. Professor Du Plessis believes regions should decide on which one/s should be the regions' "external" language/s. He also believes that

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<sup>12</sup> The Argus, 4 June 1991



regions should decide on which "internal" languages to use but that at least one of the four official languages needs to be a compulsory subject in the schools of each region. Du Plessis, according to the report, is intent on finding a place for Afrikaans in a new South Africa. He says:

Yes, Afrikaans is one of a bunch of competitors on the open language market.... Afrikaans is one part of the history of this country and part of South Africa's future, because its mother-tongue people are part of the future.

The Argus, 4 June 1991:13

#### 4.5 Some brief comments on the policy proposals

The ideas emanating from within ANC circles and the first of the two proposals made by Alexander are very similar. The idea of South African English as a lingua franca with African languages and Afrikaans enjoying official status on a regional basis, presently appears to be a popular option within the language debate. The second proposal is the "Alexander-Nhlapho" proposal concerning the possible standardisation or harmonisation of the "Nguni" and "Sotho" languages. This proposal has been the centre of considerable controversy and debate recently. Although the proposal might make a fair deal of linguistic sense, the arguments against the proposal centre around the practicality of implementation and most importantly, the acceptability of the idea to the speakers of these different languages, bearing in mind the symbolic, communicative and other functions so intimately associated with language.

The problems with the models of Schuring, Prinsloo and Du Plessis appear to be the apparent non-negotiability of the future status of English and/or Afrikaans. The proposal by Du Plessis is especially problematical since it seems to be based on the idea that all South African languages will be competing against one another "on the open language market". The idea of promoting national unity and conciliation through a new language policy doesn't appear to be a central issue in the proposal made by Du Plessis. It would appear that, central to the proposal, is the securing of a future for Afrikaans in a new South Africa. The language reality referred to in the article is not based on the four languages with the most speakers but rather on the four languages with the most speakers within different language groups (see Table 4.5. below).

TABLE 4.5

Numbers of speakers of different languages in South Africa

Language	Number of Speakers	% of Total Population
Afrikaans	6 188 981	15.66%
English	3 432 042	8.68%
Ndebele	799 216	2.02%
Swazi	926 094	2.34%
Zulu	8 541 173	21.61%
Xhosa	6 891 358	17.44%
N. Sotho	3 437 971	8.7%
S. Sotho	2 652 590	6.71%
Tswana	3 601 609	9.11%
Tsonga	1 349 022	3.54%
Venda	763 247	1.93%
Other languages		

LiCCA 1991:14

Essential to all five of the proposals, however, is that they cease to be "Ivory Tower" models. In other words, as

has been repeatedly stated in this chapter, the process of broad consultation and participatory democracy is an absolutely essential ingredient to an acceptable solution to the language question for a future post-apartheid South Africa. The idea of a possible "Language Charter" was raised as one of the recommendations in the ANC workshop in Harare (1990:13). This is a very exciting but challenging idea when considering the amount of time, effort, funding and dedication that will be needed to carry out a project of this nature. The benefits would be obvious, however, when considering the broad consensus with regard to the necessity for a democratic language planning process which will be acceptable to all and not only to those who have made the current proposals.

#### 4.6 Practical considerations

A new language policy for South Africa will inevitably, necessitate considerable restructuring of bureaucracies and programmes as well as the redistribution of resources. The current debate in parliament as reported by The Argus,<sup>13</sup> concerns the proposed restructuring of the entire education system as a result of years of opposition by extra-parliamentary organisations. The state, in a post-apartheid South Africa, after broad consultation, will have to recognise the importance of its role in a number of spheres where language is concerned. Some of these are mentioned below.

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<sup>13</sup> The Argus, 4 June 1991

#### 4.6.1 Teachers

Chick (1987:131), in quoting figures from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Investigation into Education (1981), reveals alarming statistics with regard to the percentages of unqualified teachers in the various apartheid education departments. The access to quality instruction for the majority of South Africans is practically impossible as shown by Table 4.6.1 below.

**TABLE 4.6.1**

**% Unqualified Teachers in Apartheid Education**

Whites	3.36%
Coloureds	66.4%
Asians	19.7%
Blacks	85%

Chick 1987:131

It is not surprising to hear a recent proposal made in parliament (The Argus, 4 June 1991) concerning the possible establishment of "edukons" which will serve the purpose of a bridging year between Standard 10 and university. These "edukons" would be specifically for those students who have been subjected to inferior education under the apartheid system.

Harlech-Jones also raises a valid point about the apparent inability of teachers to exploit the possibilities of their

situations due to their inherent conservatism (1987:74). Quoting from Beeby (1966), Harlech-Jones gives the reason for this conservatism:

... teachers are the product of the system in which they work; (as a result) Regression to the normal seems to be a characteristic tendency of the teaching profession....

Harlech-Jones 1987:74

Jenkins addresses the issue of teacher training very seriously (1991:5-8). Talking about language teaching, Jenkins reminds us that it is not only language teachers that need training, but also teachers of other subjects. He advocates a policy for the retraining of teachers so that they can cope with multilingual classroom situations without being prejudiced when confronted with differing levels of communicative competence as well as different languages and their concomitant varieties. He warns that the schools, when desegregated, will begin to encounter the problem of language proficiency which has become such a burning issue at universities today (1991:6). With regard to the teaching of African languages, Jenkins has this to say:

Even if the new constitution does not give the African languages some official status, it is likely that there will be an increase in demand from white parents that their children learn an African language. So far the attempts of white education departments to meet this have been derisory. White teachers who could not speak the language were given crash courses in which they learnt to sing some jingles and repeat dialogues between madam and garden boy, and then they were dispatched to pass this on to their pupils. On the other hand, the quality of teaching of African languages in black schools is on the whole notoriously bad. The heritage of inappropriate methodologies with which African languages were first taught has still not

been overcome,.... The teaching corps in this country is just not in a position for major expansion of the teaching of African languages to other language speakers.

Jenkins 1991:6-7

Jenkins continues by highlighting the obvious need for the training of English teachers in both senior and junior schools. He is under no illusion that this training process will be a simple task. Apart from this realisation, there is a dire need for the state as well as the private sector to make funds available to carry out a programme of preparing language teachers for a post-apartheid South Africa.

#### 4.6.2 Universities and teacher training colleges

In discussing the areas of teacher training Jenkins says,

... the standards of teacher training in English are on the whole very low indeed, indicating a need for better qualified lecturers and a different ethos in training colleges. Across all departments, the requirements for crediting teachers with proficiency in the official languages has become a farce (see also Kitching 1985). In universities, the relationship between a degree in English and the needs of English teachers is still in most cases tenuous and the subject of deep division of opinion.

1991:8

By extension, the training of African language teachers according to the findings of the present survey (see pars. 3.2, 3.3.1, and 3.4.1), is in a similar position to that mentioned for English above. Only 26.0% of African language teachers in CED schools felt that they had been suitably

trained to start teaching at the end of their teacher training. Jenkins makes some very valid and concrete suggestions towards improving the situation:

The rethinking of English and Afrikaans syllabuses which has begun in universities, to some extent because of desegregation, but also because of wider debate about Africanising culture in South Africa, will have to be intensified and extended to teacher training colleges and school syllabuses.

1991:8

This "rethinking" should be extended to the teaching of African languages in order to eradicate the existing dichotomy between teacher-training courses and the needs of teachers in a future education system. Of particular importance is the equipping of teachers with the necessary skills of first, second and foreign language teaching in a multi-cultural environment.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

Finally and most importantly for this discussion then, is to take cognizance of the fact that all the proposals for a future language policy mentioned above, have recognised the need and indeed the desire, to elevate the status of African languages. African languages appear destined to play a very significant role in a future South Africa. The literature and views expressed have gone beyond the simple act of intending to sign, with a stroke of the pen, a new status to these languages. Instead there is consensus amongst academics and people involved in the language debate that

these languages need active encouragement and development from the state so that the imbalance between existing official languages and unofficial languages may be redressed. The fact that African languages are destined to reach this level of importance necessitates immediate and serious contemplation of the role of these languages in schools today and more importantly, their role in the schools of tomorrow. An issue of concern at this stage, however, is the necessity for a broad and methodical process of consultation at grassroots level with regard to the language question. Such a process will possibly throw a welcome light on many of the issues that have up until now been speculated upon by academics and language planners.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have highlighted a number of issues concerning African languages. South Africa's colonial and apartheid history has shown how consecutive governments have caused the continual subjugation of the indigenous population and their languages. The effect of this has been that English and Afrikaans enjoy official language status today while the indigenous languages remain largely underdeveloped and ignored. Despite the current language debate which emphasises the future importance of African languages, the present study involving CED schools, presents a sharp contradiction. The status of Xhosa in CED schools appears to be deteriorating. The situation necessitates careful consideration and planning in order to meet the short and long term language requirements of a future South Africa and a future education system.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

The empirical study in CED schools revealed a number of contributory factors responsible for the low status of Xhosa. Only 13.5% of schools under the CED presently offer Xhosa. Recent years witnessed a 21.0% decline in the number

of schools offering Xhosa. A sharp decline of pupils doing Xhosa in 1991 highlights the fact that there has been a mere 0.5% growth rate in Standard 10 pupils doing Xhosa between 1988 and 1991. The level of encouragement of Xhosa by CED schools and the CED itself is very low. Subject choice options, Xhosa examination requirements and poor teaching in the primary schools have negatively affected pupils' attitudes and motivation towards Xhosa. The survey showed that pupils not doing Xhosa attached little significance to the language in comparison to other subjects.

#### 5.2.1 Communicative competence

The level of communicative competence and confidence in Xhosa amongst pupils was markedly low. Pupils had little faith in the Xhosa syllabus and its ability to make them fluent. The low levels of competence in Xhosa can largely be explained by the fact that 81.0% of the pupils have, at most, one opportunity a week to speak Xhosa with a mother tongue speaker. Some had no contact at all. Furthermore, 91.0% of the pupils claimed that their school never organised contact with mother tongue speakers. Lower levels of competence were also related to lower levels of teacher interest. Similarly, classes which were dominated by a purely grammatical approach were associated with lower levels of communicative competence, negative attitudes and motivation as well as higher levels of anxiety. Pupils whose parents could speak Xhosa and therefore had contact with the

target language in the home environment, experienced higher levels of communicative competence and confidence.

### 5.2.2 Attitude and motivation

The number of pupils with different home languages provided an interesting indication of societal attitudes in the Cape Province. Of the pupils surveyed, 63.9% were English, 31.4% were Afrikaans while 1.8% were Xhosa-speaking. The low percentage of Xhosa-speaking pupils points to a number of issues. Firstly, it indicates the low status of Xhosa as a subject and language in its own right. Secondly, it indicates the limited success of "open schooling" in South Africa. Lastly, it illustrates that "open schools" are not capable of teaching Xhosa as a first language.

Attitude, motivation, levels of proficiency and achievement were found to be important variables in affecting the decisions of pupils to continue with Xhosa after secondary school. The survey revealed gender ratios in the Xhosa classrooms to be significant. In the survey, 61.0% of the teachers and pupils in Xhosa classrooms were female. The explanation for this may be found in patriarchal societal norms which look favourably on women pursuing "non-scientific" subjects. The survey revealed that the majority of prospective continuers in Xhosa after secondary school were female.

### 5.2.3 The future of Xhosa

Both parents and teachers believed Xhosa to be an important subject in relation to the foreign languages offered at schools. They supported the ideas of making Xhosa a compulsory subject option in all CED schools, allowing mother tongue speakers to teach Xhosa and creating contact opportunities with mother tongue speakers for the pupils. The majority of teachers (60.0%) were in favour of making Xhosa a compulsory subject alongside English and Afrikaans. Parents, on the other hand, were more amenable to the idea of making Xhosa a compulsory subject option and allowing pupils the right to choose their second language.

### 5.3 Lessons from recent educational policies

The recent decision to make Xhosa compulsory in senior primary schools has had derisory results in promoting the status of Xhosa (see pars. 3.2, 3.3.1, 3.4.1, and 4.6.1). The "Model B" system of "open schooling" has failed to take cognizance of the practicalities involved in fulfilling pupils' language needs. Teachers are not qualified to teach African languages as first languages. Similarly, teachers are not qualified to teach the official languages and other subjects to speakers of other languages. Forward planning is therefore essential if the needs of a future education system are to be successfully catered for.

#### 5.4 Current concerns about Xhosa in CED schools

Research is an essential ingredient in the process of deriving future strategies to address the deteriorating status of Xhosa. Based on the current language debate, an urgent re-assessment of the status of African languages (Xhosa) is needed. The debate on language policy has predicted the importance of African languages and the desirability of promoting multilingualism. With this in mind, educationists, language planners and government authorities are in a position to take affirmative action towards the upliftment of the status of these languages. A policy of this nature could help to uplift the status of Xhosa and other African languages and, at the same time, assist in overcoming some of the problems highlighted in Chapter Three. It would also serve the long term needs of a future non-racial country.

##### 5.4.1 Issues affecting the CED

The CED needs to be actively involved in research within the schools. This will provide the scientific data required in the formulation of new strategies for teaching Xhosa. The establishment of mutual interest relationships between the CED, academic institutions and organisations such as the National Language Project (NLP) and the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), is a necessity. This would benefit the language debate considerably. The CED could actively encourage the schools to involve their Parent-

Teacher Associations (PTA) in the language debate. The attitudes to questions of bilingualism, trilingualism and the right to choose a second or third language can prove to be invaluable to the language debate and the formulation of a new language policy for South Africa. The CED's role should therefore reach beyond the administrative. It should also include initiating research, monitoring schools and providing material support and advice to schools that offer Xhosa.

#### 5.4.2 Addressing the lack of communicative competence

The CED should develop short and long term strategies to deal with the low levels of communicative competence in Xhosa. One of the most important contributory factors is the lack of contact that pupils doing Xhosa have with mother tongue speakers. The CED could consider implementing an affirmative action policy which would insist, as a syllabus requirement, that schools offering Xhosa should establish formal links with township schools where Xhosa is spoken. Depending on the agreement reached by the two schools, an exchange programme could be set up whereby pupils from both schools could benefit in terms of improving their communicative skills in various languages. Not only would pupils benefit in language learning but contact between schools would help to break down barriers between schools that have been segregated under apartheid education. Initiatives of this nature might help to serve as an interim measure until schooling is completely desegregated. It would

be a grave mistake to think that the current "open schools" option, which is to a large extent still discriminatory, will provide more contact with mother tongue speakers. The ideal of non-racial schooling has yet to be realised.

#### 5.4.3 Providing in-service training in CED schools

In the short term, the CED needs to take decisive steps in implementing large scale in-service training programmes for Xhosa teachers both in primary and in high schools. These programmes should incorporate local and foreign research findings which will inform the strategies adopted to improve the levels of communicative competence amongst pupils doing Xhosa. The programmes should prioritise the development of teachers' theoretical knowledge and practical abilities in second language teaching. Furthermore, programmes of this nature should be followed up by the CED in terms of making relevant resources and backup material available to teachers.

#### 5.4.4 The problem of schools not encouraging Xhosa

The intransigence of most schools towards actively promoting or encouraging Xhosa was highlighted in the survey. With the apparent desire of the South African government to move towards non-racial education, it would augur well for the CED to adopt a different approach with regard to its role in popularising Xhosa. The CED should adopt a progressive policy with regard to the encouragement of schools to

introduce Xhosa into their syllabi and encourage pupil interest in the language. This would be very beneficial to the status of Xhosa and other African languages in a future education system.

### 5.5 A three tier dilemma in Xhosa education

A dilemma exists in the relationship between the roles of primary, secondary and tertiary education in African language teaching. For instance, teachers of Xhosa in primary schools, as previously stated, are not adequately qualified. As a result, the communicative abilities and attitudes of pupils are negatively affected. During secondary school, pupils and teachers are faced with numerous problems in the teaching and learning of Xhosa. Teachers feel they have been ill-equipped to teach Xhosa along communicative syllabus lines while pupils' learning is restricted to the formal classroom environment. The result is the poor communicative abilities and feelings of inadequacy expressed by the pupils in the survey. On reaching university, non-mother tongue students enrolling for African language courses, do so, almost exclusively for the purposes of gaining communicative competence in the target language. However, tertiary institutions tend to pursue the academic side of language learning. As a result, prospective teachers of African languages are not being adequately equipped with the skills to communicate effectively in the Xhosa classrooms. The effect of this is



the perpetuation of the cycle whereby new teachers enter schools with the emphasis on teaching grammatical as opposed to communicative skills.

Of vital importance therefore, is the need for primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions to clarify their respective objectives in Xhosa language teaching as well as their relationship to one another. These relationships should essentially be complementary to each other's objectives. For example, with the current emphasis on acquiring communicative skills in African languages, it would be appropriate for the primary schools to have the development of communicative competence as their primary objective. Secondary schools could continue initially to build on the communicative abilities of pupils and in the senior standards adopt a more balanced approach (including oral and grammatical skills) to language teaching. Universities and teacher training colleges will therefore not be faced with their current dilemma of having to teach communicative skills above the academic study of the target language (Xhosa). This scenario would entail a great deal of research and planning. However, the successful resolution to this dilemma will help to ensure the future success of Xhosa language teaching across all educational levels.

### 5.5.1 The role of tertiary academic institutions

The approach to the teaching of Xhosa in schools and at tertiary institutions needs urgent re-evaluation. Tertiary institutions have a duty to take the lead in this re-evaluation. One of the first concerns is to determine acceptable goals and objectives for Xhosa language teaching. This will inform the development of a future approach to language teaching. Tertiary institutions should also undertake research in CED schools. Following this, general research on second language acquisition and teaching should be adapted in an attempt to formulate a pedagogical approach which will ensure the attainment of the predetermined goals and objectives.

Tertiary institutions need to prioritise the establishment of an "Academic Support Programme" (ASP) in Xhosa both at tertiary and at school level. A programme of this nature will act as a short and long term strategy with the aim of uplifting the status of Xhosa and the low levels of communicative competence amongst pupils. ASP programmes are very positive ways in which tertiary institutions can provide important services to the community. Tertiary institutions, with the aid of private funding, have already established similar support or promotion programmes in other school subjects. The University of Cape Town runs a project called "Geoteach" which promotes the Geological aspect of school Geography in schools. Olympiads for school pupils are already associated with subjects like English, Mathematics

and Science while Afrikaans has the Taalbond examination. Interest and excellence in these subjects are thus promoted in schools. African Language Departments at Universities are in a unique position of being able to initiate some form of "Xhosa Olympiad" in schools which will create interest and promote the study of Xhosa.

#### 5.5.2 Teacher training

The formulation of goals and the establishment of academic support programmes are only the first steps in the re-evaluation of teaching Xhosa. An extremely important aspect to the entire process is that tertiary institutions need to ensure that they possess the expertise to transmit the skills required by teachers to successfully implement the new approach. For the purposes of this study, the skills required by teachers involve the teaching of Xhosa as a second language to non-mother tongue speakers. Tertiary training of teachers needs to make a clear distinction between the teaching of Xhosa in primary and secondary schools and the differences between first and second language teaching. With the advent of non-racial schooling, teachers with these skills will be essential.

#### 5.6 Literacy and Adult Education

The debate on language policy has clearly spelled out the necessity for the establishment of adult education and literacy programmes in a future non-racial South Africa. In

this light, adult education and literacy should be the responsibility of educational authorities, the private sector and the community. The benefits of an adult education programme in the light of this study are obvious. The majority of parents who expressed an interest in learning Xhosa would be able to take advantage of such a programme. This would improve the status of Xhosa as well as the attitudes and abilities of pupils in CED schools since contact with the target language in the home environment is thought to promote language acquisition.

### 5.7 Conclusion

The solutions to the problems discussed above will not be easy. However, current political events have highlighted the urgent need to start the transformation of a political and educational system which has for so many years oppressed the majority of South Africans. Part of this transformation includes the question of language. The survey carried out in CED schools has highlighted the plight of Xhosa in schools while, at the same time, it has provided a realistic assessment from which new solutions can be formulated to uplift the status of Xhosa and the levels of communicative competence which are integral aspects to the realisation of a future non-racial South Africa.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Personal details

- 1. Home language:  
 English                       Afrikaans                       Other
- 2. Childhood background:  
 City                       Town                       Rural
- 3. Can you speak Xhosa or any other African language?  
 YES                       NO
- 4. If the answer to Question (3) was "NO", would you like to learn Xhosa?  
 YES                       NO

General questions

- 5. How do you feel about your child doing Xhosa instead of possibly taking another subject?  
 (a) Favourable   
 (b) Unfavourable   
 (c) Neutral
- 6. What is the most important benefit you think your child stands to gain from learning Xhosa?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
- 7. Would you say that it is more important for South African children to learn Xhosa (or another African language) rather than languages like Latin, French or German?  
 YES                       NO
- 8. Do you think your child has enough contact with mother tongue speakers at school to ensure his/her reaching fluency in Xhosa?  
 YES                       NO

APPENDIX A

2

9. Where would you say your child has most contact with mother tongue speakers of Xhosa?

- a). With a Xhosa speaking pupil at school
- b). At home
- c). With a personal friend
- d). At the garage or shop
- e). Elsewhere (Please specify)

.....  
.....

10. Would you say your child's social environment is conducive to the learning of Xhosa?

YES  NO  Please explain:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. Would you say your child's ability in Xhosa would be enhanced if his/her school opened its doors to all, including Xhosa speakers?

YES  NO

12. Do you think mother tongue teachers of Xhosa should also be allowed to teach Xhosa in Cape Education schools?

YES  NO

13. How would you feel if your child's school organised regular contact with Xhosa speakers from the local township school?

HAPPY  UNHAPPY

Please explain:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

14. Do you think that all schools should offer the African language of the area as a subject option for pupils?

YES  NO

PTO

APPENDIX A

3

15. Do you think all pupils should be compelled to learn both the current official languages as well as the African language of the area?

YES  NO

16. Would you say that pupils doing only two languages at school should be allowed to choose their second language?

YES  NO

17. What do you think will be the implications of "open schooling" for the teaching of Xhosa? Please comment on both positive and negative aspects.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME !

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Personal information

- 1. Male  Female
- 2. Home language  
English  Afrikaans  Other
- 3. Where did you spend your childhood years?  
City  Town  Rural
- 4. When did you start learning Xhosa?  
a). Primary school   
b). High school
- 5. Do either of your parents speak Xhosa?  
YES  NO

Reasons for doing Xhosa

- 6. What would you say your single most important reason for studying Xhosa is?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 7. Do you intend continuing studying Xhosa after school?  
YES  NO
- 8. What would you say the most important use of Xhosa will be for you in future?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 9. What is the attitude of your parents to your doing Xhosa?  
a). Neutral   
b). Favourable   
c). Unfavourable
- 10. Which reason best describes the attitude of other pupils at your school to your doing Xhosa?  
a). Neutral



APPENDIX A

2

b). Favourable

c). Unfavourable

11. Which reason would you give to explain why other pupils don't take Xhosa?

a). They are not interested

b). They think other subjects are more important

c). Their subject choice does not allow it

d). Other (please explain)

.....  
.....

12. What do you enjoy most about learning Xhosa?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. What do you enjoy least about learning Xhosa?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. What would you say are the biggest obstacles to learning Xhosa successfully at your school?

.....  
.....  
.....

Speaking Xhosa

15. Do you get the opportunity to practice speaking Xhosa regularly at school?

YES  NO

16. Does your school organise contact between you and mother tongue speakers on a regular basis?

YES  NO

## APPENDIX A

4

23. Do you think more pupils in your school should be doing Xhosa?

YES NO 

Please explain:

.....  
 .....

24. Do you think that Xhosa should be compulsory at school?

YES NO 

25. Do you think learning an African language is more useful for pupils than learning languages like French, Latin or German today?

YES NO 

26. Do you find learning three languages a strain?

YES NO 

27. Would you say that pupils doing two languages should be allowed to choose their second language?

YES NO Teaching issues

28. Do you think the present syllabus prepares you to speak Xhosa fluently?

YES NO 

29. Are your classes predominantly:

a). grammatical b). oral c). equally mixed 

30. Would you say your teacher is:

a). Very enthusiastic b). Interested c). Not very interested d). Uninterested THANKS FOR YOUR TIME!!!

## APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERSPersonal details

1. Male  Female
2. Home language:  
English  Afrikaans  Other
3. Childhood background:  
City  Town  Rural
4. For how many years have you been teaching Xhosa?
5. What is the highest formal training you have in Xhosa?
- a). Standard 10
- b). Xhosa 1
- c). Xhosa 2
- d). Xhosa 3
- e). Honours in Xhosa
- f). Masters in Xhosa
- g). Teacher Training College

School particulars

6. For how many years has your school offered Xhosa?
7. Please indicate how many Xhosa pupils you have in each standard. eg. Std 6: 27
- Std 6:  7  8  9  10
8. How many pupils are there at your school?
9. How many matrics are there at your school?

Speaking Xhosa

10. Did you take Xhosa at school?
- YES  NO
11. Do you think pupils would attain higher standards of communicative competence if they started Xhosa at primary school?
- YES  NO

## APPENDIX A

3

19. What are the biggest problems you have experienced while teaching Xhosa? Please elaborate:

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

20. What is the most gratifying aspect of teaching Xhosa?

.....  
 .....

21. Are you ever disillusioned when teaching Xhosa?

YES  NO

Please explain if "YES":

.....  
 .....  
 .....

22. How would you describe your pupils' attitude to doing Xhosa?

- a). Favourable   
 b). Unfavourable   
 c). Neutral

23. How would you describe the rest of the pupils' attitudes to Xhosa at your school?

- a). Favourable   
 b). Unfavourable   
 c). Neutral

Xhosa at schools

24. As a teacher of Xhosa do you think more emphasis and expertise should be placed on preparing teachers to teach Xhosa as a second/third language?

YES  NO

25. At the time of completing your studies, would you say you were suitably trained and confident to teach Xhosa along communicative syllabus lines?

YES  NO

PTO

APPENDIX A

4

26. In your own opinion, would you say that the present syllabus prepares pupils to become communicatively competent in Xhosa?

YES  NO

27. Would you say that the present syllabus and examination system still requires too much formal grammar?

YES  NO

28. Do you know of any schools where Xhosa has been or, is being phased out?

YES  NO

If "YES" please mention school/s:

.....  
 .....

29. In your opinion, would you say there is a need for more material support and advice on Xhosa issues from the Cape Education Department.

YES  NO

30. Do you belong to any Xhosa teacher group which attempts to offer support and collaboration for teachers?

YES  NO

31. Do you think learning an African language is more useful for pupils than learning foreign languages like French, Latin or German?

YES  NO

32. Do you think Xhosa (an African language) should be made a compulsory subject option at all schools?

YES  NO

33. Do you think that pupils doing only two languages at school should be allowed to choose their second language?

YES  NO

34. Would you say that pupils doing three languages are more academically taxed than pupils doing only two languages?

YES  NO



### 1. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The Analysis of Variance is useful for statistical problems where one is interested in the effect of one or more non-metric variables on a single non-metric variable. In the ANOVA technique, the non-metric variables are referred to as factor or classification variables. ANOVA can also be used to analyse variables which have been grouped. The ANOVA assumes that the data being scrutinised follows the normal distribution. It analyses the effect of one qualitative factor on one classification variable.

### 2. The Two-Sample Analysis (Student's t-test)

The Two-Sample Analysis or t-test is the procedure used to estimate and test the means and the variances of two samples. The Student's t-test uses the 95.0% confidence levels to determine the difference between the two means, assuming equal and unequal variances.

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<sup>14</sup> The definitions for the statistical techniques were taken from STATGRAPHICS: Statistical Graphics System by Statistical Graphics Corp., Version 4, 1989: USA.

## APPENDIX B

3. Chi-square test

The chi-square statistic allows one to test whether data can be accurately represented by a normal distribution. The procedure for the chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic calculates a chi-square statistic that allows you to compare observed to expected frequencies. The chi-square statistic is defined as the sum of observed minus expected frequencies squared, each divided by the expected value. The Yates correction for continuity was also employed with the chi-square test when necessary.



GRAPHIC TECHNIQUES

## APPENDIX C

Three types of graphs have been used in this thesis. The first is commonly known as the X-Y line plot. This graph is interpreted by reading the values of the two variables off the X-axis and the Y-axis respectively.

The second technique employed for the representation of ANOVA and Two-Sample Analysis statistics is known as the Means plot. In the interpretation of the Means plot, the centre line represents the mean for each factor level. The lines on the extremities (above and below the mean) indicate the interval means which are determined by the range test at the 95.0% confidence level.

The Barchart is the third graphical technique employed. These graphs have been used to represent the chi-square statistic. The bars in these graphs represent the frequency of observations for the variables in the test. The different variables are distinguishable by the hatching of the bars.

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