UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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MODULE: Academic Literacy for Education Students/ Language in Teaching and Learning
CODE: ALE00Y1/BEN0015
TIME: Take-home examination
MARKS: 100
EXAMINER: Mr. G. Makubalo, Dr. D Robinson
MODERATOR: Dr. C. Ramhurry
(This paper consists 2 pages)

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following instructions carefully before answering the questions.

1. Answer all questions
2. Answers must be typed students must use the cover page provided.
3. Attachments (texts) have been posted on Blackboard

QUESTION 1

Read the article by Linda Chisholm entitled 'The challenge of South African schooling: dimensions, targets and initiatives' and answer the questions that follow.

1.1 What is Linda Chisholm's main argument in this paper? [5 marks]

1.2 In between 250 and 300 words critically evaluate Chisholm's paper. [20 marks]

1.3 In one paragraph summarize the challenges in South African schooling identified in the article. [10 marks]

1.4 The article states that '[S]chool leadership and teacher performance...are critical in-school factors accounting for school functionality and literacy and numeracy achievements'. In between 300 and 350 words motivate how school leadership and teacher performance can improve the performance of South African schools. [25 marks]

[60 marks]

The importance of mother tongue-based schooling for educational quality

Commissioned study for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005

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Part A: Overview

While there are many factors involved in delivering quality basic education, language is clearly the key to communication and understanding in the classroom. Many developing countries are characterized by individual as well as societal multilingualism, yet continue to allow a single foreign language to dominate the education sector. Instruction through a language that learners do not speak has been called "submersion" (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000) because it is analogous to holding learners under water without teaching them how to swim. Compounded by chronic difficulties such as low levels of teacher education, poorly designed, inappropriate curricula and lack of adequate school facilities, submersion makes both learning and teaching extremely difficult, particularly when the language of instruction is also foreign to the teacher.

Mother tongue-based bilingual programs use the learner's first language, known as the L1, to teach beginning reading and writing skills along with academic content.[1] The second or foreign language, known as the L2, should be taught systematically so that learners can gradually transfer skills from the familiar language to the unfamiliar one.[2] Bilingual models and practices vary as do their results, but what they have in common is their use of the mother tongue at least in the early years so that students can acquire and develop literacy skills in addition to understanding and participating in the classroom.

Bilingual as opposed to monolingual schooling offers significant pedagogical advantages which have been reported consistently in the academic literature (see reviews in Baker 2001; Cummins 2000; CAL 2001):

[1] In cases where two or more languages are spoken in the home or locality, schooling may be provided in one of the learner's home languages, in another local language, or in a lingua franca; for lack of a better term for these contexts, this paper uses "mother tongue" or L1 to refer to any language in which school-aged children are competent.

[2] In North American and European contexts, languages are considered "second" or "foreign" depending on whether or not learners are exposed to them in the outer community. While the school language is often foreign to children and adults in developing countries, the blanket term L2 is used since it is still appropriate in terms of the sequence in which languages are learned.

- Student learning can be accurately assessed in bilingual classrooms. When students can express themselves, teachers can diagnose what has been learned, what remains to be taught and which students need further assistance. In submersion schooling cognitive learning and language learning are confounded, making it difficult for teachers to determine whether students have difficulty understanding the concept itself, the language of instruction, or the language of the test.

- The affective domain, involving confidence, self-esteem and identity, is strengthened by use of the L1, increasing motivation and initiative as well as creativity. L1 classrooms allow children to be themselves and develop their personalities as well as their intellects, unlike submersion classrooms where they are forced to sit silently or repeat mechanically, leading to frustration and ultimately repetition, failure and dropout.

- Students become bilingual and biliterate. Bilingual programs encourage learners to understand, speak, read and write in more than one language. In contrast, submersion programs attempt to promote skills in a new language by eliminating them from a known language, which may actually limit learner competence in both.

All of these advantages are based on two assumptions: one, that basic human needs are being met so that schooling can take place; and two, that mother tongue-based bilingual schooling can be properly implemented. Simply changing the language of instruction without resolving other pressing social and political issues is not likely to result in significant improvement in educational services. However, because language cross-cuts race, ethnicity, gender, and poverty, even minimally implemented bilingual programs have the potential to reach those who have traditionally been left behind by L2 submersion schooling. This paper will discuss how choosing an appropriate language of instruction has positive implications for education in terms of both increasing access and improving quality.

Part B: Policy development and implementation of bilingual programs

1. Why bilingual policies have been introduced

The introduction of mother tongue-based policies and programs normally goes beyond pedagogical motivations to address social and political aims. While it should be remembered that any one program represents a combination of aims, the following illustrate a sampling:

Historical precedents. There have been a few historical precedents for use of the L1 in developing countries, with both positive and negative implications for current practice. For example many ex-British colonies inherited mother tongue schooling as part of separate and unequal development. In the case of India this meant marginalization of Indian languages with regard to power, yet "contact with English triggered renaissance in the major Indian languages and set in process their modernization" (Annamalai 1995:

education. This was also a principal motivation in the well-documented Six-Year Primary Project in Nigeria (Fafunwa et al. 1989) whose results clearly supported long-term mother tongue development. Some countries have followed up on the successes of mother tongue use in nonformal education and in community schools by adapting their models and materials for use in formal schooling, which Cambodia has just begun doing in several languages of the eastern highlands (Thomas 2003, cited in Kosonen 2004) and which Papua New Guinea has been doing for some years in about 400 languages (Klaus 2003; Kosonen 2004). Such initiatives have received more attention and support in recent years from donor agencies interested in improving educational quality and equity while promoting democracy (see e.g. Sida 2001).

2. How programs have been introduced

2.1 Forms of introduction

Small-scale to large-scale introduction through experimentation. Experimentation is a common means for introducing mother tongue-based schooling. Such piloting is useful for determining how a bilingual model can be implemented given local conditions, and what types of technical and material input are required to make the program successful before going to scale. Experimentation has led to wider-scale implementation in countries like Bolivia, Guatemala and Nigeria, but it has also been associated with stagnation and deterioration of models in countries like Niger and Guinea-Bissau (Hovens 2003) despite having met with relative success. The gap between experimentation and implementation is often deepened due to unreasonable expectations for pilot studies to prove or disprove the effectiveness of bilingual schooling, and this based solely on test scores (Benson 2004a); as Fishman (1991) notes, this misguided recourse to "scientific proof" is simply a delay tactic for authorities who wish to seem sympathetic to language issues without committing themselves to establishing policies or allocating resources. In more supportive political climates, experimentation has paved the way for official decision-making.

Top-down introduction through legislation. In some contexts mother tongue-based programs have been introduced on a national scale by top-down methods, where government has legislated change and expected the education sector to implement it, whether or not piloting has been done and whether or not adequate resources have been mobilized. Such was the case of the original imposition of Chichewa-English bilingual schooling on all Malawians, which favored Chichewa speakers over speakers of other languages, and again in 1996 when the policy changed to include all mother tongues without regard for teacher training and posting or materials development (Mtenje & Mchazime 2001). Tanzania's implementation of Kiswahili-English schooling was more successful because it reached both first- and second-language speakers of Kiswahili and was part of an ideological movement under a respected leader, yet the policy appears to be deteriorating from both ends—failure to use mother tongues and the pressure of global English—as well as from the middle, because Kiswahili has not been used as planned at the secondary or tertiary levels (Abdulaziz 2003; Rubagumya 1991; Ouane 2003). In the

The following myths and attitudes are regularly used to challenge use of mother tongues in education, yet their false arguments are easily revealed:

- *The one nation—one language myth.* The colonial concept that a nation-state requires a single unifying language has influenced policy-makers in many parts of the world, yet imposition of a so-called "neutral" foreign language has not necessarily resulted in unity, nor have relatively monolingual countries like Somalia, Burundi or Rwanda been guaranteed stability. In fact, government failure to accept ethnolinguistic diversity has been a major destabilizing force in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka (Ouane 2003).

- *The myth that local languages cannot express modern concepts.* Another colonial concept is the supposed inherent worth of European languages in contrast to others, but all human languages are equally able to express their speakers' thoughts and can develop new terms and structures as needed. Léopold Senghor once illustrated this by translating Einstein's Theory of Relativity into Wolof, a lingua franca of Senegal. The difference lies in which languages have historically been chosen for "intellectualization," or development, through writing and publishing (Alexander 2003).

- *The either-or myth.* This myth holds that bilingualism causes confusion and that the first language must be pushed aside so that the second language can be learned. The research evidence to date shows the opposite to be true: the more highly developed the first language skills, the better the results in the second language, because language and cognition in the second build on the first (Cummins 1999, 2000; Ramirez et al. 1991; Thomas & Collier 2002). Further, there is no evidence that the L2 must be a medium of instruction to be learned well; countries like Sweden achieve high levels of L2 competence by teaching it as a subject and preserving the L1 for instruction.

- *The L2 as global language myth.* The foreign L2 is often seen as necessary for further education, work and other opportunities, yet as Phillipson (1992) points out this has not happened in a political vacuum but is the result of deliberate promotion by powerful countries or groups of their respective languages. Meanwhile, employment in the informal sector of low-income countries involves 50 percent or more of the population and is increasing, and primary schooling is still terminal for most. The vast majority will not be integrated into the global marketplace and will have little use for the L2 (Bruthiaux 2002).

- *The myth that parents want L2-only schooling.* The poorest and most marginalized are acutely aware that their access both to education and to the high-status language has been limited, and they have a right to expect the school to teach their children the same language that has benefited the elite. Undoubtedly parents will choose the L2 when presented with an either-or proposition; however, studies (see e.g. Heugh 2002) have shown that when parents are allowed to make an educated choice from appropriate options, they overwhelmingly opt for bilingual rather than all-L2

on the degree to which teacher training had been done and materials had been distributed (ETARE 1993).

- Designed to meet acute personnel needs, Bolivia has a *bachillerato pedagógico* program that provides indigenous youth (currently all female) with secondary schooling along with L2 skills and pedagogical training, preparing them to be bilingual teachers in their own communities. Another measure instituted in 2001 was to pay financial incentives for teachers working in bilingual classrooms, in remote areas, and in multi-grade classrooms, all of which benefited bilingual teachers as intended[6] (Albó & Anaya 2003).
- Inservice training for Namibian teachers in the Basic Education Strengthening project (reported in CAL 2001) was done completely in Namibian languages, which has been found to facilitate both communication and development of pedagogical vocabulary in the L1 (Stroud 2002).
- High-quality academic and practical training preparing bilingual education specialists at a post-graduate diploma or M.A. level is currently being offered for indigenous language speakers of the Andean region through the PROEIB Andes program in Cochabamba, Bolivia (Albó & Anaya 2003) and for professionals from southern African countries through the TOTSA program in Cape Town, South Africa (ref. PRAESA). CIESAS in Mexico City offers an M.A. program in applied linguistics and anthropology in Indoamerican languages, and plans to extend its academic training to the doctoral level while preserving applied elements so that graduates can meet the technical needs of bilingual programs (see CIESAS 2002 for curriculum).

Linguistic and materials development. A serious investment of time and resources, along with a commitment to collaboration between linguists, educators and community members is required to prepare materials for bilingual programs, particularly if the L1 is to be used over a period of many years (as would be suggested for the gradual transitional or maintenance models described below) and particularly if the languages in question have not traditionally been used in written form. Corpus planning, which expands the functions of a language, has three main elements (Cooper 1989): harmonization, which determines the degree to which a range of varieties can be considered one language; standardization, which selects a norm and determines its orthography and grammar; and elaboration or intellectualization, which adapts the language for more abstract forms of expression like those needed for school learning.[7] Implementation is often challenged by decision-makers' failure to allocate resources to these efforts, but other obstacles are created by failure of linguists to reach agreement, or imposition of decisions on the linguistic community without having involved them in the process. To meet the demands for educational materials, most programs do not wait for all of the linguistic decisions to be made but become part of the process by involving communities:

[6] Even though this policy helped keep bilingual teachers in remote areas, it was opposed by non-bilingual teachers and had to be abandoned two years later (Albó & Anaya 2003).

[7] In the case of less developed languages, all of these corpus planning efforts must be undertaken in a relatively short period of time, whereas more privileged languages like Mandarin, Arabic or English have had centuries to develop in different domains of usage.

Allocation of material resources. Education ministries often object to the perceived cost of changing the language of instruction, contemplating the large investments needed particularly in teacher preparation and materials development. This may prevent decision-makers from considering large-scale implementation, allowing them to maintain submersion programs or minimal use of the mother tongue (in preschool programs or only oral use in early primary), or it may limit the effects of otherwise well designed policies. Resource allocation is essential to any educational innovation, but bilingual programs are initially more costly than others, due primarily to the need for intellectualization of previously undeveloped languages and production of instructional and supplemental materials in those languages. In places characterized by extreme linguistic diversity, this may mean small print runs for minority languages, making them less attractive to commercial publishers.[9] Some of the strategies for producing materials cheaply have already been mentioned; the following are strategies for balancing the costs with the benefits of implementing bilingual education:

- Some World Bank scholars (Chiswick et al. 1996; Vawda & Patrinos 1998) have been working on cost-benefit analyses that relate the costs of status quo schooling (repetition and dropout as converted into per-pupil expenditure) to the costs of implementing bilingual schooling (teacher training and materials development), given that bilingual schooling greatly reduces student wastage. Applied to bilingual education in Guatemala, they have found that the initially higher costs of implementing mother tongue programs are outweighed by the savings due to more efficient schooling after only two years (Patrinos & Velez 1996).

2.3 *Effects/impact on quality of schooling*

Well-documented empirical studies of mother tongue-based bilingual programs in developing countries began appearing in the 1970s and still form the basis of what is done in the field today. Some of the benchmark studies are these:

- Modiano's (1973) study in the Chiapas highlands of Mexico found that indigenous children efficiently transferred literacy skills from the L1 to the L2 and out-performed monolingual Spanish speakers. Modiano also qualitatively explored how teachers from the same linguistic and cultural communities as their students were uniquely suited for their work.

- The Six-Year Yoruba Medium Primary Project (Fafunwa et al. 1975; Akinnaso 1993; see Adegbiya 2003 for other references) demonstrated unequivocally that a full six-year primary education in the mother tongue with the L2 taught as a subject was not only viable but gave better results than all-English schooling. It also suggested that teachers should be allowed to specialize in L2 instruction.

[9] It should nevertheless be remembered that "minority" groups can number in the hundreds of thousands, so linguistic surveying is important to this effort.

is essential to good second language learning, as Krashen (1999) has established. Not coincidentally, bilingual programs tend to report lowered failure and dropout rates (see e.g. Urzagaste 1999 on Bolivia).

Valorization of the home language and culture. Another result of bilingual schooling that figures prominently in the literature is the newly awakened pride the community feels for its language and culture. Seeing the mother tongue in print in the official context of schooling elevates its status and usefulness in the eyes of both speakers and non-speakers. In addition, the L1 brings cultural values into the classroom, which parents highly appreciate (see e.g. d'Emilio 2001 on Bolivia; Benson 2001 on Mozambique).

Increased parent participation. Another outcome of bilingual programs is increased parent participation in school affairs, a situation likely to be related to the fact that they are allowed to use the L1 to speak to the teacher. In Bolivia, d'Emilio found that given a "real opportunity to participate in decision-making about their children's schooling, parents no longer think speaking to teachers is a 'waste of time,' nor are they ashamed of using their native language in these meetings" (1995: 85). Parent participation is a widely-cited factor in successful bilingual programs (Cummins 2000; Dutcher 1995).

Increased participation of girls. While the mechanisms remain to be explored, a number of studies (Benson 2002; Hovens 2003) have found that bilingual schooling has positive effects on girls' schooling in terms of higher enrolment and passing rates and lower dropout rates (see also CAL 2001). International research indicates that girls never get to school, or stop attending after only one to three years, due to various factors such as perceptions that they are less able than boys, or lack of trust in male teachers (Chowdhury 1993). Benson (2002) proposes that both internal and external impediments to girls' participation may be eliminated by use of the L1, because increased student-teacher communication allows girls to demonstrate their competence and teachers to see it, and increased parent-teacher communication increases trust in the teacher while exposing him to more social control.

4. How programs have been structured

4.1 Managing languages in the classroom: models

The most common model of bilingual schooling is transitional, which Baker (2001) considers a weak form because the L1 is used only as a bridge to the L2. Weak models take a subtractive approach to the mother tongue, undervaluing the first language and culture and prioritizing the second language. Transitional programs range from short-term oral use of the L1 during the preschool and/or early primary years to development of L1 literacy skills over three to five years before transitioning, or changing the language of literacy (and usually instruction) to the L2. The L2 is taught first orally and then phased in gradually as a language of instruction. Studies have demonstrated that "late-exit" transitional programs, i.e. those that develop the L1 for four to five years, have much

experience of many European countries, suggest that a language foreign to the learner should be taught as a subject for five to seven years prior to being used to teach academic content. This would mean focusing on the mother tongue throughout primary schooling and using appropriate methodology to teach other languages as subjects, a model that is not yet being practiced in multilingual countries.

4.2 Best practices concerning models

It is difficult to highlight certain programs as "best practice" when few functioning bilingual programs in developing countries actually follow the models that Western research would see as most pedagogically sound, and even countries that have adopted well-designed models on paper have had difficulties implementing them in practice. As mentioned above, short-term transitional models are the most commonly practiced, presumably because resources are scarce and decision-makers hope for a quick solution to the school's linguistic "problems." Likewise, more appropriate models require more time, resources and commitment to implement, leaving a gap between even well-intentioned policies and actual practice. It could also be that multilingual developing contexts are special and that new, more creative solutions need to be generated in the South. However, it is clear from research in both North and South that submersion or early use of a foreign medium of instruction do not provide a reasonable quality of basic education.

The transitional program that has had the most success has been Nigeria's experiment with Yoruba use throughout the six years of primary education with English taught as a subject and phased in gradually. There is ample documentation of all of the accomplishments of this project, as well as the steps taken to effect the model and pitfalls to be avoided (Fafunwa et al. 1989; see also Adegbiya 2003). There are quite a few shorter-term transitional programs, i.e. where the L2 starts serving as a language of instruction in grade 3; the better versions of these would be the ones that begin at preschool level, and the ones that provide for continued study of the L1 through the end of primary schooling (see e.g. Tadadjeu & Mba 1996).

In terms of bilingual education policy consistent with good models, Bolivia is clearly the most advanced, with its maintenance and development model for long-term continuous study of the mother tongue and Spanish taught as a second language throughout, having arrived at a 50:50 model around grade four (ETARE 1993). Logistical difficulties like trained teacher shortages, failure to keep bilingual teachers in the most remote areas, and delays related to the development, supply and distribution of L1 and L2 materials have meant that many schools can only provide a few years of mother tongue schooling to those who most need it (Albó & Anaya 2003; King & Benson 2004). In addition, the most innovative elements—interculturalism, L1 study through secondary schooling and indigenous language instruction for the monolingual Spanish-speaking elite—have yet to be put into practice in ways that can be evaluated. Even so, this educational reform has survived over ten years and through a few governments, so it is a case to be watched.

- Becoming literate in a familiar language
- Gaining access to communication and literacy skills in the L2
- Having a language and culture that are valued by formal institutions like the school
- Feeling good about the school and the teacher
- Being able and even encouraged to demonstrate what they know
- Participating in their own learning
- Having the courage to ask questions in class (students) or ask the teacher what is being done (parents)
- Attending school and having an improved chance of succeeding (all children and especially girls)
- Not being taken advantage of (all children and especially girls)

Where these characteristics correspond with the goals of EFA and the goals people have for their children, mother tongue-based bilingual education can provide a means for reaching them.

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