

**A MULTILINGUAL APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF
HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES SUBJECTS IN THE
SENIOR PHASE**

by

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RESEARCH ESSAY

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS



TEACHER EDUCATION

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND NURSING

at the

RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: MR WAJ VAN RENSBURG

JANUARY 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the following people who were of great help to me in the preparation of this research essay.

Mr. WAJ van Rensburg, my supervisor, for his expert advice, encouragement, patience and critical comments that have inspired me to complete this work.

Dr. J Jarman for the language editing.

My colleagues in this study for encouragement they gave me when things were really tough.

My colleagues in the Department of African Languages for their encouragement.

A big thanks to the workshop participants as well the interviewees for the fruitful discussion that we had. The information collected during the fieldwork has been of great help in preparing this essay.

To my children Rapela, Masizane and Miyo, you were of great help and you always stood by me when my studies interfered with my domestic responsibilities. Thanks for understanding.

Mrs. MJ Mareka, for her assistance and attention.

My lovely young Danisile, who stayed by my side while I worked on this research essay. Thanks girl. That was of great encouragement to me.

Honey Dobyana, your love, care, sacrifice, discussion on the subject and willingness to spend lonely hours while I worked on the computer, encouraged me so much. I owe you big times. Thanks sweetie “Ku dya i ku engeta. U nga lahli, na mundzuku murhandiwa.”

I dedicate this work to my parents, the late Mr. TP and Mrs. ME Mathonsi, for they made it possible for me to enjoy life today.

Finally it was the will of God that I won the race.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om **taalbewuswording te ontwikkel in die onderrig van Menslike en Sosiale Wetenskapvakke in die senior skoolfase**. Dit is noodsaaklik dat dié doel gekoppel word aan die medium van onderrig in die skool, wat uiteindelik 'n invloed het op die prestasie van die leerders. Die vraag wat nagevors is, is: **Wat gebeur indien 'n werkwinkel gehou word om taalbewuswording te verbeter by onderwysers tydens die onderrig van Menslike en Sosiale Wetenskapvakke in die senior skoolfase?**

Die studie is benader vanuit die kwalitatiewe navorsingsparadigma en het van die aksienavoringsmetode gebruik gemaak. Data is ingesamel, hoofsaaklik met behulp van 'n werkwinkel wat gehou is in Atteridgeville vir ses onderwysers wat Menslike en Sosiale Wetenskapvakke onderrig. 'n Belangstellende onderwyser van die Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe het ook deelgeneem aan die werkwinkel. Klaskamerwaarneming en onderhoud is gebruik tydens en ná die werkwinkel.

Daar is vasgestel dat Engels as medium van onderrig 'n probleem is vir beide onderwysers en leerders. Die feit dat die leerders nie toegelaat word om kodeomskakeling te maak na hulle moedertaal nie, dra by daartoe dat leerders stadige vordering maak in die leer en begryp van leermateriaal in die klaskamer. Die tekort aan samewerking tussen onderwysowerhede asook onderwysers, ouers en leerders is verdere aspekte wat vordering in die klaskamer beperk. Verder is ook bepaal dat die tekort aan professionele ondersteuningsmateriaal soos sentrums vir vertaling en indiensopleiding of opgraderingsprogramme vir onderwysers ook bydra tot onsuksesvolle klaskamer aktiwiteite en vordering. Daar is gevind dat onderwysers nie 'n begrip het van "taalbewusmaking" en die implikasies daarvan vir onderrig en leer nie. Die tekort aan gereelde vergaderings en werkwinkels om klaskameraktiwiteite te ondersoek van verskillende perspektiewe is ook 'n probleem wat die vordering in onderrig en leer strem in die klaskamer.

Die navorser stel voor, in die lig van bogenoemde, dat:

- 'n Engels eesrtetaal spreker gekontrakteer moet word by swart skole sodat onderwysers in hierdie skole gevorderde kursusse in Engels kan bywoon om hulle taalvaardighede te verbeter.
- Ondersteuningsdienste vir meertalige vertalings van vakke geskep moet word.
- Vakspesifieke werkwinkels kwartaaliks gehou word vir onderwysers in elke distrik.
- Taalbewusmakingsveldtogte gehou word eenkeer 'n jaar in al die distrikte.
- Onderwysers en leerders die vryheid gegee word om kodeomskakeling te doen na hulle moedertaal.
- Leerders die vryheid gegee word om eksamens in hulle moedertaal te skryf indien die behoefte daar is.
- Indiensopleiding ingestel word om die onderwyser te help met opvoedkundige sake.
- Ouerbetrokkenheid die reël eerder as 'n opsie is.
- Samewerking tussen alle rolspelers betrokke by die onderrig van die leerders bewerkstellig word.
- Daar 'n spesifieke klaskamer vir spesifieke vakke is wat bestuur word deur vakonderwysers.
- Remedieel leer daargestel word vir dié wat nie slaag nie.

Die navorser het ook vasgestel dat die probleme gesentreer is om swak bestuursvaardighede van of interne of eksterne onderwys instansies. In dié verband word verdere navorsing voorgestel met betrekking tot bestuursvaardighede en indiensopleiding van Departementshoofde in die Menslike en Sosiale Wetenskappe skoolvakke.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this research essay is **to develop language awareness in the teaching of Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase**. This aim is of necessity linked to the medium of instruction in schools, which ultimately has an impact on the performance of learners. I undertook this study for the following two reasons:

- i) The medium of instruction in a number of schools results in a lack of effective communication amongst teachers and learners, thus hindering effective teaching and learning.
- ii) The multilingual composition of classrooms often cause problems in some schools.
- iii) Although there are many scholars who have conducted research on various facets of communication in a multilingual situation (e.g. Edward 1994, Hernandez 1997, Heugh 1995, Pattanayak 1981 & Tulasiewicz 1998), little has been done in connection with the teaching of specific subjects such as HSS subjects in the classrooms.

In order to give a clearer perspective of this problem, I would like to give a brief background of what is happening in the educational situation today with special reference to the black township schools, where research was conducted.

1.2 Developing the problem

As a lecturer from the former South African College for Teacher Education, I observed that there is a lack of effective utilization of Black learners' first languages in the teaching of Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase. This emanates from the fact that only English is used as the medium of instruction for all content subjects.

The reluctance to use indigenous languages seems to stem from the historical stigma attached to these languages. On the one hand the indigenous languages are associated with the previous government's policy of segregation, which was meant to stifle the development of the Blacks. This policy was structured along ethnic lines, where language was a dominant deciding factor. The use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction in Black schools is associated with the limitation of the knowledge acquired by the learners to speakers of those languages. This element of using a language for purposes of suppression and exclusion left an indelible mark in the minds of the Blacks, hence their negative attitude towards using an African language for teaching and learning.

On the other hand, Blacks also see indigenous languages as devoid of any economic value. Against this background, the use of African languages as medium of instruction is regarded as a step that will keep the Blacks in an inferior and uncompetitive position,

hence the adoption and endorsement of English as medium of instruction. Speakers of the indigenous languages decided to forsake their first languages because of the perception that English is the language of power, vertical social mobility, access to learning, employment and improved quality of life (cf Akinsanya, 1989: 138-139). This move did not only affect the use of indigenous languages for teaching and learning content subjects, but also the teaching, learning and development of the indigenous languages themselves.

This scenario has led to the surfacing of two related problems. The first one is informed by the fact that in order to successfully acquire a second language with tolerable facility, it is necessary for a learner to have a strong foundation in the mother tongue. Hernandez, (1997:70) says, “[h]aving a strong foundation in the native language makes learning a second language both easier and faster.” This idea is also supported by Nicholas (1994:7, 13 –14) when he says:

Where bilingual school children were taught both their mother tongue and the language of education, the acquisition of the second language was greatly helped. It has been shown that existing skills and abilities in a language assist the learner in acquiring skills in another language. Literacy in the mother tongue, in particular, benefits literacy in the language of education (i.e. medium of instruction). All students must be encouraged to maintain, develop and recover proficiency in their first language.

Over and above this it should also be borne in mind that learners understand concepts much better in their first languages (see paragraph 2.4). Relegating the mother tongue to the background deprives Black learners of the two fundamental tenets necessary for them to comprehend fully that which is essential to perform satisfactorily in their examinations. This contributes greatly to poor performance due to a lack of adequate understanding.

It is significant to note that it is not only the learners who are dealt a severe blow by the use of English as a medium of instruction, but also teachers in many Black schools experience a problem when they have to express themselves in this foreign language, which is not their first language. This hampers them from explaining clearly educational concepts and ideas to the learners, thus encouraging the teachers to give notes to the learners and compelling them to rote learn these notes, and to remember ideas that they did not understand during the lesson in the classroom.

The problems of languages in the classrooms are not only experienced in Black township schools where I conducted my research, but also in White public schools, as a result of the influx of Black learners from the townships and from the local residents. As can be deduced from a discussion thus far, the issue of language awareness in education comes into play as a result of multilingualism, which in its turn arises from social mobility and political changes in the country.

In the light of the situation sketched above, the question that I researched is: **What happens if I hold a workshop to raise language awareness in the teaching of**

Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase? However, before presenting my modus operandi, I shall clarify two important issues regarding this research.

The first one relates to the role of language in society. The primary and essential function of language is to communicate, but seeing that language is part of culture, it cannot be entirely divorced from the myriad activities that constitute culture. Young (in Nxumalo, 2000: 125) remarks as follows: “*Language ... is not merely a means of communication. It is a repository of values, standards, beliefs and past achievements. It is a social instrument of consequence.*” For this reason, it is not an “innocent” tool. In spite of this complexity and interwovenness, I am going to focus on the linguistic aspect of culture, although here and there my remarks or observations may touch on culture as a whole.

The second point I wish to make relates to the subjects of the HSS learning area. In the education system of the past, these subjects were identified separately as Geography, History and Religious Education. In the present curriculum they have been combined into Human and Social Sciences, with no hard and fast distinctions into three separate subjects. The Human and Social Sciences learning area is thus a combination of different types of content subjects, which formed separate entities in the past as subjects. Of these subjects, Geography and History form the major component of the learning area. These two subjects also constituted the main focus of my investigation. I shall now proceed to spell out my line of action in conducting the research.

1. 3 Research plan and design logic

In this investigation I used action research methodology as well as literature review. The literature review highlighted scholars who have expressed various views on educational aspects relevant to the topic under discussion in this study. These served to underscore the problem being discussed as well as to highlight the need to focus on the problem of language awareness in teaching and learning. I conducted a workshop, which helped me gather information about teachers’ awareness of diverse languages in their classrooms and how they handle this multilingual situation in the teaching and learning of HSS subjects in the senior phase, as well as answering the research question of this investigation. This helped me to establish the teachers’ level of awareness on the potential of multilingualism as a resource in teaching and learning.

Additional to the literature review and the workshop, I engaged in some classroom observation on lessons in HSS subjects in the senior phase prior to the workshop to get the feel of what is happening in these classrooms. Individual interviews with teachers in general before the workshop, as well as after the workshop with some of the teachers who participated in this activity, also formed part of my research technique in this investigation.

1.4 Lay-out of the study

Chapter 1 outlines the aim, scope and rationale of this study. The aim of the study has been stated as to develop language awareness in the teaching of Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review in which the ideas of a number of scholars on linguistic and educational matters are incorporated in the discussion. Their views serve as a solid base under-girding this investigation.

Chapter 3 focuses on methodology of data collection and analysis. The investigation is anchored on qualitative and action research for the collection and analysis of the relevant information. The chapter also describes the method of sampling used as well as the approach and plan of the workshop.

Chapter 4 analyses the views of the participants of the workshop as given in the questionnaires. The analysis is followed by the categorization of the findings and their semantic units of meaning.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion, which wraps up the entire discussion by summarizing the findings and recommendations.

1.5 Summary

In this chapter the aim of this study has been presented, namely **to develop language awareness in the teaching of Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase**. The scope and motivation of the study have also been outlined, including the role of language in the performance of learners in their examinations. In the next chapter the ideas of various scholars on language in society and education will be presented and applied to the current investigation.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is about literature dealing with people's communication in the multilingual situation, especially in the classroom situation. As stated in paragraph 1.1 (iii) there is a copious body of literature dealing with various aspects of language, multilingualism and medium of instruction. As a result of the extensiveness of this literature, coupled with the limited scope and confines of the type of essay I am dealing with, only the literature that is relevant to the study is chosen and ideas extracted from it to support and sometimes suggest better ways of dealing with the multilingual situation with special reference to the classroom situation. From the literature reviewed I identified **four themes**, which I singled out for discussion namely: **language awareness, multilingualism, mother tongue as a basis for learning, and the uses of language**. I am going to discuss these themes with regard to the current study.

What will now follow are the four themes discussed separately.

2.2 Language awareness

In general language awareness implies that one is in a position to be aware of many languages in one's community, society or nation, prompting one to,

- Respect the languages of the other people
- Be able to communicate in more than one of these languages
- Promote the use of the other languages other than one's own in a wider circle of applications such as in government, business, education, religion, the media etc.

In the current study it is in the educational sector, particularly the classroom situation where teaching and learning takes place, that the principles above are applied. Consequently these principles are crystallized as the teachers' awareness of the diverse languages in their classrooms and the ability to utilize these diverse languages for teaching or to encourage their use by learners for learning. Their utilization will make learners respect and have a positive attitude towards their languages. Tulasiewicz & Adams (1998: 167-185) say, "language awareness is where learners come to an understanding of each other's language and culture and learn to communicate and work together in a multilingual and multicultural world." They go on to include what language awareness can do or involves by saying:

Language awareness takes account of the elements which make up language, including sporting the differences between the user's own language and dialects and those of other people. This can be developed further to create language tolerance, a linguistic sensitivity of other languages and their users. Knowledge of language skills sensitises pupils to the diverse elements of language It sees language education process as the users' ability to apply their language experience for a critical analysis of society achieved through

an understanding of their own use of language and that of others (1998: 200-203).

On the other hand Nicholas, (1994: 16 & 103) says, “*language diversity could be used as a resource in areas of the curriculum where it had previously been overlooked like Social Sciences*” or HSS subjects in our case in South Africa.

The above-mentioned ideas are relevant to this research, as the use of indigenous languages seems minimal in HSS subjects. Only teachers on a minimal scale seem to use their own mother tongue for teaching and not for learning, with only the learners whose mother tongue is the same with that of the particular teacher benefiting. Little effort is made to encourage learners to use their own mother tongues.

The ideas above can help those involved in educational intervention to know how to handle the linguistic reaction of those they are involved with and be able to tolerate them. The same tolerance could benefit the HSS classroom situation if teachers are able to accept the diverse languages in their classrooms.

2.3. Multilingualism

I take “multilingualism” to mean the ability of using more than two different languages effectively during interaction with other people who speak different languages (cf. Salzmann, 1993: 130-131; Edward, 1994: 177). Edward (ibid) proceeds to say that multilingualism “*forces people to be tolerant of differences and eccentricity.*” He also says that it helps people to cross language barriers by the use of some kind of lingua franca. Freeman (1998) also encourages tolerance and respect among those in interaction in a school or social situation.

Webb (1998: 143-144) is of the opinion that there is more than one type of multilingualism. The types that feature in his discussion are qualitative multilingualism and functional multilingualism. For Webb qualitative multilingualism entails “*the acceptance that people may be different and the differences are not value-laden [as well as] ... creating space for people’s right to be different and assume a positive self-esteem.*”

To this qualitative multilingualism Webb (ibid) goes on to include its positive characteristic values of which only those that are relevant to the current research are given below:

- *A positive attitude towards people who know more than two languages*
- *An acceptance of multilingualism as a national resource rather than a problem*
- *An acceptance of the equal value of all languages and their speakers and a feeling of respect and tolerance towards them*
- *An acceptance of language rights as inalienable*
- *An acceptance of people’s right to exist fully through their language*

- *A willingness to respect others in the language they use towards you*
- *An understanding of the difficulties people have in acquiring and using a foreign language*
- *A tolerance by teachers especially of the people who have imperfect language knowledge and make mistakes*

For functional multilingualism, Verhoef, (1998: 194) feels, *“it cannot be pursued unless there is a real demand in society for multilingual skills which means that indigenous languages should be regarded as indispensable communication tools for academic activity in particular in this country.”*

The light shed by the above scholars, made me realize that starting to create a sense of acceptance and tolerance among HSS participants to use different languages in the classrooms would create acceptance of other racial groups. This acceptance would smooth the act of teaching and learning by heightening the self-esteem of the learners, which could further result in the richness of cognition and positive attitude required in language learning abilities needed in HSS subjects, culminating in improved HSS results.

The utilization or the realization of all languages as a resource in the teaching of HSS subjects will benefit the learners concerned only if teachers accept the equal value of all languages brought by their learners. Teachers of HSS subjects should be aware of the difficulties learners have in acquiring and using a foreign language, as well as take note of those learners who have imperfect language knowledge and make mistakes in order to pay special attention in helping them to cope with the HSS classroom situation where educational interaction is taking place.

In the present situation it would seem HSS teachers in many schools prohibit black learners from using their mother tongue. This shows that teachers take the diverse languages in their classrooms and schools as a problem. That is why I undertook this study and made use of a workshop to highlight the importance of the use of the mother tongue in the teaching and learning of HSS subjects in the senior phase. The workshop helped to shed light on the qualitative and functional multilingualism mentioned by the scholars above, which to me seems to be part of the solution to the present unsatisfactory state of school results.

This section looked at knowing more than two languages. What follows will concentrate on first language or mother tongue (which is the language that a learner knows best) in relation to how the learner acquires educational knowledge.

2.4 Education and the Mother tongue

Education is a process in which a learner is systematically led to self-actualization and meaningful, progressive participation in life's activities. The aim of education is, therefore, to acquire knowledge and skills that will equip a learner to cope with the demands of life, thus ensuring his/her survival and that of the community at large. The acquisition of this knowledge constitutes the learning process, which can only exist or

take place where there is a “meaningful association or encounter” (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988:71) between a teacher and a learner. Such “meaningful association or encounter” is realized through language in the classroom situation. There is thus no doubt that language plays an important role in the social and educational life of a learner. Webb (1998:132-147) says education should:

Excite the sense of adventure and exploration of the students to enable them to create, invent and discover meaningful education development and practice, ... this sense of creativity only occurs in a language which the learners know.

Clearly, if the learner does not know the language used very well, there will be a communication breakdown between the teacher and the learner. Such a situation subverts the learning process with dire consequences for the performance of the learner. To ensure that the learner derives maximum benefit from a learning encounter, the language used for the interaction should be one that is understandable to the learner. Webb (ibid) says: “*The use of language of learning and teaching, which learners know very well, is essential for both cognitive and affective educational development.*” This idea is shared by Brumfit (1995:167-185) who says language “*serves as a means of interaction and it shapes children’s understanding and develops their cognition. Children talk and share ideas using language. It is a means of communication, social interaction, cognitive and affective growth, and of control.*” It is also highlighted by Conacher (in Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg, 1988:71) who states as follows: “*The liberal approach sees the chief purpose of education as developing the cognitive, moral, physical, affective and spiritual aspect of the individual child.*”

Webb (op. cit.) goes on to say the “*... first language (home language, mother tongue) is essential for educational development*” Webb’s ideas clearly support the use of the mother tongue. His belief, to which I subscribe, is that creativity and invention will only occur maximally through the use of the learners’ mother tongue.

Expressing the importance of the mother tongue differently Pattanayak, (1981:48-145) says:

It is through the vernacular that the new conceptions of the mind should pass their way... in speech. It is the natural language of thought for the child and eminently suited for concept formation. ... It is best suited in achieving originality in thought and expression. Teaching in the vernacular an opportunity can be created for the common man to participate intelligently in the process of government.

Once Human and Social Sciences’ concepts are known to learners, learning could be a success, which will make all those who are involved in that particular educational situation happy and satisfied. Failure for learners to master these concepts in the language of instruction (English) should spur a creative teacher to translate those concepts into the learners’ mother tongue thus giving the low achievers a chance to participate intelligently in the learning process.

The school where I conducted my research uses English as the medium of instruction. As already mentioned in Chapter 1, English is their second language which needs a good foundation on which to be built in order to benefit the teaching and learning of HSS subjects. For this type of learning, Hernandez (1997:70) suggests that *“having a strong foundation in the native language makes learning a second language both easier and faster (cf Versfeld (1995: 2) Second language learning is worthy of discussion in this research essay because in the current situation in which English, for various reasons some of which were pointed out in paragraph 1.2 of Chapter I, is still the dominant (though not necessarily effective) medium of instruction, it is highly essential for the learners to raise their proficiency in this language in order to make it easier for them to acquire HSS subjects’ concepts much easier and faster and improve the cognitive knowledge required for learning.*

Since knowing the mother tongue well is beneficial to the learning of English, which is the medium of instruction (for most black children), it could directly and indirectly benefit learning of content subjects in schools in general and HSS subjects in particular, thus providing a two-pronged approach towards trying to solve the problem of learners failing to understand adequately what they learn in the classroom.

Being good in the mother tongue where learners’ thinking develops quickly and easily, the transfer of knowledge from mother tongue to HSS subjects will also be easy. That is why Macdonald, (1991:29-30) is convinced that: *“A thorough first language course gets children off to a good start in education because the language provides a bridge between the child’s home and the demands of the new environment of the school.”* Macdonald (ibid) continues the support for mother tongue and says: *“Poor first language programmes lead to poor teaching...”* which seems to be the major factor impacting on the results in schools in general.

Supporting the mother tongue as a necessary foundation for all types of learning is Danesi (1988:452) who says: *“Those who did not acquire enough skills in mother tongue will experience all kinds of learning difficulties.”* This confirms the fact that neglecting or marginalizing the learners’ mother tongue could result in a lack of the foundation on which their thinking skills and their ability to acquire and use other languages develops.

Seeing that language, especially the mother tongue, is so important to the educational development of the learners, more comments on language will be given in the ensuing paragraph.

2.5 Language and its uses

People communicate effectively and understand each other through the use of language by either speaking or writing. Any form of communication needs those people involved to understand the linguistic signs or codes that are used. Agreement of words and signs, which are used in the interaction, is important if communicators are to understand what they are talking about. Mwamwenda (1995:167) says:

Communication in the classroom is based on the meanings of words exchanged between teachers and learners, and unless

they both understand each other, communication and education, per se, will be fruitless.

This understandable and agreed communication is also relevant to this research, seeing that, as already mentioned in paragraph 2.4, learning in the HSS subjects would not be effective when there is communication breakdown. In the classroom situation the use of a language involves interaction between learners and learners on the one hand, as well as between teachers and learners on the other in a mutual educational relationship. If teachers are not using clearer codes and also lack the tools or vocabulary to express clearly the HSS subjects' concepts, effective learning in this learning area will not take place.

Blanton, Berenson and Norwood (2000:228) add an important dimension about the use of language when they say:

The purpose of classroom discourse is to make sense of ideas and to use those ideas to generate new thinking... students will interpret utterances as thinking devices, taking an active stance toward them by questioning and extending them, and by incorporating them into their own external and internal utterance.

This idea is supported and even expanded on by Hernandez, (1997: 104- 105) by saying:

This interactive use of language enables the collective group of students in a class to achieve a social identity. Speakers also share control of the topics, and repair breakdowns in communication. By providing a full range of activities for using both oral and written language, teachers can foster children's academic and vocational success ... Effective interaction requires cognitive skills such as defining problems, generating hypotheses, and presenting evidence, and social skills such as managing conflict, using divergent points of view, and providing mutual support

In the HSS subjects, learners need to listen carefully to what the teacher is saying in order to assimilate what is said and again generate other ideas from it. If that happens, learning will be taking place and that would ensure better results at the end of a lesson or end of a grade. This further emphasizes the importance of using a user-friendly language as medium of instruction to enhance the creation of new knowledge by the learners because they will have understood the gist of the interaction in the classroom.

In the school situation each discipline or subject uses a language that is peculiar to it in the sense that ordinary words of a language are used in subject-specific contexts, some of which develop into a specialized technical vocabulary for that discipline or field of study. Accordingly, although a language like English as a medium of instruction must be learnt, it must be taken into consideration that English as a subject or means of general communication will differ to some extent with that used in HSS subjects

because of the specialized subject terminology. Thus, for instance, geographers' language involves a new technical vocabulary in which things are classified as distinct from each other in ways different from everyday classifications. Names become technical terms when they are given field-specific meanings. Discourse of geography describes the world in technical terms, which are not simply translated into everyday language. On the other hand, in History, language is used in a number of ways to distance people and to create themes and trends in history, building these up in sequences of events or in settings. Progressivism's attempts at 'real' history, making history 'come alive', are often aimed at the dryness, generalizing distance and difficulty of historical language, which excludes lower-achieving students from prestigious or elitist versions of its discourse (cf Christie, 1990: 129 – 130).

This element of assigning specialized meanings to ordinary words or creating specialized technical vocabulary compounds the problem to learners who are subjected to a foreign language as medium of instruction (English in our situation), because, besides contending with understanding English as a means of communication on the general level, the learners have to battle with the transferred specialized meaning of the subject-specific technical language. As advocated by Webb (1998) and Pattanayak (1981) in paragraph 2.4 above, this hurdle can be greatly reduced or eliminated by the use of a user-friendly language of instruction, which, in this instance, are the indigenous languages over and above English.

2.6 Strategies of teaching in the multilingual classroom

Multilingual classrooms are de facto multicultural classrooms. They are characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity. Teaching effectively in these classrooms means creating a learning environment, which provides full access to the core curriculum and fosters communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. Teachers need instructional strategies and techniques that work effectively with students from diverse linguistic and cultural background and in different situations.

Not only the strategies are needed in the multilingual classroom, but also skills and the knowledge of how to teach and react in these multilingual classrooms are needed. The strategies that could help in HSS classroom discourse are **code switching, translation, interpretation, and borrowing or loaning**.

2.6.1 Code switching

Code switching is a phenomenon where individuals change languages frequently, often within one sentence. In code switching, speakers may often switch for emphasis. It can become a conscious and pragmatic strategy for achieving a specific discourse objective. The strategy of switching codes is most often used as a form of accommodation rather than alienation. People from the different language groups residing in the townships needed to get to know one another and to accommodate one another in their environment. They resorted to code switching, which served to express ideas with which the vocabulary of their own language could not cope, or ideas, which were alien to their culture. It symbolizes values of democratization, equity, coming together, mutual understanding and respect. It offers the possibility of creating multilingual programmes, advertisements, brochures, political speeches etc. that would enable

communication to accommodate different sectors of our multilingual society, not only in terms of understanding, but also in terms of solidarity in a cost effective way (cf de Klerk, 1998: 61-71).

Rubagumya, (1994:83-91) says:

Code switching is a powerful reflection of the ways the teacher and the learners mediate the communicative demands they face in the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers must impart knowledge by resorting to the linguistic resources available. Code switching can be in the presentation of new material, reinforcement of subject matter, in the acquisition of learning material, in the management of classroom interaction, when learners are asked to explain something, and during summaries. Code switching is a communicative phenomenon that should be explicitly accounted for in the decisions about teaching method and language policies. It should be a communicative resource for pupils and there should be a tolerance of code switching in both spoken and written discourse. Pupils must be allowed to use more than one language in their writing, particularly in the examination, when they are under pressure.

Wardhaugh (1996: 103-116) is also of the opinion that code switching crosses boundaries and changes interpersonal relations. In summary, code switching should be negotiated among learners and teachers if the use of mother tongues by both participants is to be fruitful in educational activities, including those of HSS subjects.

2.6.2 Translation and interpretation

Translation is the act or instance of reproducing in a written form the meaning of a word, speech, book, etc. in another language. Interpretation is the expression of the meaning of a text in a different language. Although both translation and interpretation require decoding of a message in one language and encoding that message in another language, they differ in the sense that translation involves writing while interpretation involves speaking. Both tasks call for language processing in a source language that has to be transformed into an output in a target language, while the content of the message is kept intact (cf Allen, 1990:621; Hamers, 2000: 244).

There are scholars that believe that translation and interpretation are influential in communication or in teaching and learning. A concept of supporting bilingualism in education, recognizing, supporting and exploiting students' use of other languages in the classroom, through translation, becomes influential (cf Nicholas, 1994:4).

In the HSS learning area teachers who know many languages in their classrooms may translate or interpret the subject matter when teaching. Teachers in HSS subjects may also encourage the learners to interpret during the lesson or even translate for those who do not understand. Such an approach would go a long way towards ensuring that

learners derive maximum benefit from the classroom interaction, with a positive influence on their performance.

2.6.3 Borrowing

Borrowing refers to the introduction of new words from one language into another to accommodate new concepts brought about by acculturation and technicalization (cf Hockett, 1958:402-407; Bloomfield, 1979:444-475; Crystal, 1991: 41). The most obvious reason for borrowing is the need-filling motive where a gap has to be filled because a specific concept or practice was non-existent in the receptor language, e.g. *tafula* (<Afrikaans *tafel*) in Xitsonga for 'table'. Many types or forms of borrowing can be distinguished, such as adoption, adaptation, coinage and semantic substitution.

Adoption is an instance where the new word is taken over completely as it is from the donor language e.g. *Geography, solstice*, etc. to designate those concepts in the receptor language, e.g. Xitsonga.

Adaptation is where the borrowed word is adapted into the sound system as well as orthographic and spelling rules of the receptor language, e.g. in Xitsonga we find the following examples, *jenerala* (general), *majoro-jenerala*; (major general), *puresidente* (president); *dimokirasi* (democracy); *latichudi* (latitude) etc.

Coinage entails the combining of bona fide words of the receptor language to accommodate the new concepts, e.g. *hlungwa-vukosi* (coup d'etat); *ntivombangu* (environmental studies) in Xitsonga.

Finally, **semantic substitution** in which existing words in the receptor language which have a *related* meaning to the new concept are extended in their meaning to include the new concept, for example the following Xitsonga words: *hosi* (originally 'chief') applied to 'emperor.'

The strategy of borrowing is used in many languages for purposes of technicalization and revalorization so as to expand the field of application of those languages, i.e. elaboration of function. Webb (1998: 132-147) comments as follows on this strategy as far as the indigenous languages are concerned:

African languages are fully available as languages of learning and teaching. There is need for the adaptation of these languages for development. Adaptation will be the technicalisation of the African languages as well as their general revalorisation, that is their social promotion, so that they increasingly become regarded as instruments of value, instruments with which important task can be performed, such as their use in high status public functions and domain. ...Language revalorisation is a long –term task, which is directly linked to the positive socio-economic transformation of a community.

On account of the fact that the mammoth task involved in borrowing affects the community as a whole, the teacher who engages in it should work hand in glove with the relevant codifying authority and other stakeholders to ensure acceptance of the

terminology developed in this manner so that the language continues to serve as a link between the home environment and the school. Such an approach to the multilingual situation in the classroom could enhance better understanding and performance by the learners.

2.7 Summary

This section presented what scholars say about language in general; its uses both among the people in the community and in the classroom where teaching and learning take place. It was highlighted that each school subject has its specialized vocabulary or language. It was also pointed out that one learns the second language better if one knows the first language. It was highlighted out that there is a connection between language awareness and progress at school as well as between language and culture. It was clear from the above information that language plays a major role in communication in the classroom and thus affects school results at the end. As language diversity is a reality in most classrooms, it was argued that one effective strategy of dealing with such a classroom situation is the adoption of a multilingual approach in teaching through the use of code switching, translation and interpretation, and borrowing. In the next chapter the methodology used in the collection of data will be discussed.



CHAPTER 3

Methodology of data collection and analysis

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the way data was collected based on qualitative research methodology. Four strategies were used, namely, literature review, a workshop, interviews and observation. The literature reviewed for this study has already been dealt with in Chapter 2. Consequently only the questionnaires of both the workshop and that of the interviews will be explained and discussed in the present chapter. Findings from the observation will also be mentioned in the section dealing with the findings.

3.2 The research methodology

The study was approached from the qualitative research paradigm. This is the paradigm of social interaction between the researcher and the respondents involving a deep understanding of the social life and culture of the population I am dealing with, which Hakim (1987:26) says:

Is also concerned with individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviours. It offers richly descriptive reports of individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings, the meanings and interpretations given to events and things.

The major research technique used to encapsulate the above is action research, which Cunningham, (1993:5,9) describes as:

A process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system, involving theorizing, experimenting, implementing and understanding the system, defining solutions or discoveries, applying and modifying these solutions, and assessing the results of the action.

He proceeds to say that the purpose of the activities above is to understand how the system operates. Such understanding can lead to or result in improvement and change. Winter (1987:21,42) underscores this definition of action research by saying:

Action research is ...a study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of the action within it. It is ... a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their practices.

Finally Hart, (1998: 46) adds a further dimension by defining action research as:

A system where a researcher helps a group to help themselves and to empower the respondents to research themselves and their situation and on this basis take responsibility for their own situation.

I regarded this research technique as appropriate for the present study, seeing that my aim is to familiarize myself with the prevailing situation in the teaching and learning activities of the HSS subjects in the senior phase with the view to suggesting possible improvements, changes and adoption of certain strategies that may help to enhance the performance of learners in these subjects.

To realize the ideas expressed in the quotations above, a workshop was organized and conducted among some teachers of HSS subjects in the senior phase. Sampling preceded this workshop.

3.3 Sampling

Before settling down to the composition of the sample, I visited two female teachers, and also one male teacher who is a neighbour, teaching in different schools in Soshanguve. I asked them semi-structured questions about their teaching. What I wanted to find out were the problems they encounter in classrooms or in schools, which affect the schools' performances. From our interviews, I gathered that content subjects were a problem because of the medium of instruction i.e. English, which is not the learners' mother tongue. The most worrying aspect they mentioned was lack of family support from the learners' parents in school matters as well as lack of educational authorities or officials in matters that concern these content subjects. From these interviews my plan was to help in the field that I had knowledge of and interest in, which is Human and Social Sciences subjects.

In choosing my sample, cognizance was taken of Leedy's (1980:111) assertion that it

should be so carefully chosen that through it the researcher is able to see all the characteristics of the total population in the same relationship that he would see them were he actually to inspect the totality of the population.

The fieldwork was conducted mainly at **Tshwane Central** and **Tshwane North Schools**, with **Saulsville** representing Tshwane Central and **Soshanguve** representing Tshwane North. These townships are part of Gauteng Province and they were easily accessible.

I targeted ten teachers from two secondary schools in Saulsville (Tshwane Central) for the workshop. But, due to wrong timing I could only use seven teachers from one school because it was during revision time, and principals wanted the teachers to put more effort and due the best of their ability in their teaching so that learners could performance better at the end of the year and produce good results. The low number of these participants for the workshop was not a problem as I had interviewed three teachers in the beginning of the research, and I could consult them if more information was required, this information would make up for what was lacking from the workshop.

The two female teachers are people whom I know and I only had to pass by their homes when coming from work to interview them. The third one was my neighbour, consequently I only had to walk over to his place for the interviews. The sample was accordingly composed of these participants:

- Seven teachers who attended the workshop in Saulsville, of whom six were from Human and Social Sciences subjects and one teacher from Economic and Management Sciences. They were interested in what was to happen in the workshop.
- Two female teachers and a male teacher interviewed from Soshanguve, one female teacher being a Head of Department, the other female teacher was from HSS in the intermediate phase. The male teacher teaches Economic and Management Sciences in the senior phase.

Initial interviews were the first to take place as already mentioned above, and will be the next item to be discussed.

3.4. Interviews

These interviews were conducted before and after the workshop. As stated earlier in paragraph 3.3, the interviews conducted before the workshop gave direction to this study. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to interview the two female teachers from Soshanguve. I followed Leedy's (1980:104) advice that "*questions should be carefully planned and as accurately worded as the items in the questionnaires.*" Some of the questions I asked them individually were:

- *What are the problems encountered in teaching?*
- *Do you hold subject meetings and meetings with teachers from other learning areas to discuss problems or progress in these areas?*
- *Do you ever seek some help from education authorities such as subject specialists?*
- *How do you involve parents in the HSS subject matters of their children?*
- *Does your school ever discuss progress or the running of the school with parents? Why?*
- *Do you have teacher centres, and how are they used?*

This initial interaction led to an investigation of literature on this subject from the library.

After the literature review and the conducting of the workshop, there were further interviews from the workshop as a focus group. The interview activity continued to allow these participants time for interaction with fellow participants, sharing ideas and what they got from the workshop. These workshop respondents gave verbal responses during the interviews, which I noted. The interviews after the workshop were held in order to assess the impact and success of the workshop. Some of the questions put to them were:

- *What is your opinion about the workshop?*

- *Would you like this type of workshops to be held? Why?*

Before the workshop could take place I visited the classrooms of the workshop participants to observe their activities with learners. That is why observation will be the next concept or theme to be discussed briefly.

3.5 Observation

The aim in observation was to find out what was really happening in the classrooms as far as communication between learners and teachers is concerned, which is the practical element of teaching and learning and the frequency of teacher talk in comparison with students talk. Observation was encouraged by Flick's (1998:161) words, which say:

Observation tries to understand practices, interactions, and events, which occur in a specific context, from the inside as a participant (workshop I conducted) or from outside as a mere observer.

I wanted to observe if there was group-work among learners, peer teaching as well as how teachers and learners relate to one another. I had no problem during observation because I was part of the culture and a member of the society that existed in those classes. From Leedy's (1980:107) idea that "*observation is accompanied by the making of a record,*" I also made some notes to help in this research.

The procedure to interview local respondents, and observe and run a workshop in Tshwane area, was preferred in view of its cost-effectiveness. The workshop will be discussed below.

3.6 Workshop

A workshop is a two-way beneficial process that can also help teachers to get involved, and so help the development of competence in their teaching. This was preferred in addition to other techniques (on which some researchers solely depended) such as interviews and observations, where there is no intervention in learning among the participants, but just the collection of one-sided information for the researcher. According to Brook-Harris & Stock-Ward, (1999: 5-6) a definition of the characteristics of a workshop embraces the following:

Short-term intensive learning; small group interaction, active involvement; development of competence; problem solving; behavior change as an outcome and application of new learning. It is also a short-term learning experience that encourages active, experiential learning and uses a variety of learning activities to meet the needs of the diverse learner.

What will follow is the workshop I planned for this intervention.

3.6.1 Structure of the workshop

Title: *A multilingual approach in the teaching and learning of the Human and Social Sciences subjects in the Senior Phase*

Venue: *Flavius Mareka Senior Secondary School.*

The participants: *The participants consisted of all members mentioned in paragraph 3.3 under the first bullet. The females dominated the participants. Their needs and the needs that I had already identified as mentioned in paragraph 3.3 were incorporated in the design of the workshop focused on the HSS subject.*

Goals:

- *To sensitize the HSS teachers to the number of languages spoken in their classrooms*
- *To show teachers the importance of understanding and using these multiple languages in their classrooms for teaching the subject and helping the learners to learn*
- *To show teachers the importance of the effective use of multilingualism*
- *To highlight the value of multilingual collaboration and team teaching*
- *To make teachers aware of the importance of respecting learners in teaching HSS*
- *To generate ideas on using all the multilingual potential such as translation, code switching and interpreting in the teaching and learning of HSS*

Tasks during the workshop involved the following topics:

Defining language awareness and the importance of language of the subjects
The importance of code switching in a multilingual classroom
Developing multilingual learners' reading and writing skills
Multilingual collaboration in-group work and team teaching using the multilingual approach

Methods:

- *Use of the experiential learning method, which included a mini-lecture and discussion*
- *Combining the intra-personal, inter-personal, small groups and the whole group teaching strategies*
- *Giving them handouts containing information about language awareness as well as language of the subject*
- *Regular use of the board to record respondents' responses*

What follows are the major questions to which those attending the workshop had to respond. The workshop consisted of eight sections, which are the personal information, classroom problems and the grouping of HSS subjects, knowledge about the use of the

mother tongue, knowledge about reading, communication, textbook method, collaboration, and language awareness.

i) Personal information

Write your names on the papers provided.

What is your home language?

Which languages are you able to speak, read and write?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of knowing only one language?

When did you start teaching HSS?

What are the language problems that you encounter in your classroom?

What would you like to be helped with in the teaching of HSS?

ii) Classroom problems and the views about the grouping of the HSS subjects.

What did you like about the old way of separating or grouping the subjects e.g. History and Geography?

What is your opinion about the new structure: *Human and Social Sciences*?

What is your opinion about the language of the subjects of HSS?

What is the attitude of the learners on this learning area?

Are you happy about you teaching and learners learning HSS through the medium of English and why?

iii) Knowledge about the use of the mother tongue

What is code switching?

Do you code switch when you explain a concept? Explain.

Do you allow your learners to code switch and why?

Do you make your learners aware of the spoken and the written language, and how do you do it?

What do you do to promote a sense of respect and responsibility to others and their languages?

How do you let learners acquire and practice the use of language of the subject?

Do you correct the grammar of your learners and why?

iv) Knowledge about reading

What do you think is the purpose of reading in HSS subjects?

Do you have a library corner in your classroom for more reading by learners?

Do you have a library in your school and what is in the library?

Do you put aside time for learners to read in the library?

How is the language of this learning area represented in the textbooks? Explain.

v) Communication

Who dominates your classroom communication, and why?

How often do you interrupt your learners while they are still talking, and why?

When do you hand over control to your learners, and why?

How and when do you involve learners to manage their learning?

Do you allow learners to reflect on their learning? Explain.

vi) Textbook method

Do you use the textbook method? Why or why not?

What are you doing to help learners with the language of HSS in the textbooks? Show the strategies.

What do you think will be the outcome of the textbook method?

How do you select textbooks?

How do you use textbooks? Show the strategies.

Have you given your learners an open-notebook essay? Why or why not?

Do you give learners instructions on how to take notes and how to make summaries? Why or why not?

vii) Collaboration

Give the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative teaching or planning together.

What is your opinion concerning a cross-curriculum theme?

How will you encourage group work to learners?

How will you encourage collaboration among teachers?

viii) Language awareness

What is language awareness?

What is the value of a language?

What is multilingualism?

What is the learners' attitude about the medium of instruction?



3.7 Summary

This chapter dealt with data collection. The major technique for data collection was a workshop that allowed participation among teachers teaching the same subject. Preference of the workshop is mainly because of the direct and personal experience of both the respondents and the researcher. The workshop interaction gives the participants an opportunity to share ideas, and encourages them to want to research more on the particular problem, thus enriching them with knowledge. Through participation in the workshop, teachers gain the ability to be creative and inventive in finding new strategies and skills for teaching, which will improve their competence and self-esteem and ultimately lead to teachers changing their behaviour.

In this research the workshop drew teachers' attention to the diversity of languages their learners bring to classrooms, and encouraged these teachers to use these languages for teaching and learning as well as the creation of self-development of communication skills in their classrooms where diverse languages prevail. The effect of collaboration by both teachers and learners is another issue that the workshop tried to highlight to the teachers.

In the next chapter the data will be presented and analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is about data analysis. The major research method as mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3 is the workshop, which was used for eliciting and recording the responses of the participants. Observation, interviews and questionnaires were also used as triangulation to the workshop. Following the arrangement of data collection in chapter three, data analysis will start off with analyzing the unstructured questionnaires for the initial interviews then observation and finally the analysis of the workshop's questionnaires.

The workshop participants wrote their responses for the workshop on papers and I collected them at the end of the intervention. Writing their responses on papers made it easy and faster for me to analyze the data, as the data was always available when I wanted to refer to what each participant had said. I gave each participant a number starting from 1 – 7 for those who participated in the workshop and 8 – 10 for the teachers interviewed at the beginning of the research. The letter **T**, which stands for **teacher**, preceded the number allocated.

Time was not wasted, such as transcribing from a tape recorder because of the use of the workshop technique where participants wrote their responses on paper. During the workshop, when they mentioned an important point relevant to the research, I noted it during my spare time and tea breaks.

In the analysis I will write down each question put to the participants, give a general indication of the findings and then quote some of the participants' responses that bring out the general feeling of the group. The interviews as well as a brief explanation or discussion of the observation made before the workshop will be dealt with first before tackling the section of writing down the question and giving the participants' responses. I will later synthesize the data by identifying the categories and discussing them one by one.

What follows are the interviews of the individuals and those of the selected few forming the focus group from the workshop.

4.2 Interviews

4.2.1 Individuals

Question: What are the problems encountered in teaching?

Answer: The general concern from all teachers is the problem of the language of instruction (English) which teachers feel learners are not at ease using it for learning. In support to what is said above **T10** sums up as follows:

The biggest problem is in the language of instruction for content subjects, we battle to put the subject matter across. Our learners also struggle to express what they learnt from the lesson present.

Question: Do you hold subject meetings and meetings with teachers from other learning areas to discuss problems or progress in these areas?

Answer: The meetings held by all teachers seem to be on the general running of the school rather than focusing on the problems and progress of the specific learning area. This is supported by T8's words that say, "*no, the only meeting we have is for the issues concerning administration and management of some school issues.*"

Question: Do you ever seek some help from education authorities such as subject specialists?

Answer: T9 "*We do, but what we get is them checking our workbooks, of which we do not get feedback. They always claim to be late for another appointment in another school. They only meet the principal and the Heads of Department of various subjects.*"

Teachers see educational authorities as people interested in paper work rather than helping them with real classroom problems in the real interaction between them and learners.

Question: How do you involve parents in educational matters?

Answer: The general response is that parents are not the willing horses to help in the education of their children.

This is summed up by T10 who says:

They refuse to be involved. I think their reason is because many of them are illiterate. Even if you send them their children's work to sign, only a few will respond. They even fail to encourage their children to write homework.

Question: Does your school ever discuss progress or the running of the school with parents, and why?

Answer: An honest answer is given by T9 who says:

We do not, mainly because they seem reluctant in matters concerning the children's education. I do not blame them though, because besides being illiterate they come from poor, noisy areas and a place full of drinking problems. Parents are called when the school wants money from them or if there is a problem of discipline of some learners.

Most teachers do agree that the school fails to allow parent to get involved in the education of their children as the above words from T9 indicate.

Question: Do you have teacher centres, and how are they used?

Answer: From their responses the centres are not properly utilized for particular learning areas matters. T8 summarizes their concern by saying:

We have one. Generally, most of the time it is used for holding meetings, which do not involve classroom problems. At the introduction of OBE, the centre were used to hold meeting involving OBE on Saturdays, which I can say were not beneficial as far as I am concerned, as they confused people, like myself.

In summary the situation seems to be that teachers are the only players and referees in their classroom educational activities in their particular learning areas without the help of either their learners' parents or educational authorities.

4.2.2 Focus group

Question: What is your opinion about this workshop?

Answer: T6 *"At least I learnt something valuable today. If all the workshops can be this successful we would improve our results and so enrich our teaching."*

Question: Would you like this type of workshop to be held, and why?

Answer: T7 *"Yes, because is nice to hear other colleagues' views, and to realise that for some of the problems we have, their answers and solutions are in our hands. You know what it is like when you are able to do it yourself. It is fantastic."*

Teachers see holding workshops as a way of allowing them the opportunity to interact with colleagues, which seem to be the key to the solutions of their classroom problem solving as well as a key to their self-confidence.

What follows here are both the classroom activities of the workshop participants I observed before the running of the workshop and during the workshop.

4.3 Observation

My observation from the classroom activities is that teachers made learners aware before the time that they were to use English as a language of learning as their examinations were going to be written in English. Teachers spoke most of the time, with little interaction between them and their learners. Only a few learners were actively involved in the answering of the questions asked by their teachers. Teachers who encouraged group work did not encourage their learners to use their mother tongue in their group discussion, even if they were to answer in English during feedback.

What was observed during the workshop was that respondents were a bit tense at the beginning. After the ice-breaking task, they were relaxed, and later they were quite free to discuss and argue. There was a tendency to use Sepedi, with a bit of translation into English. Translation was done because of the fact that one member could not understand Sepedi or any of the African languages. It was observed that some participants from other African languages accepted the use of Sepedi and English as a medium of the workshop. There was a problem in using only English as the language for the workshop, as some participants had a problem in expressing themselves fully and clearly without code switching into their mother tongue. It was observed that there

were two dominant respondents who were always talking and starting some arguments. They made the workshop discussions interesting and lively. What surprised me was that they were not amongst those who gave feedback during the report back session from the groups' contribution. I later wanted to know why they never reported on behalf of the groups they were in. Their response was that they wanted to give their partners time to be involved, as they had contributed the most during the discussion.

4.4 Workshop responses

The focus here is on the number of issues such as general knowledge of the participants' language, the number of languages they can speak and write and the implication there of, their experiences and problems they encountered in the teaching field concerning methodologies and strategies especially in the teaching of a multilingual classroom focused on HSS in particular.

Question: What is your home language?

Answer: 99% of the participants were from African languages, with isiNdebele dominating these African Languages, while 1% was Tamil.

Question: Which languages are you able to speak, read and write?

Answer: Generally English, Sepedi, Setswana and a bit of Afrikaans were the languages that almost all (90%) of the participants know and are able to use.

Question: What are the advantages and disadvantages of knowing only one language?

Answer: All (100%) respondents gave their response for the advantage as follows:

T2. "You fit in and communicate well in a multicultural society and are able to impart knowledge and culture to multilingual classrooms, conferences and congregations composed of multicultural people, and you can obtain knowledge and culture from these conferences, and congregations, and gain multilingual texts. T1. Communication becomes easier with other people, learners and parents of different languages. T3. Knowing more than one language will result in intermarriage, friendship, better understanding of each other, easily conducting of learning matter and controlling of participation." T4. It makes it much easier to communicate with other people and enables one to explore and learn more from others.

For the disadvantage of knowing one language they responded this way:

T1. Communication may become difficult, and as a teacher I will not be able to help parents as well as learners in their own languages if social problems and learners' learning problems in their learning area are encountered. T2. You are not able to communicate effectively in a multicultural community such as South Africa, and you are unable to access knowledge of other cultures. You are disadvantaged academically and in interviews for different careers and have limited choice of educational institutions e.g. Afrikaans schools. T4. If learners cannot understand a concept, it will be difficult for you to help them. You cannot

communicate with people who use different languages, and so you will fail to express your feelings. T5. You will be unable to code switch when explaining difficult concepts.

The way teachers see it, to know more than one language can be of great help in a multilingual classroom or situation as one will be able to understand and be able to switch to another language for smooth and clear communication with others.

Question: When did you start teaching Human and Social Sciences?

Answer: The average was 14 years for 80% of those who took Human and Social Sciences, which means the old History and Geography. 20% of those who took HSS, to mean the new combination of History and Geography, had an average of less than a year of experience.

Question: What are the language problems that you encounter in your classroom?

Answer: All indicated that English was the major problem, as well as some African Languages learners spoke at school. Participants do admit that not knowing their learner's languages create a major teaching and learning problem as they also fail to address their learners in their language where necessary.

This is what some of them said in support to what is mentioned above.

T1. Learners cannot understand the language of learning that is the medium of instruction (English). Trying to meet learners' comprehension, their home languages, at times becomes a problem, as I do not have the proper command of Tsonga and Venda, and it is therefore too difficult to help them in their languages. T2. Learners who have not spent more than two years in an urban area, i.e. who come from rural areas such as Northern Province in Venda and Gazankulu, encounter serious problems if the teacher is Sepedi speaking, because when I use Sepedi, which is my mother tongue and a language that is known in Pretoria's townships to explain a difficult concept they do not understand. Those who come from Sepedi rural areas at least do comprehend when teachers translate into Sepedi as this language is also their mother tongue. So, these learners from rural areas encounter a serious language backlog.

Question: What would you like to be helped with in the teaching of HSS?

Answer: Their answers varied because of the different priorities they have in this area but 80% mentioned the lesson planning.

This is what some of them said:

T1 To be helped with lesson planning and proper lesson presentation by tutors or subjects' experts from the department of education. Learners should also be allowed the chance to learn in their mother tongues, as this will be their comfortable medium of expression. T4 Education authorities should allow us to use different languages that we know and not just English only. Learning materials should be sent to school, and

schools should be allowed the freedom to have a classroom specifically for HSS with all the teaching aids and other information relevant to all subjects. T3 Some workshops should be conducted concerning the idea of the syllabus, the methodology and sometimes even offer some strategies in the teaching of HSS. T5 Educators must be properly trained in the planning and the presentation of the subject, and they must always give advice in matters concerning a particular subject. More workshops to upgrade educators should always be conducted in the teacher centres. T2 Learners should attend an enrichment programme in English or have certain texts translated into their own languages for reference. The teaching of HSS needs expert authors to compile suitable learning material, which covers the essential aspects of the history of South Africa. T6 Facilitators should supply work programmes, and come to school every quarter to give assistance wherever we have problems."

Participants are of the opinion that lesson planning must be demonstrate by those who have the know how such as subject specialists to all teachers and that these specialists must be more knowledgeable than teachers who will take control of their specific learning area without difficulty.

Question: What did you like about the old way of separating or grouping the subjects e.g. History and Geography?

Answer: The general response was that it was a clear distinction, which was easy to teach and follow and they said:

T1 Learners at times understood them as two separate subjects and could not link them, that is to say, they could not see that historical event, which constitute History happened on land which is part of Geography. T2 Is a clear distinction and illustrates the richness of the subject as a whole. T3 Separation of the subjects makes it easier for the syllabus to be completed and learners will be able to identify all the concepts and terminology of History and Geography if they are separate. T4 In the past when Geography and History were separated, I was able to teach History effectively, but with HSS I am having problems with some parts of Geography, especially map work.

Question: What is your opinion about the new structure?

Answer: All respondents did not like the idea of combining the two subjects.

Some said:

T2 This area integrates the two subjects, which adds to enrichment, but the authors have left out the fundamental structure of both History and Geography, and therefore over simplified HSS by trying to integrate other learning areas such as economics. T3 I do not like the new structure because the grouping of all those subjects will cause problems for some of our teachers, as they will be terminated from their jobs. T7 I disagree with the structure for it is not possible to integrate effectively all aspects of History and Geography in one learning area.

Participants see the bundling of HSS subjects as confusing as there is mixing of concepts from different subjects as well as reducing the number of teachers thus causing retrenchment.

Question: What is your opinion about the language of the subjects of HSS?

Answer: There were different answers, which emanated from the fact that these teachers have different experiences as far as language is concerned.

Here is what some of them had to say:

T1 *English should be kept or written to the level of the learners, especially as it is their second language. T4 It would be easier if learners were given a chance to express themselves in their mother tongue.*

Question: What is the attitude of the learners in this learning area?

Answer: Positive. That was the general answer given by 90% of the respondents while 10% said it is not positive.

Here are some of their responses:

T1 *Their attitude is fair, as a fraction understand the medium of instruction and another fraction experience a problem as far as English is concerned. T2 Learners do not like HSS because of the overemphasis of sciences from the Department of Education and the cooperate world. Little concern is given to humanities. T4 Learners are enjoying HSS and they like it very much. T5 Learners readily accept the new learning area because they are active participants. T6 They enjoy the subject although they have a problem with terminology of a language.*

Question: Are you happy about you teaching and learners learning HSS through the medium of English and why?

Answer: The respondents gave different reasons ranging from the fact that the language is difficult for the learners to use for learning, but other teachers felt using English will make learners learn the language.

They said:

T1 *It puts me as the educator in a difficult position as not all learners are fairly accommodated because of the difficulty they experience in using English, as I have to explain in their mother tongue." T2 I am happy to teach HSS in English because most of the learning materials are written in English and because English as the second language is user friendly. Learners will be able to learn English faster. T3 I am happy because I am able to express my knowledge about HSS although I do feel African languages must also be practiced in teaching HSS. T4 I am happy, but I am afraid they do not understand English and they cannot express themselves. In a lesson, learners are the ones who should*

know and understand what I am saying if effective teaching and learning is to take place. T5 It should be taught in the language best understood by learners, because most learners cannot communicate and discuss freely in English. T6 I am happy because it helps learners to know English as the language of instruction, which learners are suppose to know, as the examination questions are asked in English. T7 I am not happy because pupils are not well –versed in English. They should be taught in their mother tongue.

The way participants see it learners are at the disadvantage when English is used as a language of learning as they feel most learners do not seem to follow their teaching.

Question: What is code switching?

Answer: All (100%) said it is switching from one language to another. Two of the responses are given here as an example of the idea of what they implied in their response.

T2 Is the mixing of different languages when explaining a concept e.g. Sepedi and English at the same time in trying to explain a concept during a lesson. T5 The ability to explain concepts in the learners' mother tongue or any language that learners best understand.

Question: Do you code switch when you explain a concept?

Answer: 1% of the respondents could not code switch because of not knowing African languages while 99% resort to code switching in their mother tongue when they explain a new concept.

This is what they said:

T1 After mentioning a point, I then switch to Sepedi, and ask the Tsonga and Venda version while trying to accommodate all diversities or groups in the classroom. T2 I do code switch when I want to give an example or explain a difficult concept using the learners' experiences. T3 I code switch because some learners understand better when I am using their own language. T4 I explain in English and after that I ask the learners what I said. If they cannot answer then I explain the same thing in Sepedi asking them what is said in Tsonga and Venda. I do that because we have students who cannot talk Sepedi, because they are from Venda and Giyani. T5 When learners do not understand I often use a language that they can understand.

Question: Do you allow your learners to code switch and why?

Answer: Their answer was 'yes' and some said:

T1 I allow them to code switch because it is a way to help me see if what we have been doing has been understood. T2 I allow them to code switch when I want to check whether they understand a concept meaningfully. T3 I let them code switch in order to allow them an opportunity to express themselves in their own languages T5 I allow the learners to use

their mother tongue so as to indicate their understanding of the subject matter and permit them the freedom of communicating freely in group activities.

All the participants see the value of code switching in teaching hence they allow this strategy in their teaching for the better understanding of what is been learnt that could allow learners to reflect on their learning.

Question: What do you do to promote a sense of respect and responsibility to others and their languages?

Answer: Teachers must encourage learners to speak their language and encourage them to learn and respect their friends' languages. By speaking at list a sentence in the learners language encourages them to respect and want to use their languages in public and learning places. All responded.

This is how some phrased their responses:

T1 I try to speak all the languages I know and make them understand that all languages are equal and it should be their pride as a nation to use these languages. T2 One promotes a sense of respect and responsibility to others and their language by making an effort to learn their language and communicate with it. T3 By considering their languages, allowing them to speak and not ignoring the learners' languages. T5 I encourage the learners to try and understand other learners' culture and to learn other people's languages. T7 I encourage pupils to express themselves in the vernacular.

Question: How do you let learners acquire and practice the use of the language of the subject?

Answer: Learners should be encouraged to read widely in all languages they know. They all responded and this what some of them said:

T1 I encourage them to read a lot of English and HSS books. T2 I encourage them to read HSS books, and give them the opportunity to present orally, as well as allow them time for getting involved in group-discussions on HSS themes. T4 I encourage them to read English books and try to talk English in the classroom. T7 Assist in the formulation of English sentences during HSS lesson.

It would seem that participants are not aware that reading in your own language broadens the your knowledge which forms a basis for learning another language or new concepts this is shown by the encouragement of learners to read English and HSS subjects only.

Question: Do you correct the grammar of your learners and why?

Answer: Grammar should be corrected, but learners should not be penalized for grammar if it is not a language lesson, for what is important in HSS in particular is the meaning, and if the meaning is clear, they must get their credits.

These are some of their responses:

T1 *I always correct when strange words are used so that they should know and learn to use the correct words, correct spelling and the pronunciation of those words. T2 I correct at the end of the lesson so that meaning of the content is not lost, but such errors are not penalized, as in a language lesson. This is seldom done because what is important is the number of facts mentioned, not the number of errors made. T3 I correct because they would continue to misuse and pronounce wrongly. T4 I correct almost everyday during HSS lesson so that they should know the correct words and correct usage of those words. T5 I correct when it is necessary because if I do not correct the wrong words it will distort the intended meaning.*

All participants correct spelling to make the idea put across to be clearer to the learners and they do not penalize the learners.

Question: What do you think is the purpose of reading in your subject?

Answer: Reading makes the reader to gain the use of the language, and also to gain more knowledge about things in general. The participants support these above-mentioned idea by quoting some of their responses which say:

T1 *The aim of reading is to acquire more facts and information concerning the subject. T2 Its purpose is to acquire information about a particular theme. T3 It is important in improving both learners' and teachers' vocabulary. It also helps in good pronunciation. T4 The purpose of reading in general is to let one know what is happening around you and neighbouring countries, and to read books relevant to HSS subjects so as to equip teachers with full knowledge of their subject matter. T5 The aim of reading for learners is to let them best understand the subject matter and be able to practically participate and improve their reading skills.*

Question: Do you have a library corner in your classroom for more reading by learners? What is in your library?

Answer: The general answer was 'no' for all the respondents. From the classroom observation that I made, it seems that the major problem is that teachers follow their learners into their classrooms. In that way putting valuable books would not be safe as anyone can take them away without being noticed.

Question: Do you have a library in your school and what is in the library?

Answer: They have a library but it seems that the library is not used either by learners or teachers judging from some of their responses. Some of the responses were:

T1 *The library has all types of books, fiction to reference. T2 Our library is quite rich in reference books in HSS, which are often donated by big companies. T5 The library has different resources for different learning areas such as videos, books, magazines etc.*

Question: Do you put aside time for learners to read in the library?

Answer: 90% were honest and said 'no,' and here are some of the responses:

T2 Usually the school year is short and there is never time set aside for library reference by the teacher and the learners. T3 I do put aside time for learners to read in order to study well in the library.

It would seem from the participants' responses that teachers are less interested in what is in the library as well as using it in the way that will benefit their teaching and learners' learning.

Question: What is the effect of silent reading? Give your opinion.

Answer: Silent reading encourages the learners to be disciplined and be able to work silently at the individual's own pace without disturbing others. 80% responded by rating it is being good while 20% said it is not a good method to be used in the classroom.

They said:

T1 Silent reading gives learners freedom to practice concentration. T2...Is uninterrupted by external factors or variables and it is quite effective for meaningful reading. T4 Silent reading helps with the evaluation of the understanding of a learner as well as concentration. T5 Silent reading is for helping learners with better understanding because each learner works at his or her own pace. T3 It is not good because there is no active participation. T7 Not very good, as pupils prefer the educator to read.

Question: How is the language of this learning area represented in the textbooks?

Explain.

Answer: Their responses gives an indication of how different they rate the level of language representation in this learning area which always point to the fact that all learners find it difficult to understand and use successfully for learning. What I observed is that generally the language of the subject is difficult for learners whose medium of instruction is not their first language as well as those who are not encouraged to read widely. The family background of the learners also plays a role from my what I observed. What follows are ideas of some respondents on this issue:

T1 I would says it is fairly represented although some words are above their level of comprehension so that dictionaries have to be used. T2 It is represented in a particular terminology for a particular subject. T4 My opinion is that it is just right and up to the level of our pupils, but the problem is that most of the time pupils are using mother tongue.

Question: Who dominates your classroom communication and why?

Answer: All responded and observation revealed that teachers talk too much during classroom activities with few exceptions where some try to give learners the opportunity to read to find answers for the assignment given and report back. The participants do realize the importance of learner talk and learner

participation for successful learning as support some of their responses which follows:

T1 *The educator (myself) and some learners dominate, as the medium of instruction (English) is a problem. T2 Learners dominate the lesson because we use cooperate learning. T4 A few students and I, because others take long time to gather words to express their thoughts. T5 Learners participate in groups and as individuals. T7 Learners dominate because the lesson is pupil centred.*

Question: How often do you interrupt your learners while they are still talking, and why?

Answer: A learner should not be interrupted unless there is a serious mistake. Here are some of their views:

T1 *I interrupt very often as they will at times dwell on one aspect for a long time, and the time consumed will let us lag behind. T2 When they are discussing a wrong issue or when I want to increase their pace. T4 I interrupt because if I allow them to take a long time formulating sentences, at the end of the day we will only cover 10% of the work, and GDE officials will fight me because they will blame me for not doing my work or not working according to the year plan. T5 I seldom interrupt when there is excessive noise. T7 Not often. Only when they require an explanation.*

Participants see it fit to interrupt if learners are no longer discussing the stated topic or theme which is the only way to control learners to stay focus to the said theme.

Question: When do you hand over control to your learners, and why?

Answer: All said 'very often', commenting as follows:

T1 *Very often I let learners interact well with their peers, so as to gain confidence and share ideas and even to show their knowledge of the learning area (subject). T2 I hand over during group work. T4 I hand over everyday so as to express themselves, to share knowledge with others and to improve their language. T7 I hand over during role-play.*

Question: How and when do you involve learners to manage their learning?

Answer: During group work and assignment sessions, was the general response which seems to be the best to let learners get involved and be responsible for their learning. These are some of their responses:

T1 *Very often by letting learners work as groups. T5 I let them manage learning always as individuals and in groups. T6 I let them manage their learning by assessing each other through giving each other questions.*

Question: Do you allow learners to reflect on their learning? Explain.

Answer: Learners should be given an opportunity to reflect on their learning. All participants responded supporting the idea of learners reflecting in their giving these responses:

T2 I let the learners reflect on their learning after explaining the meta-cognition strategy so that they can self correct themselves. T3 I let them reflect by means of discussing the learning matter with other learners. T4 I let them reflect by letting them do research on a particular concept, and after doing research they give feedback in class, and also when marking class work they give the answers. T5 Yes, I allow learners to assess their peers, and they are also assessed by educators to see how far they know their subject content. T7 I assess views of various pupils.

Question: Do you use the textbook method? Why or why not?

Answer: 90% use it for gathering information on the subject by the learners, while 10% feel it is outdated. Their views are as follows:

T1 I use textbooks to give learners a chance to gather and understanding the contents of their subject. T3 I use textbook method because it is easy to make notes. T4 Yes, I use the textbook method sometimes to give learners a chance to read aloud and to explain what they have been reading about. T5 I use the textbook method because learning activities are derived from textbooks. T6 Yes, I use it to let learners get used to using books. T7 I do not use the textbook method because it is outdated.

Participants see the textbook as a major source of information for the particular subject although it would seem from their answers that concentration is only on the prescribed textbooks rather than all relevant textbooks that could give information for the particular subject.

Question: What are you doing to help learners with the language of HSS in the textbooks?

Answer: The general answer was that teachers explain the difficult words and make use of the dictionary. The following are their views:

T1 I underline strange words, and use the dictionary, and link the meaning of the given sentence to the subject matter to give sense and meaning of the whole concept or idea. T3 I explain all difficult terminology using their vernacular. T4 I let the learners bring dictionaries everyday to class, guide them on how to check the meaning of a particular word from the dictionary, encourage them to read notes at home and look for the meaning of difficult words from the dictionaries on their own. T5 I explain the meaning of words, explain concepts, and teach them how to use a dictionary. T7 I explain and simplify words for them when they come across a difficult word.

Question: What do you think will be the outcome of the textbook method?

Answer: 90% said the learners will have a good understanding of the content, while 10% said the textbook method is useless and outdated. Some of their responses are:

T1 Learners will have a good understanding of contents. T3 Students will be able to elaborate their facts. T4 Learners will be able to know the content, and learn pronunciation as well as reading fluently. T6 Learners will know how to use books, where to get a diagram or find a chapter. T7 The textbook method is not useful in the school situation.

Question: How do you select textbooks?

Answer: They all responded giving different opinions ranging from choosing the textbooks that are written in simple language which is understandable to learners to point where they give mention of the GDE officials being the people to set the criterions for their selection.

This is what they said:

T1 I select those that are to the level and understanding of the learners, that is, those that are simplified. T2 Selection of textbooks has a certain criteria according to GDE circulars but for OBE circulars, the new curriculum 2005 recommends OBE oriented criteria. T3 I select those textbooks that have relevant information for the subject. T6. I select those that have simple language. T7 I select those that are relevant, use good language, have enough activities for the learners and those that are reasonable in price.

Question: How do you use textbooks?

Answer: More than three quarters ($\pm 90\%$) of the respondents said that they distribute them to the learners to read as references in cases where assignments are given to the learners, while ($\pm 10\%$) said they only use them when they want relevant information to back their lesson.

This is what some of them said:

T1 I distribute textbooks evenly amongst groups and let them read and those who have good understanding and imagination share their ideas with the rest of the group. T2 They are used for references in preparing worksheets for groups or individual working classes. T3 I use them for the selecting of relevant topics. T4 My textbooks are not enough. I have got 20 books for 250 learners. I carry them to class everyday and do whatever we are supposed to do and take them back. T7 I use them for question and answers, assignments and diagrams."

Question: Have you given your learners an open-book essay? Why or why not?

Answer: More than half (60%) of the sample said they tried it to test learners' knowledge and 20% never tried this method. The remaining 20% decided not to respond to it.

Those who responded said:

T2 *I have never given learners an open notebook essay, as their textbooks are written in their second or even third language (English), and they battle to extract meaning, and often end up copying the text without extracting only the facts.* **T3** *I use it to test their knowledge.* **T5** *I use it because it encourages learners to seek information individually and to do their own research.* **T7** *I use it to test differing viewpoints, as the content is not important.*

Question: Do you give learners instructions on how to take notes and how to make summaries?

Answer: 10% did not respond while more than three quarters (90%) said:

T2 *I do give them instructions and notes such as mind maps to help them summarize a text.* **T3** *I give them instructions in order to make learning content easier.* **T5** *I give them instructions to compile notes, which are then controlled by me, the educator.* **T6** *Yes, as a form of a summary to show if they did understand what they learnt.* **T7** *Yes, I show pupils how to sift relevant information out.* **T4** *I do not give learners instruction on how to make notes and summaries because of the shortage of textbooks. I always give them notes."*

Although participants see textbooks as important source of information some are of the opinion that using them as a strategy for teaching and learning is outdated. It would seem that using a textbook as a method of teaching did not get enough attention in the training of the teachers as is shown by low response to the question of whether 'learners are given instruction on how to take notes and how to make the summary' above.

Question: Give the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative teaching or planning together.

Answer: All responded, and the advantages of collaborative teaching will be given first while the disadvantages will be given last.

This is what they said:

T1 *It encourages teamwork and good understanding of teachers on what they would be resolving or working on, like subject matter. Teachers will be working at the same pace, and they will be fast.* **T2** *There will be the sharing of ideas and new information, thus enriching both the lesson and the teachers. It sets standards and time frames.* **T3** *Advantage of collaboration and planning together is that there will be active participation and better understanding of concepts by teachers. It is good for time frames, and determining the same working pace for the completion of the syllabus.* **T4** *Teachers will help one another, work on the same pace, be able to give the same test at the same time, planning will be more easier, and teachers will be encouraged to work according to the year plan. It is a good idea as we would be teaching the same thing at the same time and planning will be easier as we will help one*

another and share ideas. T6 Teachers will move at the same pace and help solve problems encountered in classrooms. It is a good idea as it helps the teacher to do the same work and not struggle to set a question paper where you have taught different things.

For the disadvantages they said, **T1** *the inactive ones would not be participating and will disturb progress. T2 It is time consuming and is not subject specific or theme specific.*

Most participants see collaboration as the best way for sharing and participating positively toward self-enrichment.

Question: What is your opinion concerning a cross-curriculum theme?

Answer: More than three quarters of the respondents (80%) gave their ideas while 20% did not attempt to air their views.

Those who responded pointed out the following:

T1 *Cross curriculum themes bring the interrelationship of the learning matter in learning areas and help in the realization of education. T2 Cross curriculum themes often benefit language teachers but not mathematics teacher. One theme may take weeks in other subjects while in mathematics only a few lessons cover the whole theme. T3 Cross curriculum themes are good for the learner as they learn to know that some how subjects have a link. T7 Cross-curriculum themes promote overall growth of pupils and reduce 'tunnel vision' effects.*

Cross-curriculum seems not to be favored by most participants as it is seen as time consuming and only benefit the learners as it helps them see the link between the subjects.

Question: How will you encourage group work for learners?

Answer: Every one responded, and the idea of giving teachers a kind of incentive was favoured by most participants.

Some of their responses were:

T1 *Group work can be promised incentives to the most active and hardworking group. Incentives such as books and pens must be given to the best participants. T3 By giving them some prizes and marks. T4 Encourage competition amongst the groups, and the best group receives pens, pencils, etc. or best group to be exempted from cleaning the classroom. T7 By mixing the groups and encouraging discussion.*

Question: How will you encourage collaboration among teachers?

Answer: The general response was that there must be regular subject meetings.

Some of their responses are given hereunder:

T1 *I will encourage teachers to examine the Phase Organizer, then the Programme Organizer, which will bring about interrelatedness of the Learning Areas. I will also encourage us teachers meeting regularly to discuss progress and resolve problems. T2* *By encouraging teachers to attend subject meetings. T3* *I will recommend that the best teachers be given the merit certificates. T7* *By establishing a subject committee and thus promoting interaction.*

Collaboration and group work share the same sentiments as both are concerned with people working together as a team towards a common goal. Participants see this as a team effort, which can encourage working together in a particular learning area as well as attending all matters as a team for the progress of that area.

Question: What is language awareness?

Answer: About 80% of respondents gave an explanation of what they think language awareness is and 20% did not.

The following are some of their responses:

T2 *Language awareness is when a teacher is able to modify language of the medium of instruction by sometimes resorting to code switching because of the learners' different vernaculars present in the classroom that are sometimes used in the lesson. T3* *Language awareness is when somebody takes into consideration his/her own language. T4* *Language awareness means understanding the importance of every language of a nation or people. T7* *To understand the meaning of words pupils use.*

The main idea brought out by the participants is that every language must be taken as important and equal to any language irrespective of how small the numbers of the people who use it in a particular area.

Question: What is multilingualism?

Answer: All answered and pointed out that it is the ability to speak more than two languages in a society that has many languages.

Some said:

T2 *It is a concept that embraces different languages in a single society and an ability to use at least two of these languages. T4* *It means having knowledge and understanding of more languages and their technicalities.*

The idea here is that people must realize that there are many languages used and people must try by all means to know at least three languages spoken in their areas.

Question: What is the learners' attitude about the medium of instruction?

Answer: The responses of 40% of the respondents was that learners are positive about the medium of instruction, while 20% were unsure of the learners' attitude, maybe because they never wanted to find out from them. The last 20% said the

learners have a problem in using this language (English), as it is their second and sometimes their third language.

What has been given above is the general indication of the interviews, observations, questionnaires and the workshop responses. What follows is the categorization of the findings from the above activities.

4.5 Identification of categories

Briefly this is how the process was done. The synthesizing and identification of the categories was done after I had read the responses over many times and noted the units of meaning using a pencil, writing down key ideas on the discovery sheet based on my understanding of the responses and notes. I wrote the categories on a sheet, and wrote the identified semantic units of meaning under these categories. I finally read the responses to check if all semantic units of meaning fell under the correct categories and that no unit of data had been omitted. What will now follow is the categorization of the findings and the semantic units of meaning found. I first identify the categories and their units of meaning and later discuss each category in detail.

I identified four categories as follows: **communication problems**, **lack of a support system**, **lack of a conducive learning environment** and **learners' passiveness**. With regard to **communication problems** teachers mentioned the following points: difficulty of medium of instruction; minimal utilization of first languages of the learners; lack of language awareness by teachers; lack of collaboration among teachers, and between teachers and learners; lack of collaboration among stakeholders. With regard to **the lack of a support system** they mentioned: lack of utilization of staff development centres; lack of funds; lack of professional support; lack of textbooks and lack of translation resource centres. With regard to **lack of a conducive learning environment** they mentioned: illiterate surrounding; illiterate families and poverty; drinking and a noisy background and lack of parental support and involvement. With regard to the **learners' passiveness** teachers mentioned the following: lack of learners' group work; lack of peer teaching; lack of learners' motivation and lack of mother tongue use by learners. Some facts mentioned above were discovered or identified during classroom observation. These categories will be discussed in turn.

4.6 Description of categories

4.6.1 Communication Problem

Language is a major problem hindering classroom activities. From the data analysis and literature reviewed, it was found that English is not just a problem to the learners but some teachers also have a problem in expressing themselves clearly in the medium of instruction (English), (cf paragraph 1.2) hence the wish from some workshop participants to be allowed freedom to use their own languages in teaching. There are some factors affecting communication mentioned from the workshop. They are:

4.6.1.1 Difficulty of Medium of Instruction

It was revealed from data analysis that English, as the medium of instruction of HSS subjects, was a major problem for teaching and learning. It did not only hinder teaching and learning, but also affects the end of the year results of learners, which show a high failure rate. This is supported by Webb's (1998:132) words that say: "*Pupils perform poorly if the language of learning and teaching is not well known*" while on the other hand Edward (1994:64) has this to say: "*The use of a foreign language is one of the chief factors in producing mental retardation.*"

It was also revealed that black parents made a hasty decision about the medium of instruction for their children by allowing the early introduction of English in the foundation phase before a more complete and satisfactory development of the mother tongue is acquired. Lack of mother tongue as a foundation for the development of other languages and some kind of learning have a major impact on results, and it is supported by Pattanayak (1981: xii) who says:

The difference between the home language and the school language and the lack of any strategy to bridge them is not only responsible for drop-out, wastage and stagnation at the primary stage, but is also responsible for the development of a low self-image and lower achievement all through education in the school. ...The notion of one dominant language as medium of instruction leaves thousands of children illiterate in the mother tongue and foster low achievement levels in the dominant language itself.

4.6.1.2 Minimal utilization of learners' first language

It was reinforced by the data analysis that some teachers do not know the mother tongues learners bring to the classroom. Failure to know the learners' mother tongues causes the teacher not to allow learners to code switch, or the freedom to use their mother tongues for learning. This lack of confidence and the reluctance to let learners use their mother tongue, which is very effective in classroom activities, is a sign that some teachers take diverse languages in their classrooms as a problem. It was also revealed that education authorities did not allow the freedom for the utilization of mother tongues or to encourage teachers to allow code switching in teaching and learning. Failure of learners to utilize their mother tongues makes them look down on their language and regard it as useless. Learners' feelings that their language is inferior because it is not used for learning, is supported by Pattanayak (1981:145) who says:

"If the language the child brings to the classroom is derided and stigmatized and no academic strategy is adopted to give the children due competence in the school language so that they may study as equals of the majority language children, then they are bound to an inferiority complex, which in turn will affect their personality structure."

The media also reinforces the fact that linguistic and cultural signs for communication between learners and teachers in general causes problems of misunderstanding, which in the end affect teaching and learning, resulting in poor results.

4.6.1.3 Lack of language awareness by teachers

Although some teachers have an idea that “language awareness” has to do with knowing as well as the utilization of other languages for teaching and learning, the data revealed that the concept is not clearly known by those who are supposed to utilize its premises. Teachers do not know the impact of the concept “language awareness” on the language and cultural understanding and tolerance among the different people in a multilingual situation. They are also not aware that ‘language awareness’ helps in the spotting of the differences (e.g. the pattern) between a user’s own language and dialects as well as languages of the other people (cf Tulasiewicz & Adams, 1998:200-203). They are not aware that “language awareness” is people’s sensitivity to conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life, which some teachers seem to lack.

4.6.1.4 Lack of collaboration among teachers, and between teachers and learners

The data reinforced that there is no collaboration between teachers as it became clear that no meetings are held for teachers who are involved in a specific learning area in order to discuss the subject matter or the results. The workshop revealed that there is a lack of teamwork. This results in a lack of collaboration between teachers and learners, which also leads to a lack of collaboration between the teachers and their learners. The main point raised, which hinders collaboration, is the target to finish the syllabus for the year, aimed at pleasing educational authorities at the learner’s expense.

4.6.1.5 Lack of collaboration among stakeholders

It transpired from the data analysis that collaboration is a matter that is not taken seriously by both teachers and educational authorities as people who have more light in the leading of learners to maturity or adulthood. The data confirmed that there is inadequate interaction between teachers and educational authorities for the discussion of educational matters concerning the learners.

Parents and teachers meet only when there are problems that concern administration and the running of the school such as finance and learners’ misconduct. It also came to light that education authorities do visit the schools but they concentrate on workbooks (paper work) rather than meeting the teachers and discussing their problems in order to find solutions. Data proves that there is no time for all stakeholders to discuss how to improve classroom activities especially since there is a problem of diverse languages and the introduction of OBE in schools. Hence some teachers have a problem of lesson planning.

4.6.2 Support a system

4.6.2.1 Lack of utilization of staff development centres

The data confirmed that teacher centres are rarely used for issues that will benefit the classroom activities. Workshops that teachers attend at these teacher centres are said to be less effective and less helpful because language issues are not addressed. In the types of workshops held in these centres, all teachers from diverse languages are grouped together and only English is used without allowing the use of other languages where necessary during the running of the workshop.

4.6.2.2 Lack of funds

The responses from the workshop prove that there are no funds to buy apparatus and learning aids to help in the teaching and learning activities. The data also shows that not all stakeholders, particularly teachers and parents, are doing enough to raise funds for the improvement of classroom activities.

4.6.2.3 Lack of professional support

It has been revealed by the responses from the interviews that education authorities fail to help teachers concerning the problems encountered in their classrooms. It also transpired from the analysis that there is a lack of workshops to help in updating and reinforcing teachers with the recent teaching strategies and teaching skills relevant to either HSS subjects with diverse languages and OBE related teaching matter.

4.6.2.4 Lack of textbooks

The data analysis indicated that textbooks are sometimes in short supply for learners in some classrooms. Shortage of textbooks causes teachers to practise traditional ways of teaching: that of giving notes on the boards for learners to copy, which encourages rote learning. The data analyzed also reveals that the language of some textbooks is not up to the standard of the learners' level of understanding, resulting in the slow progress of teaching and learning. It has also been revealed by the data that the introduction of HSS as a learning area is a problem as relevant books for this learning area are not up to standard, and therefore teachers lack the confidence to use them.

4.6.2.5 Lack of translation resource centres

There are no translation centres that teachers can visit when classroom activities demand additional information. From my observation, translation centres need to be established, especially where Black schools and African languages are concerned and encountered.

4.6.3 Lack of a conducive learning environment

4.6.3.1 Illiteracy and poverty

Individual interviews revealed that most learners come from poor families and cannot even afford to buy themselves lunch during breaks. Learning with a hungry stomach is known to be ineffective, and that affects the classroom progress of the learners. Poor parents cannot afford to buy teaching and learning materials for the schools. As poverty works hand in hand with illiteracy, it was not surprising when data also revealed that parents do not check their children's schoolbooks and they fail to help them with their homework. In the environment where parents are illiterate, the parents accept the failure of their children, as mentioned in Biddle, Good & Goodson (1997: 1223) that "*social environments may present conditions in which failure is accepted as a part of learning.*"

4.6.3.2 Drinking and a noisy environment

Observation of township life as well as data analysis, reinforces the fact that some learners stay in noisy sections of the townships where drinking and turning the knobs of neighbours' or their families' radios to the loudest volume is the order of the day. The noise affects the writing of homework and the sleep of the learners at night, which results in learners sleeping during lessons, especially on hot days and after lunch breaks. Sleeping by learners in the classroom reaches its peak on a Monday and after pay day like month end because either their families or neighbours sell beer or have a month-end party (such as '*stokvel*'), which cause the neighbourhood to be noisy.

4.6.3.3 Lack of parental support and involvement

It has already been stated that parents fail to check their children's books. This is a sign of the lack of parental support of school activities. If, on top of this, the school denies parents the opportunity to be involved in classroom activities, it will aggravate this lack of support from the parents regarding their children's schoolwork. Parents are in most cases not given a chance to decide on the education of their children, especially in township schools, which results in a total shift of parental and educational responsibility to teachers, who become the only referees of the educational and social life of the learner.

The data analysis confirms that township schools no longer have so many learners because of the idea that parents see English as the language of power, upward social mobility, access to learning, employment and improved quality of life (cf Akinnaso, 1989:138-9). The data also proves that the rights given to parents to choose the medium of instruction for their children, and the abandoning of grouping schools according to languages, results in township schools becoming empty as parents take their children to formerly White English medium schools.

4.6.4 Learners' passiveness

4.6.4.1 Lack of learners' group work and peer teaching

Although the workshop revealed that teachers do sometimes give learners tasks to work on in groups, observation proved otherwise and revealed that group work is limited, with most teachers not utilizing it effectively. Where a group work task was given, only a few learners dominated, simply because it was compulsory to use English, with the result that those who lacked the language to take part kept quiet. Quiet learners were not given time to talk, and that resulted in a lack of learning. The learners did not gain experience in the lessons they were taking part in. Data revealed that talking makes learners gain linguistic maturity. This is supported by Andrews (1993:45) who says that *"student to student talk makes students' growth in linguistic maturity owing to the experience and practice with language that talking provides."*

Observation also proved that although the workshop responses indicated that learners are allowed to explain difficult concepts using their mother tongue to those who do not understand, learners are not given the opportunity for peer teaching, as indicated by a teacher's remark during observation that *"we are all going to use English as you are going to answer examination questions and tests in English."* That remark resulted in passivity of learners due to the language of learning that proved to be a problem for self-expression by learners.

4.6.4.2 Lack of learners' motivation

Observation has shown that most learners were left alone in their own passive world while teachers concentrated on those who were active in their teaching. Lack of motivation was due to the language of instruction that was not their mother tongue. It has also been revealed from the data analysis above that some learners came from noisy, illiterate and poor families, a combination that leaves a learner less motivated to learn, as there is nothing to look forward to as role model. Our country's situation of unemployment is another reason that emerged from the data analysis. This demotivates learners, as their future seems dull without employment.

4.6.4.4 Lack of mother tongue use by learners

I have already mentioned above that a teacher that I observed in class said: *"We are all going to use English as you are going to answer examination questions and tests in English,"* and that is a sign of a teacher denying learners to utilize their mother tongue for learning. To deny the utilization of mother tongue by learners does not only affect results but results in looking down upon their mother tongue and so lowering their self esteem. Observation and the workshop revealed that teachers do use their own mother tongue, but in most cases learners are not allowed to use their own mother tongue because they claim that teachers do not know it (i.e. Tsonga and Venda). Data analysis from the workshop showed that teachers do sometimes allow learners to use their mother tongue to explain to other learners of the same mother tongue. Workshop responses supported the idea of either teaching or allowing learners to learn HSS subjects in their mother tongue, a matter supported on the one hand by Gersten (1990:41) who says:

Learners should be taught all academic subjects in their native language for no fewer than five, and preferably seven years, because extensive academic instruction in the native language is necessary for students to benefit from the mainstream classroom.

On the other hand Heugh, (1993b: 30) has this to say:

“Mother tongue education only succeeds when the community acknowledges its own language, and given the status to enable it to grow in use, for example, in newspapers and in literature. Translating the examination paper and appointing markers from each language group, should give all learners the opportunity to answer all examination papers in their mother tongue. This will send a clear message to learners and parents that their children can benefit from mother tongue instruction.

Nicholas (1994: 16-103) is of the opinion that, “*providing examination in other languages found in a school or classroom while staff be retrained to help in the development of the strategies to teach in a plurilingual classroom more effectively by improving the esteem and status of multilingual learners*” will give learners the opportunity to improve results.

4.7 Summary

This chapter dealt with data analysis and findings. The chapter has shown that the four major findings are communication problems, lack of support system, lack of conducive learning environment and learners' passiveness. With regard to communication problems, English as a medium of instruction and lack of the utilization of diverse languages in the classrooms are the major contributory factors retarding classroom progress. In the lack of support systems, paucity of professional support systems such as multilingual translation systems and proper utilization of teacher centres for conducting of workshops aimed at solving classroom problems created irreparable damage to the teaching and learning in the classroom. A major problem affecting learners directly is the environment that does not encourage meaningful learning by learners due to illiteracy, drunkenness, noise, poverty and sometimes lack of electricity. Motivation serves as the most important factor for any person to want to learn or know more about a particular issue or subject, but it is the most remote issue handled in today's classrooms: this results in learners being passive and reluctant to learn.

The next rounding off chapter will encompass a recapitulation of the whole study as well as my recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This research essay set out to investigate **what happens if I hold a workshop to raise language awareness in the teaching of Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase.** The aim of this research essay was to **develop language awareness in the teaching of Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase.** The diverse languages in the modern school, especially the township schools, could be utilized effectively in teaching and learning as long as teachers accept and tolerate their use. This research essay was also set to determine the extent to which these diverse languages impact and affect the process of teaching and learning. The research has now come to end and I will recapitulate the salient points that emerged from the discussion under the following: overview of the research, reflection on the workshop, summary of findings, recommendations and finally I will give a summary of this chapter.

5.2 Overview of the research

In Chapter 1 the general problem of communication in Human and Social Sciences was outlined and the aim and the research question of this research essay were given. The research question and the aim of the study have again been mentioned in 5.1 above. In Chapter 1 claims such as: there is a lack of utilization of learners' mother tongue in the teaching and learning of Human and Social sciences subjects, that English as a medium of instruction is a problem for both teachers and learners, and finally the fact that teachers see the diverse languages in their classrooms as a problem, were put forward.

The key term for the study is *multilingualism* as this research focused on the classroom that has diverse languages, hence the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 dealt with multilingualism. This literature revealed the importance of language as the basis or foundation of learning that takes place in a human being's life on the way to maturity or adulthood in a formal as well as non-formal situation. In this chapter, themes such as: language awareness, multilingualism, education and the mother tongue, language and its uses, and strategies of teaching a multilingual classroom were discussed.

Chapter 3 was about the research methodology of collecting the data for this research. The major research method used was action research with its key technique being the conducting of the workshop to teachers teaching Human and Social Sciences subjects in the senior phase. The aim of the workshop was to answer the research question stated in Chapter 1. Observation, questionnaires and interviews formed triangulation of the key research method, the workshop.

In Chapter 4 data was analyzed. In the analysis of data four categories were identified with their subheadings, mentioned either by teachers or found during literature review in Chapter 2. These were the categories identified in Chapter 4: communication problems, lack of a support system, lack of a conducive learning environment, and learners' passiveness.

5.3 Reflection on the workshop

The workshop was run during the revision period, which is the busiest and most stressful time of the year for the teacher and learners. During this period, examination fever catches up with both teachers and learners in anticipation of improving end of the year results compared with those of the previous years. In short, it means my timing was not favourable to the teachers. This made it difficult for the workshop to run for the whole day, as teachers were not allowed to leave learners unattended. Saturdays were not free for use as teachers were attending OBE courses. The best option was to run the workshop after school when learners had gone home. That caused the workshop to drag out for four days before it could be completed.

Day one was not good enough as teachers felt their time was going to be wasted and they needed some rest from a long day's struggle in class and wanted to go home at three o'clock, their usual time for school out. Before our time expired during the first day, they were eager to continue as they started enjoying the workshop. On the following days the sailing was smooth as teachers were the ones pressing for more tasks as they found some tasks to be relevant to their classroom problems. Before the workshop came to an end, there was an indication that such a workshop should be held in the beginning of the following year with some tasks to be given to teachers to utilize in teaching, and a follow-up workshop to be conducted to get the feedback from the given tasks. For these teachers, such an undertaking would make them improve their teaching as well as share their success and frustration with other teachers.

In the light of their reactions, I deem the workshop a success because it was an eye opener for the teachers as far as the utilization of diverse languages in their classroom for teaching and learning is concerned. The workshop was a real success given the situation that the timing was just not proper. It was more than what the teachers and I expected. The workshop so far succeeded in the raising of teachers' language awareness in Human and Social Sciences subjects.

5.4 Summary of findings

It was found that:

- English as the medium of instruction is a problem for both teachers and learners
- There is a lack of the utilization of the learners' mother tongue through code switching, translation etc.
- There is a lack of language awareness by teachers, which affected the acceptance and tolerance of the utilization of diverse languages in the HSS subjects
- There is a lack of parental involvement in their children's educational activities
- There is a lack of a conducive learning environment for learners due to illiterate parents, drinking problems, noise, poverty
- There is a lack of collaboration between stakeholders in educational activities taking place in HSS classrooms
- There is a lack of resource materials (e.g. textbooks) and support materials (e.g. translation centres)
- There is a lack of multilingual collaboration among teachers, between teachers and learners, and between learners and learners

- Lessons are teacher centred, and there is also a lack of peer teaching
- There is a lack of encouragement concerning reading and the use of libraries

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendations for the improvement of teaching

- A mother tongue speaker of English should be contracted to teach in the townships, and teachers in such schools should attend advanced English courses to improve their language skills
- The creation of support centres such as those for the multilingual translation of subjects.
- General subject specific workshops should be held quarterly for all teachers in a particular district.
- Language awareness campaigns should be held once a year in all districts.
- Teachers and learners should be allowed the freedom to code switch to the home languages.
- Learners should be allowed the freedom to answer examinations in their home language, when the need arises.
- In-service training should be established to help teachers in educational matters.
- Parental involvement should be a rule and not an option.
- There should be collaboration between all stakeholders involved in the education of the learner.
- There should be specific classrooms for specific subjects managed by subject teachers.
- Service learning should be established for those who failed.

5.5.2 Recommendation for further research

Managerial skills required of the Head of Department of Human and Social Sciences in schools in order to reinforce teachers' language awareness.

5.6 The Final Word

To summarize, the main purpose of the study, as already mentioned in Chapter 1 and at the beginning of this chapter, was to make teachers aware and take note of the different languages in their classrooms, and to make it their goal to utilize these languages for teaching and learning rather than seeing the diverse languages as a problem which hinders classroom progress. The study tried to suggest the introduction or establishment of an academic support system, such as a translation centre amongst other things, to help teachers improve their professional and academic performance and classroom practice.

In retrospect it appears that teachers have teaching needs which are obviously not being properly addressed. There is also a missing link between teachers and learners, teachers and education specialists, and between teachers and parents. If these links are missing and not found, the level of teaching and learning cannot be improved, and that will result in the fact that the interaction between teachers and learners bears no fruit. These

missing educational links could be reached through clear communication among stakeholders.

If teachers are not in a position to interpret clearly what they are teaching and applying in the classroom, then their knowledge is redundant and useless, as it will not reach the intended target, which is the learners in this instance. Teachers also need to be supported throughout their teaching if their teaching is to bear positive fruit for the learners and the community in general. Teachers need to be constantly reminded of their responsibility towards learners. They need to be competent to ensure that quality learning takes place in their classrooms.

It is hoped that these findings will highlight sufficiently how HSS subjects' activities are being managed in the senior phase classrooms, and help to improve the situation to the benefit of everybody in the education sector.



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