AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TO THE
STUDY OF ISIXHOSA AT TERTIARY LEVEL: NMMU A CASE

STUDY

by

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SUMMARY

This study is about the analysis of perceptions and attitudes concerning the study of isiXhosa at tertiary level Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth.

The objective of this study is to investigate negative attitudes of African students with special reference to isiXhosa.

Chapter One looks at the objectives of the research, the research problem, and its theoretical framework, as well as the literature review, the significance of the study, the research methods and definition of terms.

Chapter Two deals with language planning and the current negative attitudes towards African languages, with special reference to isiXhosa.

Chapter Three deals with status planning, the teaching of isiXhosa, language maintenance and multilingual education policy.

Chapter Four discusses corpus planning, the role that Xhosa educators and students should play in the development of the language.

Chapter Five discusses acquisition planning, the attitudes towards isiXhosa language and the maintenance of the language.

Chapter Six concludes the study by presenting the summary and recommendations for the future research.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The objectives of the study

In South Africa African people seem to have lost pride in their languages and mostly use English as means of communication and studying. The use of African languages by Africans themselves has declined since 1994. English has become the dominant language. The main objective of this study is to investigate why isiXhosa students have negative attitudes towards their mother tongue/first home language at tertiary level with specific reference to the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

The study is conceived against the background of language policy, language planning, issues and problems in language planning with specific reference to isiXhosa. Perceptions and attitudes are influenced by aspects of language planning namely, corpus planning, status planning and acquisition planning.

1.2 Research problem

Indications are that many isiXhosa students have opted to learn English as a subject rather than isiXhosa. Performance in isiXhosa has consistently deteriorated over time. Students believe that the status of their language is below that of English and Afrikaans. This has discouraged them from speaking and developing their language. This study will focus on language planning with particular reference to:
The questions which this study will try and seek to answer are:

- Why do isiXhosa speakers have a negative attitude and perceptions towards their language?
- What can be done to address these negative attitudes and perceptions?
- What is the role of language practitioners in all these?
- What language frameworks need to be put in place?

1.3 Theoretical framework

This study falls under the umbrella of sociolinguistics and impacts on language planning. For the purpose of this study, various approaches to language planning and problems will be applied. There seems to be general agreement among researchers, as quoted below, that the position, function and the status of African languages in South Africa are deteriorating.

Nyati-Ramahobo (1991:314) states that Setswana is spoken by about 90% of the population either as mother- tongue/ first language or as a second language in Botswana. However she says there is a decline in the learning of Setswana,
Mbokazi (1991) did research on Black attitudes towards isiZulu relating to its use as communication medium for South Africa. The area of attitudes will be based on Mbokazi.

The area of language planning will be based on a National Language Plan for South Africa from the Department of Arts Culture Science and Technology cited by Ngubane (1996:104). The study is concerned with the negative attitudes African students have towards their mother-tongue/first home languages, with special reference to isiXhosa.

A Teacher’s attitude also would naturally influence the attitudes of his/her learners. The tendency among many language teachers has been to opt to teach English rather than isiXhosa and the performance of students in isiXhosa has consistently deteriorated over time.

African languages may be vaguely defined as languages spoken in Africa by Black Africans. In this study they are also referred to as indigenous languages in that they are spoken by the people who are the original inhabitants of an area. De Klerk in “Perspectives in Education, 2002” did some research on language issues in schools, focusing on the teaching of isiXhosa and the use of the mother tongue for instruction.

The study will focus on status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning, and will follow a multitheoretical approach.
1.4 Literature review

Research has been conducted on other languages concerning the negative attitudes of students towards their first home language. Such studies were amongst others conducted by Levitt Jesse et al (1999) where they conducted their research on language problems and language planning.

Research has been conducted on African language planning policies. Such studies were conducted by Phaswana (1994) where she provides the investigation and analyses the role of African languages in language planning policies at the University of Venda. Her study investigates the position, function and the status of African languages at the University.

Mbokazi (1991) is of the opinion that Black languages rely more on those of Whites, especially English, since Whites are believed to be the “high status people” in South Africa. Van Heerden (1992) examines the attitude of Afrikaans teachers towards Afrikaans in Mamelodi, a township in Pretoria, South Africa.

He states that Afrikaans should remain a compulsory subject at least until the end of the Junior Secondary Phase. He further says that, from a sociolinguistic point of view, language planning depends among other things, on the determination of the attitudes of people towards particular languages.

To Dladla (1993) it is apparent that a language can decay because of a lack of meaningful use and development. This is exactly what is facing

Granville et al. (1997) believe that children should be given education in the language that has material power in order to shape their future. If the African languages are not the languages of power, then the speakers of these languages should be allowed to empower themselves in the language of power, which is English in this case. This poses a challenge to the Africans to empower their languages in all respects and thereby encourage interest in African languages, in this case isiXhosa.

Working within a similar framework, Probyn et al (2002) investigate language policy and practice in four Eastern Cape districts. They describe the gap between the policy goals and what is actually happening in schools in four districts in the Eastern Cape.

Their findings state that it appears that school governing bodies are not well equipped to make decisions about language policy which meet the requirements of the national LiEP (Language-in Education-Policy), and economic imperatives to acquire English override considerations of multilingualism and additive bilingualism as expressed in the policy.

Plüddemann (2000) in his research explains the need for dual-medium schooling in South Africa today, particularly for the African language speaking majority. His research then describes a case study of an ongoing dual medium (isiXhosa/English) educational programme in schools.
Dalvit, and De Klerk (2002) discuss the attitudes of isiXhosa-speaking students at the University of Fort Hare towards the use of isiXhosa as a language of learning and teaching. Their analysis indicates that while English is recognized as the dominant language in South Africa and, more specifically, in the domain of education, some categories of respondents acknowledge the usefulness of isiXhosa as an additional medium of instruction. They state that students seem to consider the use of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction more appropriate in the first year of study.

Heugh (2000) stresses the need for language-in-education policy to take into account the attitudes of students and their parents. Webb (1996) claims that most African parents prefer English as a medium of instruction for their children in primary school, especially for instrumental reasons.

The development of isiXhosa and other African languages for academic purposes is considered a crucial issue in the academic debate as Languages of learning and teaching (LOLT) at tertiary level (Alidou and Mazrui 1999; Kembo-Sure 2000).

A study carried out by Barkhuizen (2001) on learners of isiXhosa as a first language in Western and Eastern Cape secondary schools confirmed positive instrumental attitudes towards English and a tendency to consider isiXhosa more appropriate to lower status domains, such as peer group, family and community life. In spite of this, the majority of the
learners thought that it was important to study isiXhosa, mainly for integrative reasons.

Bekker (2002) reviews relevant past research on language attitudes at tertiary level. He states that students feel that to use their mother-tongue/first home language would help them, for that would improve their understanding.

1.5 Significance

The significance of this study lies in the fact that of the studies conducted on attitudes towards African languages, none addresses negative attitudes towards isiXhosa. It is encouraging to see the new apparent mood in all provinces where there is an attempt to learn the African languages of the relevant province. It would send a positive signal if prominent people, especially politicians, could be seen to speak, and encourage the use of African languages.

There needs to be some awareness on the part of isiXhosa speakers that language is an important indicator of identity. This is particularly so because parents feel that English medium schools offer more meaningful education, better or good English accent and increase confidence in their children. This is apart from seeing English as opening the door to wider and greater economic opportunities.
The shift to English is happening despite the fact that teachers, and sometimes even parents, know that this creates problems for learners (Mgudlwa, 1997; ELTIC, 1997).

1.6 Research methods

The data for the study will be collected through:

- classroom observation
  The aim was to gain a close and intimate familiarity with students and their practices through an intensive involvement with them in their classroom. This was done in informal interviews, direct observation, and group discussions.

- interviews
  Interviews were done with lecturers and students as well as with contract workers (for example, the cleaning staff) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Interviews were also done with parents of students living in Port Elizabeth. Questions were asked to obtain information regarding attitudes towards isiXhosa,

- random sampling
  A random sample was taken from the student body as well as the general public.
questionnaire
A self-administered questionnaire was completed by approximately 100 students. The questionnaire consisted of mostly open-ended questions with a limited number of closed-ended questions. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

1.7 Definition of terms

The following terms are defined in order to enhance the main thrust of this study.

1.7.1 The Language planning

Jones (1999: 258) says:

To survive and flourish into the next millennium every lesser used/minority language needs ROOTS AND WINGS. Without a sense of the past and an awareness of history its -roots- a language loses its sense of purpose. Without a sense of purpose no language will have a future. A sense of purpose gives the language wings so that it can leave the safety of the historical nest and fly with confidence into new domains.

Jones, definition shows that any attempt at language planning in a situation where the language lacks roots and wings becomes an exercise which can best be described as an attempt to navigate without maps, a fruitless if not impossible, exercise.
Fortunately isiXhosa has roots and wings and we have maps with which to navigate. The map in the case of language planning refers to social factors, demography, strengths and weaknesses in the economy, individual and group attitudes which are only a few of the factors which have to be taken into consideration. If they are not taken into consideration then the danger is that language planning becomes an exercise which takes place in a vacuum and ignores reality.

Language planning and language policy as concepts have received various definitions by language planning theorists and sociolinguists. Language planning is defined by Weinstein, cited in Beer and Jacob (1985:2) as:

– a government authorized, long term sustained and conscious effort to alter a language itself or to change a language’s functions in a society for the purpose of solving communications problems.

Language planning refers to deliberate and conscious efforts by government to alleviate language problems and to recognize one or more languages as official languages or media of instruction. Tollefson quoted in Dube (1992:8) says that language planning involves all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties. These efforts may involve creation of orthographies, standardization and modernisation programmes or allocation of functions to particular languages within multilingual societies.
Language planning involves public decisions about language, its use, status and development, decisions that have overwhelming significance socially, economically, educationally and politically for both society and the individual (Reagan, 2002:419).

From this definition it means language cannot be separated from such concerns, nor, indeed, would it be appropriate to try to do so. Tollefson (1991:22-42) says language planning efforts are, in short, inevitably ideological in nature, and this fact must be taken into account in trying to understand them.

A number of different definitions of language planning have been suggested. Among the most compelling and complete is that offered by Eastman (1983: 9) who defines language planning as a developing field that sees language as a social resource. He says language planning is done through the cooperative efforts of political, educational, economic and linguistic authorities.

Reagan (2002: 420) says this definition can be further expanded to include the following features:

- language planning as a conscious and deliberate activity
- language planning as future oriented; and
- language planning as involving choices, and the decision-making process involved in making these choices.

Language planning consists of three related but distinct types of activities namely; status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning (Reagan, 2002: 420). In the South African context, examples of status planning would
include the selection of ‘official’ languages and the use of various languages in official and semi-official settings for example, as media of instruction in schools, in law courts and by the public broadcaster.

Corpus planning on the other hand would focus primarily on the lexical development and expansion of Afrikaans and the African languages of South Africa. Specific examples of corpus planning would include the creation of new terminology and the production of dictionaries and textbooks. Acquisition planning refers to organized efforts to promote learning of a language (Cooper, 1989:157).

Language planning can serve as a tool for empowering groups and individuals, for creating and strengthening national bonds and ties, and for maximizing educational and economic development (Reagan, 2002:420).

Reagan continues to say language planning can also be used to maintain and perpetuate oppression, social-class discrimination, and social and education inequity. The history of language policy in South Africa is a powerful example.

1.7.2 Language

All definitions of culture agree that language is an important part of culture. It is a component of culture along with other entities like values, beliefs and norms. Hamer and Blanc (1989) state that language is a product of culture, transmitted from one generation to the next in the socialization process.
They say that language moulds culture that is to say, our cultural representations are shaped by language.

This definition proves that language is a transmitter of culture, a main tool for the internalization of culture by the individual.

Adler (1977) cited in Sukwiwat (1991:216) says about language:

> Language is usually mentioned as an important aspect of the intertwined system of values, attitudes, beliefs and norms that give meaning and significance to both individual and collective identity.

It is a dynamic set of visual, auditory or tactile symbols of communication and the rules to manipulate them according to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2008:1).

Language is everywhere and is essential to thinking and learning. It permeates our thoughts, mediates our relations with others, and even creeps into our dreams. Most human knowledge and culture is stored and transmitted in language, which is so ubiquitous that we take it for granted (Langacker, 1973: 3). Language is an integral part of society.

Language is the human use of spoken or written words as a communication system. Language can also include a system of communication based on signs, gestures or inarticulate sounds (www.edgateway.net,2005:2). Language defines a culture, through both the people who speak it and what it allows speakers to say.
1.7.3 Cultural identity

Hunt (1996:22) refers to culture as groups of people who share abstract knowledge, world, values and norms, manners and customs, and orientations towards social and interpersonal relations, that are taken for granted by the members of a social community. Cultural identity is the feeling of identity of a group or culture or of an individual as far as s/he is influenced by her belonging to a group or culture (www. Wikipedia.org/cultural identity, 2008:1).

While culture is usually delineated in terms of nationality, ethnicity or language, some definitions give it an individual focus, and include such factors as gender, age, religion and education (Pederson, 1994:229). Individuals can thus be viewed as composites of multiple identities any or all of which may influence their behaviour in a given context (Hunt, 1996:23).

1.7.4 Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a term which represents social groups with a shared history, sense of identity, geography and cultural roots which may occur despite racial difference. It is the classification of a population that shares common characteristics such as religion, traditions, culture, language and tribal or national origin (Hunt, 1996: 24).

Kellas (1994) defines ethnicity as a state of being ethnic, or belonging to an ethnic group. This is a definition that begs the question. Ethnicity is a social
and political construct used by individuals and communities to define themselves and others. Specifically, ethnicity refers to a person’s cultural background, including his or her language, origin, faith and heritage.

It comprises the ideas, beliefs, values and behavior that are transmitted from one generation to the next. It also tends to be perceived in terms of common culture, language and nationality (www.students.ubc.ca/access/race.cfm).

Ethnicity is a social construct that indicates identification with a particular group which is often descended from common ancestors. Members of the group share common cultural traits such as language, religion and dress, and are an identifiable minority within the larger nation-state (Harvey, 1998:250).

1.7.5 Language Policy

A language policy may be defined as a programme of action on the role or status of a language in a given society (Bamgbose, 1991:111).

Language policy involves decisions concerning the teaching and use of language and their careful formulation by an authority which has the power to do so, for the governance of others. So says Prator, cited in Olshtain (1989: 151).

Language policy implies a governmental perspective as opposed to consideration of the pattern of actual language use on the ground (Journal of Sociolinguistics, June 1998, vol.2 p189). Some key policy aims of language
policy are to promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education.

The general language policy, which mainly has to do with choice of a national or official language(s), is closely related to the educational policy of a state. The educational policy of South Africa is referred to in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996, Section 29). According to 1990 statistics provided by the Human Research Council, 75% of all South Africans have an indigenous African language as mother tongue and the other 25% of South Africans speak other languages such as Afrikaans, English and Portuguese (Kaschula and Anthonissen, 1995 :97). While this data may be dated it does not detract from the current numerical dominance of black South Africans.

The educational language policy is about:

- setting out the relationship between the teaching of the various languages and the levels at which they are taught (Bamgbose, 1991 :106).

Hornberger (1998:439) argues that language policy and language education can serve as vehicles for promoting the vitality, versatility and stability of indigenous languages.
1.7.6 African languages

African languages may be defined as languages spoken in Africa by Black Africans. In this study they are referred to as indigenous languages in that they are spoken by the people who are the original inhabitants of the area. African languages are isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, Sesotho, siSwati, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Setswana, and Tshivenda.

1.7.7 Official language

In South Africa there are eleven official Languages and they form part of the Constitution of South Africa. The Constitution enshrines the right of citizens to receive government services in their own language. These languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu. An official language is a language that is given a special legal status in a particular country, state or other territory.

The nation’s official language will be the one used in business, government, legislation, parliaments, administration and courts. An official is an official language because it is designated as such by a regulation or law. This means that although a language may have no official status in a particular country, it is the most commonly used language in that country and it is used in official settings. At the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University English is the official language.
1.7.8 Language attitudes

The term ‘attitude’ refers to a kind of formed behaviour directed to something. Pearsall (1998: 108) refers to ‘attitude’ as a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something. Language attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language or the language for others, according to Crystal (1992).

For example, mother tongue/first home language speakers may feel secure about their language and take pride in using it. If so, they may want their orthography to be very distinctive from that of the other languages used in the country.

Webb (1992:433) sees language attitude as:

a mirror of indirect but semi-conscious social and psychological perceptions of a category of language users defined by territory, ethnicity or social grouping.

1.7.9 The Language maintenance

Language is an utterance from the soul. If one knows his/her own language, that means s/he will even understand more and be familiar with his/her own traditions. The concern to preserve the use of a language or the traditional form of a language is referred to as language maintenance (Crystal, 1997:215).
Language maintenance occurs where people continue to use a language, often through adopting specific measures (Crystal, 2002:17). Speakers must take pride in their language; use it whenever they can and as creatively as they can so as to maintain it. To enable a language to grow and to maintain it, culture must be promoted also. The nation which is great is the nation which holds in high esteem its own traditions and language (Crystal, 2002:18).

Some groups maintain their language in a wider range of domains, others do not. Language maintenance is crucial for language survival. Parents should be encouraged to speak their mother-tongue/first home languages with their children at home and correct their children’s language so as to maintain the standard of the language. If isiXhosa speakers have a rather negative attitude towards isiXhosa than towards English that will adversely affect isiXhosa language maintenance.

If isiXhosa speakers feel the need for language maintenance for reasons of cultural, educational and ethnic identity, the study points to the need for the isiXhosa speakers to come together and take explicit steps rather urgently to prevent the ‘loss’ of language and language maintenance.

Linguists are often called upon to support the preservation or maintenance of minority and threatened languages. Linguists have to begin by identifying the values and self interest of themselves, then interests of various social groupings, political entities, institutions and finally affected speakers of a language themselves need to be addressed.
1.7.10 Language loss

Facing the loss of language or culture involves the same stages of grief that one experiences in the process of death and dying (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1998:71).

Language loss is part of a much larger process of loss of cultural and intellectual diversity in which politically dominant languages and cultures simply overwhelm indigenous local languages and cultures, placing them in a condition which can only be described as embattled (Hale, 1992: 101).

1.7.11 Language death

Language death is real, throughout history languages have died. The language of the Masarwa at Khakhea in southern Botswana is dead. Mesthrie (2002:44) says: to say that a language is dead is like saying that a person is dead. He says this because without people languages cannot exist. He continues to say that a language dies when nobody speaks it anymore.

1.8 Plan of study

Chapter One looks at the objectives of the study, the research problem, and its theoretical framework as well as the literature review, the significance of the study, the research methods and the definition of terms.
Chapter Two deals with language planning and the current negative attitudes towards African languages, with special reference to isiXhosa.

In chapter Three the teaching of isiXhosa, language policy and maintenance together with multilingual policy are presented.

Chapter Four incorporates corpus planning methods and the status of African languages and the role that educators and media can play. Language loss and language death are also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter Five looks at language acquisition planning and how isiXhosa can be maintained in view of current attitudes towards the language.

Chapter Six presents the conclusion of the research study and gives recommendations for possible future research.
Chapter 2

The Language planning and negative attitudes towards African languages with special reference to isiXhosa.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the current circumstances, conditions and situations that characterize African languages as subjects/courses at senior secondary schools, former technikons and universities. It explores negative attitudes towards African languages with special reference to isiXhosa. It looks at children/students, language acquisition, children/students and teacher attitudes towards African languages with special reference to isiXhosa usage in education with reference to senior secondary schools, universities and universities of technology or former technikons.

2.2 The Language planning

Language planning as a term refers to the process of implementing a particular language policy. There are many different approaches towards
language planning, and many definitions. Toffelson (1991:16) defines language planning as:

– all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties. These efforts may involve the creation of orthographies, standardization and modernization programmes, or allocation of functions to particular languages within multilingual societies. The commonly accepted definition of language policy is that it is language planning by governments.

Language planning is defined as a government authorized, long term sustained and conscious effort to alter a language itself or to change a language’s functions in a society for the purpose of solving communication problems (Weinstein 1980:55).

From the above definitions it seems that language planning refers to a set of deliberate activities systematically designed to organize and develop the language resources of the community in an ordered schedule of time. Cluver (1992:136) is of the opinion that language planning should always be informed by the long term objectives of a broader national development
programme, and because of this, language planning should support these policies.

Language planning can be divided into three main sections, namely acquisition; status planning and corpus planning. Only two will be dealt with. Status planning deals mainly with language policy and its implementation as well as the selection of languages used for official purposes and education. Corpus planning, however, deals with codification, standardization and language elaboration with regard to technical development for the educational and public sectors.

Bamgbose (1991:109) points out that language planning requires the identification of major language problems in a nation along with outcomes to solve these problems. During the apartheid era South Africa was generally perceived as a bilingual country, the two official languages being English and Afrikaans. The nine indigenous languages had regional co-official status in the respective self-governing or “independent” territories.

In the past, language planning in postcolonial African countries has been directed toward the selection and implementation of a national language.
The rationale behind this neglect of the given society was the belief that national unity and national identity are best promoted by a single national language.

Today most language planners view multiculturalism, pluralism, and multilingualism as facts of African life, which have to be seen positively as resources upon which language planning must be built, and not just as obstacles on the way to national unity and socioeconomic advancement.

The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) advises national and provincial governments on language legislation and develops the official and non-official languages of the country. It also protects language rights. The purpose of the PanSALB is to promote multilingualism in South Africa by:

- creating the conditions for the development of and the equal use of all official languages.
- fostering respect for and encouraging the use of other languages in the country, and
- encouraging the best use of the country’s linguistic resources in order to enable South Africans to free themselves from all forms of
discrimination, domination and division and to enable them to exercise appropriate linguistic choices for their own well-being as well as for national development (Ndabezitha, 2001: 63).

At this point it is useful to look at issues and problems in language planning

2.3 Issues and problems in language planning with particular reference to isiXhosa.

South Africa is a society which is highly diverse. The society is multiracial, multicultural, multireligious, and multilingual. This diversity is arguably nowhere manifested more clearly than in the case of language.

There is no language which is superior to any other; therefore no person should be prevented from the use of the language of his or her choice. Racial discrimination, apartheid, social struggles have made it possible for English to become the dominant language of power in South Africa.

Internationally, there is a growing awareness of the need for people in education constantly to be developing and reviewing curricula in accordance with changing circumstances. In South Africa this is particularly urgent in
view of its new language policy, and avowed intentions to promote multilingualism at all levels of society.

The Constitution of 1996 already makes a serious commitment to the provision of the rights of children to be educated in their own language and the Draft White Paper on language (1999) explicitly confirms the view that language diversity is a valued resource, and that language minorities should be empowered and functional multilingualism actively promoted.

It is apparent that the political will to promote these languages and the rights of their speakers is there (Hornberger, 1998:454). But there is little evidence, six years down the track, of any real change (Bowerman, 2000:30). As pointed out in de Klerk (2000 : 89) linguistic is still a seeming impossibility, and there is increasing evidence, ironically, that English is growing in its tendency to monopolise many areas of public administration in South Africa, and in many other multilingual contexts such as business, schools, universities, military camps and prisons.

Bowerman (2000: 63) has shown that the use of English has actually increased extensively in parliamentary debates where speakers of indigenous
languages outnumber mother-tongue/first home language speakers of English.

There is persistent functional deficiency and low levels of development for indigenous languages in terms of corpus, status, and prestige in the area of education, commerce, science and technology (Kamwangamalu, 1998: 224; Bowerman, 2000: 63). This means that their speakers are excluded from high corporate and official domains and increasingly demand access to English, which they see as absolutely essential for success.

African language departments at several tertiary institutions have had to cut back on staff as a result of steadily declining student numbers who wish to study these languages, which means therefore that numbers of prospective language experts, teachers, and lecturers for example, are declining. IsiXhosa has not escaped the effects of this trend.

At Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University for example, some isiXhosa mother-tongue/first home language courses have been discontinued in the light of the steadily declining numbers of isiXhosa speaking students who wish to study their own language. Is it because isiXhosa students or parents
reject or look down on their language? Parents prefer English medium schools for their children. This will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters of this study.

Schuring et al. (1997:17) report that increasing numbers of speakers of indigenous African languages see English as “the language of prestige and something to be aspired to”. When all South African schools were opened to all races from 1990, formerly whites-only English medium schools were overwhelmed with applications from non-English children because of the powerful appeal of these schools in terms of what they could offer formerly disempowered speakers of African languages (Coutts, 1992: 42).

IsiXhosa is one of the most widely spoken indigenous languages in South Africa spoken by 18% of the population, second only to Zulu according to the 2001 Census. Although it is now one of the official languages of the Eastern Cape Province, and despite huge changes in policy in order to promote such languages and despite being a numerical majority, isiXhosa speakers find themselves in a world where English offers the greatest financial and political opportunities.
The demographic facts of language distribution in South Africa also favour English; it has the widest and most general distribution of all languages in contrast to the indigenous languages.

2.4 The Language planning situation in South Africa

In South Africa, English is the medium of instruction at most schools throughout the country, except at historically Afrikaans medium schools and universities. English at these institutions competes for space with Afrikaans to accommodate Black students’ demand for English medium education. English is widely used in the print media, on the radio, television, and the Internet. It is the language of science and technology, of job opportunities and is the language for conducting the business of the state.

It is seen by many as the language of power, prestige and status, and as open sesame by means of which one can acquire unlimited vertical social mobility (Samuel, 1995: 150). In short, English is, as some people put it, “a language that can take you – anywhere” (Virasamy, 1997: 105). It is in the words of Pakir (1998:104), a language with “no sell by date attached to it”.
Despite all its positive attributes in South Africa, English has been accused of being a double-edged sword for the following reasons:

- Although it provides access to education and job opportunities, it also acts as a barrier to such opportunities for those who do not speak it, or whose English is poor (Branford, 1996:36).

- It is an important key to knowledge science and technology, but it is increasingly seen as the major threat to the maintenance of indigenous languages (Masemola and Khan, 2001:11), as a remnant of colonialism a cause of cultural alienation (Schmied, 1991:121), and as a vehicle of values not always in harmony with local traditions and beliefs (de Klerk, 1996:7).

### 2.5 Language and culture

Nieto (1992:53) describes language as a primary means by which people express their cultural values and the lens through which they view their world. Language is the principal means of representing information (Frawley 1992:45). Language may be a tool for social and cultural domination. Language is power and people can only be empowered through their own language.
In the definition of Weber (1968) cited in Edwards (2006:15), power is “…
the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance or more generally, the
exercise of one’s will over others.’

Language and culture are interlinked; they convey culturally and socially
relevant ideas and issues. Culture can be seen as a group’s ever changing
response to their environment. Frawley, (1992:45) defines culture as a
people’s system of beliefs and theories about the operation of the world
cosmology – passed down through generations through a symbolic tradition.

In a multilingual group there may be differences in world view, learning
styles, behaviour, sense of humour, and in non-verbal communication, as
well as in the actual spoken language.

IsiXhosa speaker may ask ‘Ninjani’? (how are you?) (plural) reflecting a
communal world view in contrast to the English person’s more
individualistic, ‘unjani’? (how are you?) (singular). Non-verbal
communication is an important part of language that often creates tension.
Maphai (1991) says:

Black people think white children are rude because they accept a gift with one hand. White adults think black children are greedy for putting both hands. Surely the important thing is that both children have been taught the same underlying value - to be polite – but from different cultural perspectives. Why waste energy and compromise confidence in this way?

It is widely accepted that acquisition of the second language is enhanced by development of the first. The former Model C teachers tend to tell students to practise English at their homes. However, this undermines the child’s relationship with the family and community. This can reduce the emotional support and nurturing one gets from home.

The acquisition of the second language interferes with the development of a positive self-concept and, is likely to delay cognitive development. Teachers should allow children to speak in their home languages while a target language is gradually introduced. Children should also speak their home language and attempt a second language as they feel ready.
There are cases where learners refuse to speak isiXhosa even when they go home for example to New Brighton in Port Elizabeth. To deny the existence of cultural difference is to negate the child’s experiences and those of her/his family and community, and serves to undermine her or his self-concept.

Teachers tend to assume sometimes that all the children understand the ground rules when they may, in fact, feel totally lost. All this puts the child at a disadvantage when it comes to learning. Parents and teachers should interpret the behaviours mentioned as warning signals indicating that the child’s way of doing things is being ignored and a new way is being imposed which has detrimental effects on the child’s self-concept.

To deal with issues of language and culture, people cannot know all the customs and languages of all South African cultures, but few things can be done to help immediately. People can become aware of their own bias and begin the process of genuinely accepting that their own way is just one way of doing things, and it is neither better nor worse than others. Then people will thereby find it easier to create real space for children to bring their own experiences and ideas to the group.
Schools often use a more middle class language style which can be confusing to children used to more direct communication. Only children who are familiar with that style will recognize it, for example ‘How do you do?’ instead of ‘How are you’? Teachers need to be approachable so that children are not afraid to indicate that they are lost in translation (Hoffman 1989: 201).

Parent involvement at schools is one of the most effective ways of achieving authentic cultural representation in classrooms. Research shows that children succeed best when they see their parents included in the school environment and when parents support their children’s education and help them to maintain and develop their home language.

Robb (1995:68) states that:

Parents need to be consulted and heard all along the way so that they become real partners in their children’s education and so that they too are assisted in the adjustment process.
This will help to create a school that really is a community school where all the children feel recognized and valued with their home language, for example, isiXhosa in this case.

Black African children are in Africa and South Africa, but there is a tendency of reflecting English rather than African culture. The education system has treated black children like foreigners in their own country. In fact, they and their languages, culture, religion, traditions and interests have been made largely invisible.

Black South African students need to know where they come from, who they are and have pride in themselves. A conscious effort has to be made to unlearn the biased attitudes which may have been acquired (Delpit, 1992:96-97). The importance of maintaining and developing the child’s home language must never be forgotten. Multilingualism should not mean that children’s home languages are being supplanted but rather they are supplemented from English.
2.6 Acquisition of language by children and students

Language may refer to the concrete act of speaking, writing or signing in a given situation (Crystal, 1997:213). Language is essential to thinking and learning, learners must be able to learn in the language or languages which best suit this purpose.

One of the first words isiXhosa baby tends to pronounce is ‘mama’.(mother) When children cry they tend to use the word ‘mama’, ‘mummy’, ‘mme’ or an equivalent depending on their mother-tongue. According to my interviews in Mzimba district in Malawi one baby boy surprised everyone in the area with his cry, he always cried “daddy” and yet his mother was still alive and brought him up.

The story says this boy committed murder in his twenties and everybody in the area justified and traced his murder act to the strange way of crying “daddy” instead of “mummy”. The suspicion of these people can only be justified on the basis that the child development is greatly influenced by the mother- tongue/first home language from which the thinking process originates and on which it depends.
Having said this, the utmost importance of mother tongue language as the process of thinking from day one in child development can be seen. Any discipline, be it in Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Economics, Religion can perhaps be better understood through the medium of the first home language.

A powerful way of encouraging language acquisition is for parents and teachers to set the example. Children often learn more from what parents and teachers do than from what they say.

Language learning is not really something that the child does, it is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment, much as the child’s body grows and matures in a predetermined way when provided with appropriate nutrition and environmental situation (Fromkin Rodman and Hyams, 2003:347).

The above idea shows that language is a creative process. Learning may be defined as changes in knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes brought about by experience and reflection upon that experience.
The experience may be structured as in courses and learning packages or, it may be unstructured as in browsing or casual learning from peers. Feedback from others augments the experience and reflection, a form of internal feedback, accelerates learning (Schmidt et al, 1990).

Apart from being clear about what one wants students to learn, one has to provide opportunities for learning, meaningful feedback, opportunities for reflection and further feedback. Students learn through listening, thinking, reading, writing to others and note taking, observing, talking to and with others and doing things. Translations and actions stimulate language acquisition.

The key processes are various forms of thinking, such as searching for understanding, problem solving, creativity and evaluative thinking, and various forms of remembering such as note taking, identifying patterns and learning through understanding. Students are more likely to learn effectively if they are motivated to learn. Students acquire language then by understanding reality, because when one has really learnt something one sees things one could not see before.
When students learn, they acquire facts or procedures which are to be used. If one has learnt something and acquired it then one can do it again when one is asked to.

2.7 Self image

A lot of black people are shocked when they meet me because I don’t speak an African language. (*Fair Lady*, August 2008:64).

These are the words of Zeni Meiring who was adopted by a white family at the age of 11. She says she has been called a ‘coconut’, and she guesses that is what she is. Zeni was raised in a Western or European culture rather than in an African one, so she understands why people call her that.

At school Zeni had the choice to learn Zulu but she did not think it was important at that time. The lady continues to say, ‘Not speaking an African language is a ‘bit’ of a problem now; but still she does not feel like she missed out on anything.
Another case of Avuya Nzala who was adopted by a white family at the age of 12 says, ‘For me, culture is not fixed. I know all the rituals and customs; I have all of that within me. But I have the same knowledge of Afrikaans culture; I know how to treat Ouma and Oupa. I am able to look at everything from a bird’s eye view.

Avuya says she has combined the two cultures and has come up with her own. She agrees that there are differences, for example she says when it comes to dating her isiXhosa mother would say she is still young, she is 17 now. She says in isiXhosa home a girl of her age is not supposed to talk about those things, but in her Afrikaans home it is quite open. He would bring her boyfriend over for lunch. Avuya has her adoptive sister Zintle who was adopted at the age of 2.

Walter Nish Shange (25) was also adopted by a white family at the age of six and is now 25 years old. He says he does not feel any less black. He can speak Zulu. Walter’s advantage is that he lives with his white family together with his biological mother by his side, so he feels he has the best of both worlds because he understands both cultures.
Walter says, ‘I fully understand my mother’s motivations—she tried to give me more than she had. She insisted I visit my grandmother in the rural areas during holidays and drilled Zulu into me so I’d be able to communicate and do not lose insight into where I’m from.’ Walter says he likes the way he grew up and would like his children to also grow up like him. He claims that despite the difficulties he encountered while he grew up, he is where he is now because of good education, experience and has a decent job.

Sheri Shenker of K & S Adoption South Africa quoted by Jellars (2008) is of the opinion that cross-racial adoption has been quite successful in South Africa because the South African culture and environment at home is usually the same. Definitely there are some differences and challenges and based on that she recommends that white adoptive parents should learn an African language with their child because a black child in South Africa who does not speak an African language can be treated as an outcast later on.

In the case of Riathandi who was also adopted by a white family at the age of three, the language of the mother, Riana is Afrikaans; but Riana wants her Riathandi to speak English as well as an African language fluently because she does not want her child to lose her identity and language.
What Riana is doing is highly appreciated because in this way Riathanda’s language is maintained.

2.8 Language attitudes

Language attitudes are part of linguistic culture. Since linguistic policy is often rooted in linguistic culture, attitudes cannot be ignored. As language constitutes an integral part of society and individual’s identity, people’s attitude towards language must have strong effects. Gardner and Lamberts (1972), propose motivation as a construct made up of specific attitudes to language.

Language attitude is defined by Richards et al., (1985) as the feeling that speakers of different languages or varieties of a language have towards each other’s usage or their own language. Negative or positive attitudes towards a language may reflect linguistic difficulty or simplicity of learning, degree of importance and social status. Fasold (1987) differentiates attitude from other attitudes in that language attitude is precisely about the language.
The definition of language attitude is extended to cover the way in which language is dealt with in a variety of domains including language maintenance and planning efforts. A positive attitude towards isiXhosa language will help students to formulate a strong motivation to learn isiXhosa.

Some learners are interested in learning English as a language just because they want to achieve certain objectives through it. This kind of motivation plays an increasingly dominant role in leading vernacular-speaking people to learn the dominant language in host environments.

According to Adegbija (1994), many African students view their own ethnic languages as unsuitable for use in official domains. They believe that these languages lack the capacity for expressing ideas in a variety of domains. As a result, indigenous languages are excluded from all aspects of communication in official settings and in some degrees and diplomas.

The neglect experienced by African languages plays a significant role in creating a negative attitude among students towards isiXhosa. This may lead to the demise of African languages in the future.
To counter this situation, language revival strategies and procedures are desperately needed. Adegbija (1994) says standardization can help develop positive attitudes towards indigenous languages.

The need for a positive attitude towards isiXhosa as a language requires an active involvement of government in the affected areas, otherwise chances of survival will be limited. The use of English as a medium of instruction in schools and universities further enhances the neglect of indigenous languages and consequently creates more negative attitudes among students towards isiXhosa instead of promotion and development of indigenous languages.

2.9 Children/students and teacher attitudes towards African languages with special reference to isiXhosa usage in education.

Young et al (1991) study of language planning and attitudes towards the role and status of languages, especially English in Western Cape secondary schools, found that 98% of their respondents strongly agree that knowledge of English is important and useful in getting a job. Over 70% of their respondents, including Afrikaans mother-tongue/first home speakers
preferred English as a *lingua franca* and instrumental national communicative language (Young, et al, 1991:13).

One of the important factors in developing negative student attitudes towards books written in African languages is that such books are usually school-oriented and do not really address students’ day-to-day problems (Ntuli, 1968:32).

The results of the investigation based on interviews show that 80% of African students prefer to use the English medium for all their subjects and courses, from primary, high schools up to tertiary level. For that matter, even for their leisure time, listening to the radio, watching television and reading newspapers, they prefer English medium. Sixty percent of teachers and lecturers prefer isiXhosa medium.

The results of the preferred language as reflected by the percentage cited above for students show attitudes towards their African mother-tongue first home languages. Observations on this research show that although students claim the ability to express them better in their first language, still they choose or prefer English over isiXhosa since English is widely considered as
the language of economy, power and advancement. Students prefer to use English instead of their indigenous languages.

One of findings of this study at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa is that there are no isiXhosa communication handbooks at the bookshops. Handouts and other materials are used.

Both students and lecturers indicated that this needs to be looked at for there are people who have the potential of writing such books. Lecturers and students also indicated that at undergraduate level, African language grammar should be taught in the medium of African languages. Teachers at primary and high schools fully agree with this idea also.

African schools in the townships in Port Elizabeth, from Grade 1 to grade 12, African languages are offered in the medium of African languages. But in some tertiary institutions African languages are taught in the English medium. In the former Model “C” schools, some do not offer isiXhosa at all. Those that offer isiXhosa teach conversational isiXhosa which is totally
different from the syllabus of schools in the townships which is isiXhosa language grammar. The syllabus also needs to be revisited.

Seventy percent of students, teachers and lecturers strongly agreed that switching from an African language to English would unarguably hinder the scholastic performance of students studying African languages. Some students and lecturers preferred both African languages and English as medium of instruction because students had studied African language grammar through English in their first, second, and third year levels at university, and they see English as the only language suitable to teach African language grammar.

Lecturers who preferred both African languages and English as medium of instruction argued that the teaching of an African language grammar in an African language medium lowers standards. This shows a negative attitude towards an African language, and this needs to be looked at intensively.

As a lecturer at NMMU (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), it has been discovered through investigation that there is a decline in the number of students taking isiXhosa as a course or subject.
This is surprising because the decline comes against the backdrop of a language-in-education policy that explicitly supports multilingualism. It is important that all three provincial official languages of the Eastern Cape, namely English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa should be promoted at schools and tertiary institutions.

While African language speakers were forced to learn the two official languages, Afrikaans and English, in addition to the home language, Afrikaans and English speaking students were never required to reciprocate and learn an African language. Now that isiXhosa students have a choice to study their language, they do not like it because they regard it as “a difficult language”, they do not see the “relevance of it” or they feel that they already know how to speak it.” These are some defensive and escapist attitudes one finds.

The tendency is for many teachers to promote English as a language of instruction at the expense of home language instruction. Yet the Department of Education’s language policy stresses the importance of home language instruction in the cognitive and emotional development of children. This is one of the reasons why learners have negative attitudes towards their mother
tongue/first home languages with special reference to isiXhosa. Learners say they prefer English because it is the medium of instruction and all the application forms, interviews, assessments, examinations are done in English. It is an international language.

Most isiXhosa learners are eager to speak about their language and culture but some do not want to take it as a course or subject at tertiary level. They learn isiXhosa at primary and high school because it is compulsory, they have no alternative. NCHE (1996) Alidou & Mazrui (1999) Webb & Kembo–Sure (2000) are of the opinion that the development of isiXhosa and other African languages for academic purposes is considered a crucial issue in the academic debate on their use as language of learning and teaching at tertiary level.

Learners argue that “akukho mfuneko yaso kuba bayakwazi ukusithetha”(there is no need for the language because they are able to speak it). But they forget that they are not taught conversational isiXhosa but (based on this research) communication skills as it is in other languages.
The development of the use of isiXhosa as a course or subject in all faculties is necessary, particularly in the Faculty of Arts. African languages are sometimes used to supplement explanations in English. It may be argued that the use of isiXhosa as an additional language of learning and teaching is appropriate; this appears to reflect the common practice of using code-switching in lectures and tutorials. This applies in all the communication environments, and not in learning situations only.

It is interesting to note that students believe that the use of isiXhosa improves their understanding and their academic performance because courses link with each other. Graduates in Social Work Media and Communication for example, would probably have more contact with the isiXhosa speaking community. It would be relatively easy to develop new isiXhosa terminology for the subjects taught in these two faculties, Social Work and Communication.

Students themselves also believe that the use of isiXhosa would have positive effects such as allowing more isiXhosa students to go to university and provide graduates with a better understanding of the subject studied. Students are afraid of not achieving sufficient English proficiency, and this
clearly influences their attitudes towards the use of their mother-tongue/first home language as a medium of instruction and taking it as a course.

Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) indicate that English was considered as a “must have” in order to find a job and, consistent with the observation, was identified as a key to upward mobility, because of its communicative power.

It is disgraceful and dehumanizing to hear isiXhosa speaking student saying, “IsiXhosa is very difficult”. One can hear a student saying “ndiyoku-attend iPhysics” (I am on my way to attend a Physics lecture) or any other course/subject, but not isiXhosa, although the student is on the way to isiXhosa lecture. Students report that isiXhosa is difficult to take as a subject because the language system is different from that of English and Afrikaans.

The language system may be different from that of English and Afrikaans, but that does not mean isiXhosa is difficult, especially for a mother-tongue/first home language speaker. Two facts should be made clear from this: if isiXhosa is a difficult language then it means English and Afrikaans are also difficult languages.
A simple look at the various ways in which one can express the past tense can demonstrate this. For example isiXhosa ndagoduka, English I went home. “Went” is the past tense of “go” the verb has changed totally, yet in isiXhosa it is only the vowel i that has changed to a to make past tense. The point that is being made here is that English has a rather complex morphological structure which does not readily lend itself to as any easier comprehension.

As much as isiXhosa sentences have a different structure, it is an easier language to learn than either English or Afrikaans, or even French for that matter.

When students were asked about their negativity in taking isiXhosa as a course, others responded by saying they do not see the relevance of isiXhosa because isiXhosa speakers can speak English anyway. Some say they never studied isiXhosa from primary and secondary schools. Some say they would be emigrating after finishing their studies and go to work overseas and there will be no need for isiXhosa.
It becomes very hard to catch up for those students who got poor teaching of isiXhosa in primary school as a result they drop out at high school and even worse at tertiary level, as was apparent from interviews conducted. The learners noted the uncertainty about the role of isiXhosa in securing future jobs. They say that English and Afrikaans remain the two languages that are attached to important jobs or better job opportunities.

Most students who take isiXhosa as a subject or course feel that it has instrumental value and those who do not take it do not feel like that. “Our black students are running away, not even shying away from the language” (Mtuze, 2007: 19). This seems to show that isiXhosa has no economic value for them, since they say, “what are you going to do with an African language”? This starts from the parents who say, ‘I am not going to send my child to do this language because it has no economic value’.

Language is important as a way of understanding oneself. So it goes way beyond economic value. Research done by PanSALB indicates that the majority of parents would like their children to learn African languages. To support this, when interviewing parents; they highlighted that learning and
the teaching needs to become modernised. It needs to be enjoyable, attractive.

Satyo (2001) claims that “The missionaries made people believe that African languages were languages of barbarians”. It is very sad that black people, African people, feel that they are beggars in the economy of the country. In some societies attitudes to different languages are varied. It is not unusual to hear languages which are foreign to certain people being referred to as inferior.

The Bushman language sounds more like the chatter of baboons than the talk of men (Burke, 1974:84 in Naidoo, 1984:6). This is similar to what isiXhosa people say about the Nigerian language, calling it the 'makwerekwere’ language because of the way the language is spoken. African languages seem to be the most discouraged at schools.

Many African language speakers moving into the English first language schools are shying away from their own language which they are learning to regard as inferior or useless. One of isiXhosa teacher says, “Quite a number of the kids who attend former Model C schools with whites do not want to
speak isiXhosa any more”. They say their teachers encourage them to speak English because it is a superior language, and also for them to be fluent in English means jobs and increases mobility.

Based on all what has been discussed children/learners/students should be encouraged to use their own languages because, that acknowledges the importance of first language development. First language development is central to second language development. Language educators agree that the more proficient students are in their first language, the more proficient they will be in their second language. By negating the first language, one is retarding the development of the second language.

2.10 The status of isiXhosa at universities

African languages have been offered in some universities and African language departments tended or tend to focus their courses on comparative linguistics, and phonetics, whilst neglecting the important area of applied linguistics and communication skills.
First language students of African languages, and with special reference to isiXhosa, would naturally have studied their language in this context. This study shows that this is one of the reasons why students are not interested in taking isiXhosa as a course. They say that they do not like, for example, phonetics and comparative linguistics that is why they do not take isiXhosa as a course at university level.

From the foregoing discussion, it is very crucial that the Department of Education must change the curriculum so as to accommodate the interests and the need of studying isiXhosa for the working environment in the outside world. Another significant factor is the absence of first language courses in certain historically white universities and second language courses in most historically black universities. There is also lack of material and trained language practitioners for the African languages. Alexander in Heugh (1993:30) notes that:

– it must be clear that the lack of material and trained human resources in virtually all the indigenous languages in South Africa will inevitably restrict the extent to which tuition can be offered in those
languages. Any model which does not address and make allowance for this reality will necessarily disadvantage the students/learners.

From the above quotation, it is apparent that something must be done to address the problem of a lack of material and trained human resources. In schools and universities learners could be encouraged by their teachers and lecturers to become language facilitators, thus empowering the pupils and allowing them to be seen by their peers as valuable language sources.

Julie Frederikse (1993:28), in her report aimed at getting pupils who were first language speakers of Zulu to teach their peers, comments that this project aimed at least in part, to challenge the conventional power relationships between first language English speakers and second language English speakers.

Based on the above, it is crucial that schools, universities and also all language organizations should develop sufficient resources to increase training in, and promotion of, these languages with specific reference to isiXhosa.
It has been noted that universities which do offer services towards the development of isiXhosa and other African languages are doing that on a very small scale.

IsiXhosa beyond the classroom will flourish only if teachers set a positive, supportive and creative example, by using their undoubted power to promote it. From the questionnaires, students reported that they believe that it was important to maintain their mother-tongue which is isiXhosa. Fifteen of twenty interviewees (parents) wanted their children to see themselves in the future as fluent isiXhosa speaking people, three strongly felt that government should have isiXhosa taught as first language not as second or third language.

African languages should be compulsory at schools just like English. Parents move their children to English medium schools despite their support for isiXhosa and that will increase their children’s exposure to English and not isiXhosa because isiXhosa that is taught at these English medium schools is conversational and not academic. De Klerk (2000) says if you cannot speak your mother tongue you will be a disgrace to your nation.
From the students’ interviews conducted, the response from all of them was that they want isiXhosa to be used as a language because they feel that, that will maintain the culture and identity of the community. Students say that it is important to maintain isiXhosa so as to not forget who they are and where they really come from.

In response to the question how can we maintain the fullest use of isiXhosa"? student commented that it must be introduced as a subject; we must speak it daily and fluently and do not mix it with any language, we must read isiXhosa books’. Students feel that isiXhosa should be taught in schools so as to encourage isiXhosa learners to gain interest in isiXhosa and to know the language better. Some say they speak it enough at home and they find the language difficult.

They feel that as much as they would like to encourage their children to learn isiXhosa; they do not think that by the time they become parents, the language will still be taught at school. When asked if they think that English speakers should be encouraged to learn isiXhosa; they say they should because many black people are not educated and they struggle to communicate with them and in most places it is still white people in charge.
It is interesting that seventy percent of students do not like the attitude of those isiXhosa students/people who speak only English and never their own language. They say they feel sorry for them, that they are ashamed of their own language and themselves and mostly they are Xhosas and will never change.

Twenty five percent of the students say they do not like their language, they find it difficult since they were never taught isiXhosa at school and some say they were sent to English nurseries at the age of 9 months. Others say they cannot find the word they are looking for in isiXhosa so they find it easier to phrase their conversation in English.

Eighty percent of the students from English medium schools say they learn more effectively in English and it is the easiest for them to use when presenting, and twenty percent from other schools say they prefer isiXhosa although they understand English but it becomes hard for them to express themselves in English.
Students like care and are proud of their language, but sixty percent of them do not want to learn it as a subject or course at school and tertiary level.

2.11 Conclusion

Chapter two defined language planning with special reference to isiXhosa from the perspective of different authors. It gave reasons for the negative attitudes towards African languages, especially isiXhosa. The chapter shows that language and culture are interlinked and they convey culturally and socially relevant ideas.

This chapter also showed the importance of maintaining language and culture and that language is essential to thinking and learning. Learners and teachers attitudes towards African languages were also seen to be almost the same. The chapter reveals that African languages are not offered in some universities.

Finally this chapter showed that positive attitudes towards isiXhosa language will help students to have a strong motivation to learn.
Chapter 3

Status Planning

3.1 Introduction

Language planning can be divided into three main sections: status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. Status planning deals mainly with language policy and its implementation as well as the selection of languages to be used for official purposes and education. Corpus planning, however, deals with codification, standardization and language elaboration with regard to technical development for educational and public sectors. Acquisition planning according to Cooper (1989:157) refers to organized efforts to promote the learning of a language.

This chapter focuses on status planning. It investigates the teaching of isiXhosa. It looks at the language maintenance and use of multilingualism. Just as languages change over time, the functions they serve for particular communities change as well.
3.2 Status planning

Status planning refers to the language’s standing with respect to other languages or to the language needs of a national government, community, or individuals. It includes the selection of official languages and their use in official settings such as media of instruction in schools, in law courts, SABC of various languages.

According to Kloos (1986:18) status planning means the planned alteration in the active use of a language and hence of its functions and status as well. Although corpus and status planning are closely intertwined, it is not the scientist who decides on the status of a language, but its speakers by their active language use, and of course, the politicians of a country who try to reach a specific political, economic, educational or social aim.

Matsêla (1996) blames governments that:

– mother-tongue languages were not developed so that they could be used as effective media of instruction. This was purposely done, partially to keep their speakers down (as they would learn faster and
most effectively in their developed mother-tongues) and partially because a lot of effort and money were required and unavailable to develop instructional materials like books in using them.

This means that status planning is a significant part of any language policy. Three main areas can be distinguished within status planning. They are:

- the political domain
- the educational domain and
- the cultural domain

The political domain refers to the fact that language must be used for administrative purposes at the regional, national and international levels. The educational domain has the choice of a language as a medium of instruction for different regions, different age groups (levels of education) and for different school subjects. The cultural domain refers to the language used in radio and TV programmes, newspapers, literature, and cinema.

According to Hornberger (1990:20-21) and Nahir (1984: 40) goals of language status planning are constituted by officialisation, nationalization,
status standardization, vernacularisation, revival, spread, maintenance, and interlingual communication.

The declaration of a language as official constitutes status planning. Crystal (1997:95) is of the opinion that status planning deals with the standing of one language in relation to others. Status planning is more concerned with the social and political implications of choosing a language. Cooper (1989:99) defines status planning as deliberate efforts to influence the allocation of functions among a community’s languages.

The declaration of a language as official constitutes status planning. When a community views a language as a symbol of its greatness, the specification of that language as official serves to support the legitimacy of governmental authority.

When a government recognizes the language of a subordinate minority as a statutory language, rulers in effect grant symbolic recognition of that group’s right to maintain its distinctiveness. Conversely, when a linguistically heterogeneous polity declares one language only as statutory, for example
English as the official language of South Africa, the declaration in effect denies the legitimacy of diversity.

One can therefore argue that in most cases the specification of statutory languages is an exercise in the manipulation of political symbols for the maintenance of ruling elites. Whereas a statutory official language is necessarily the outcome of status planning, a government’s use of a given language for given activities need not be the outcome of deliberate planning.

A policy document (ANC, 1994) stresses that “….language is essential to thinking and learning, learners must be able to learn in the language or languages which best suit this purpose.” Despite currently popular arguments in favour of English as the dominant language of learning, such approaches to education have been shown to be seriously flawed, and there is comprehensive and convincing evidence which demonstrates the linguistic, academic and social advantages of mother tongue education and bilingual schools in order to ensure all pupils will have equal access not only to the school door but also to useful and meaningful engagement with the curriculum.
3.3 The teaching of isiXhosa

The low status of isiXhosa as a language for literacy in society, makes the early years of childhood critical ones for fostering the development of early positive attitudes to isiXhosa writing in as meaningful and accessible ways as possible, with both English and isiXhosa speaking children (Bloch 2002:69).

Teachers have been encouraged to consider ways of adapting their literacy teaching in a movement away from the “sterile exercises of workbooks” Robinson et al., (1990:12) towards an approach that includes showing the children that teachers have faith in them and how they tackle their learning. An approach that includes simultaneous exposure to isiXhosa and English is another way than can be used.

Varied encounters with print in both languages may be provided. Promoting an ethos that values reading and writing as powerful, useful and enjoyable practices should be included. Students can be introduced to making use of, and developing understanding about the possibilities and potential of translating and interpreting.
Crawhall (1994), Folliott *et al.*, (1995) are of the opinion that offering isiXhosa as a subject in the secondary phase had, however, proven problematic, owing to the lack of suitably qualified teachers, an appropriate curriculum and textbooks.

The current educational system seems to offer parents the choice between either English or African languages as medium of instruction for their children. A better solution would be to offer genuine bilingual education (Luckett *et al.*, 1993).

Heugh (2001:28) says that bilingual education for each child within a multilingual education policy does not mean the choice between either English or an African language, it means both.

It means then therefore that to develop the first language and add a second language is the best possible manner to ensure the successful learning of the second language. Current signs that parents attach a high value to English, does not necessarily imply a lesser valuation of indigenous languages, but to students it is the opposite.
A bilingual language-in-education policy would solve the dilemma for parents and students. It would also uplift and nurture indigenous languages and offer all children equal access to English, should they desire it. Heugh’s evidence of the steady decline in academic success levels during Bantu Education once mother tongue education gave way to the early introduction of English is very significant.

She argues cogently that African languages do indeed have the capacity to deliver quality education to the majority of South African learners, and that they will benefit enormously, both linguistically and cognitively, from mother-tongue/first home language education, alongside English, in a curriculum which, she maintains, is not too expensive in the bigger picture.

What is apparent according to this study is that isiXhosa speaking children who are developing fluency in isiXhosa reading and writing are equally fluent in English. To use English less has not meant any deficiency for development in English. On the contrary, the use of isiXhosa has brought gains for both isiXhosa and English.
For isiXhosa speaking students, ‘there is no demand for isiXhosa’, most isiXhosa speakers rather prefer Afrikaans second language to isiXhosa first language because the linguistics of isiXhosa is perceived to be difficult. Some parents prefer Afrikaans second language to be replaced by isiXhosa second language classes. It is important that isiXhosa should continue to be part of the culture at home.

Teachers who teach isiXhosa at tertiary level where isiXhosa is taught as an examination subject and as first language are fully trained teachers and academically qualified in the sense that none of them has less than two university courses in isiXhosa. Most of them are the product of Bantu Education where isiXhosa at university was, and in some is, taught in English. Some do not have a good background of isiXhosa culture.

Gebeda (1975:53) says:

Most of the isiXhosa teachers at high schools have very little or no background of isiXhosa life, having not lived among the isiXhosa people and they have no experience of speaking isiXhosa outside their university classroom; this being the only contact they have with
language. This can make them poor in spoken proficiency and can influence their children and scholars they teach at schools.

As a result of statements such as the above many of the teachers usually consult the teachers and lecturers at nearby university departments when they have difficulties in the language. There are some cases where one or more students in a class have a better command of spoken isiXhosa than the teacher. This may create problems in written and oral lessons.

Some students who study isiXhosa as a subject at tertiary level are not so excited about learning an African language, while others are comfortable. Those who are not happy say they do not have a problem with the subject it is the syllabus that they do not like. If the syllabus can be changed then some but not all well of cause would learn the subject. The syllabus is based on grammar which students do not like.

Students claim that as the subject is now, they find it not easy, and they see no need of learning it because it can take them nowhere.
Gebeda (1975:54) states that:

– students soon discover that they are not finding the language very easy as they had anticipated, and some of their curious enquiries are not satisfactorily met by the teachers.

Gebeda also says that when one moves from schools in small country towns to schools in the big towns and cities one discovers a corresponding decrease in the level of fluency among students. This situation is perhaps caused by the attitude people in big cities have.

They have lost their humanity and culture and think that their culture is inferior. On the side of teachers the overall impression is that they feel that to know isiXhosa grammar is to know isiXhosa. But it is equally important for one to know the corresponding culture of one’s mother tongue/first home language.

An example would be how to greet people. In isiXhosa culture a young person is supposed to have respect when greeting someone older than
him/her. These days at least teachers are very keen and welcome isiXhosa
speakers to help them to know isiXhosa culture better. For example there are
heritage days now where African cultures are observed and slowly being
recorded and compiled into books.

The general aspiration of isiXhosa teacher right from university is to teach
isiXhosa as a new subject so that s/he may use his/her initiative to build up
the course from the beginning. Principals are finding it difficult to get
teachers to teach isiXhosa. As a result of the scarcity of isiXhosa teachers
some schools are forced to keep the numbers of students who take isiXhosa
as a subject down.

Some schools are unable to introduce isiXhosa for lack of teachers and for
fear that isiXhosa teachers may come and go when they do become
available. It would appear that in most areas children are not encouraged to
take isiXhosa at school by their parents or by other teachers. There are
schools which seem to be bent on discouraging learners from taking
isiXhosa as a subject, evidence suggests.
Some teachers find the task of teaching isiXhosa tiring and full of frustrating moments, while others find it exciting, challenging and rewarding. The plight of the teachers is worsened by the fact that they feel that the syllabus for isiXhosa is unreasonably demanding. They do not have the material with which to work, and they do not know where to get help because even the inspectors of schools who come to inspect work in isiXhosa are unable to advise for they themselves do not know isiXhosa, or how to teach it. (Gebeda 1975:56).

Having examined the position at high schools, what would be the ideal situation for the isiXhosa programmes in schools as for them to run smoothly and effectively?

3.3.1 The Language- in- education policy

Besides the academic and professional training that teachers have received, it is still desirable that teachers should become the instruments, the language transformer of the printed word, giving out the sounds, and tones which a language like isiXhosa uses to express different meanings through using the
same word. It is one of the characteristic features of isiXhosa that different inflections indicate different meanings of one selfsame word.

The other aspect is that language –in- education policies need to be suited to the socio-economic environments of the learners. Whites do not bother about African languages because the language in education policy, and the poor resources and curriculum allow them to ignore them. Blacks are abandoning their languages because the language –in- education policy gives them little alternative. The winner by default is English.

Because of South Africa’s linguistic diversity and its democratic constitution, the issue of minority language rights and language in education are particularly important, and as Dow (1987:5-6) puts it:

[S]ociolinguistics has continued to challenge linguists to come out into the field and look even more closely at the dynamics of language loyalty, conflict, spread, erosion, shift, and in some cases, maintenance against dominant languages. When it comes to the issue of language in education, the time has come, now that the business of
explicitly stating the learning and key players, including parents, educators and professional bodies.

It has been too easy to make glib statements of intent to the effect that it is important to take into account the diverse linguistics, cultural and religious backgrounds of learners and to provide support and development to facilitate access to courses by these learners. The difficulty lies in making such aims reality.

De Klerk (2002) is of the opinion that:

If first language curriculums for African languages are not radically overhauled and these languages are not better resourced at school terms of text books etc; as a matter of urgency, the gap between the wealthy and the poor will widen.

Elite isiXhosa speakers will shift with chameleon- like efficiency into elite English speakers, and abandon their mother tongue/first home language, as they join the linguatocracy of the future (Pendley, 1983: 48). Pendley (1983) is of the opinion that Language-in-education policy and practice has a
crucial role to play in ensuring that people’s young democracy develops and sustains itself and ensuring the survival of marginalized indigenous languages.

He continues to say that failure to address these problems will result in the silencing of the majority of voices in our country simply because they will not have thorough competence in any language by the time they leave school.

### 3.4 The Language maintenance

The concern to preserve the use of a language or the traditional form of a language is referred to as language maintenance (Crystal, 1997:215). A language is worth preserving because each language is unique and is the historical vehicle for whole eras of regional culture. Every act of preservation does carry an opportunity cost.

Linguists preserve the maintenance of languages. They may incite a group of speakers to preserve a language that would otherwise have passed away. It is
important for teachers to show by word and attitude that all languages are of equal value and need to be maintained.

It is also important for students to know that their teachers are interested in their languages. The credibility given to African languages by the teacher's interest may help children see that their language is a potential area for further study, even later employment.

Batibo (2005:102) defines language maintenance as:

– a situation in which a language maintains its vitality, even under pressure. It implies therefore that the degree of resistance is strong enough to contain any pressure that may be coming from a dominant language. In a situation of language maintenance, the domains of language L1 remain largely the same and transmission of the language to the children is active and as perfect as possible. Moreover, the number of speakers remains relatively stable and they maintain a strong allegiance to their language. Language maintenance usually applies to a relatively monolingual situation. However it may take
place in a stable diglossic situation, in which the functions of L1 and L2 are well defined and remain unchanged.

Who speaks a language, is more important than how many speak it (Romaine, 1995:40). A large minority group is often in a better position to make itself prominent and to mobilize itself in support of its language. When large groups concentrate in particular geographical areas, they are often better able to preserve their languages. For example, if people leave rural communities to work in urban areas this may lead to language loss. Migration to urban areas may lead to the decline of languages, especially African languages. The language in danger of being replaced is always the language of the dominant group.

African languages have more borrowings from English and Afrikaans languages because of migration. Identification with a language and positive attitudes towards it, guarantee its maintenance. This has been true in other countries like Poland where Polish speak their language only and they do not negotiate with any other language.
If speakers of the minority language manage to find an ecological niche in the majority community which is conducive to language maintenance, they may have a better chance of survival (Hamp, 1980: 167).

Some languages survive when in contact with a dominant language over time, others do not. Based on this statement, Fase et al, (1992:3) say that a central feature of the study of language maintenance is that studies either deal with the gradual replacement of one language with another in a contact situation, or with the resistance that some languages show to being replaced by another.

The purpose behind language maintenance is to ensure cognitive development through the first language and to follow the best route to second language proficiency for speakers of all languages.

The most appropriate available niche for indigenous language and culture programmes is a language maintenance programme within the parameters of language maintenance programmes referred to in the Department of Education’s language-in-Education Policy (Republic of South Africa, 1997, Clause 4.1.5).
The recommendation for this is that the programme must be expanded beyond the scope of a home language maintenance programme into the area of academic support. That means the home language must be used to mediate between the language and culture of the community and that of the school. The outcomes of this programme would help the learners to participate in the development of mother-tongue/first home language literacy skills in the community.

Learners also would develop their conceptual understanding of academic content as presented in other learning areas. They would develop language and learning skills in the mother tongue/first home language. Language maintenance programme would help community members to regain some of their self-esteem and develop skills in basic educational practices.

Siegruhn (2002) suggests the following training courses to support the language maintenance programme:

- Introduction to educational principles and facilitation skills
- Introduction to alphabetical literacy and orthography development
- Community interpreter training
- Local materials development (print and radio)
- Gathering and recording of oral history
- Traditional crafts and skills training (identified by community)
- Documenting and presenting information on natural environment

She continues to say that an interest in languages could be developed over time to cover sections of the mainstream curriculum, in other words including lifeskills and some numeracy skills, apart from the language skills.

The structure of the programme would be conducted in four phases; foundation phase where basic oral and visual skills would be developed; intermediate phase where traditional social, communication and learning skills and other life skills would be developed; senior phase where research skills and skills in phase two would be developed; and the fourth phase, further education and training; where academic support, developing research skills to compare and integrate with school knowledge would be dealt with.
3.4.1 Maintaining the isiXhosa language

Findings based on this research show that literacy in the mother tongue/first home language is easier to attain than initial literacy in a second language and it also provides a solid basis for the learning of a second language. Mother tongue/first home language speakers should take pride in their language and culture. This confers a value of learning the mother tongue, so that it is not merely a bridge to facilitate learning the official language.

Anderson-Mejias (2002:4) states that all languages are of equal value for their speakers, students and teachers must be interested in their languages. Mother tongue/first home language affirms children in their self worth and in their identity. Most researchers agree that mother tongue/first home language results in cognitive advantages for school learners, especially in the first years of primary education.

Researchers provide evidence that children who are submerged in education through their second language demonstrate loss of self confidence and a low self esteem. Researchers also provide evidence that literacy transfers across languages. As researchers increasingly provide evidence that literacy
transfers across languages, researchers also confirm that learning to read in the mother tongue/first home language makes learning to read and write in an additional language easier.

This supports that expression in the mother tongue/first home language is important as it facilitates proficiency in second language. If a learner is capable of speaking isiXhosa as first language, then he or she will be capable of speaking English as a second language well. The national language in education policy of 1997 commits South Africa to additive bilingualism.

It is then important to maintain languages especially indigenous languages. All languages must be valued and speakers of African languages must have pride in their languages. It is convincing that the standard of isiXhosa is declining especially among students. This is based on the response from the questionnaires.

The younger isiXhosa learners have less interest on maintaining the linguistic patterns of their language, hence the practice of switching of codes among them. Older people also seem to be linguistically conservative,
especially those in rural areas. This is a universal phenomenon which is experienced in many parts of the world.

The status of African languages within the national language policy is important. In order to maintain isiXhosa students must read isiXhosa newspapers, and must try not to mix the language with other languages.

According to some researchers like de Klerk, (2000), it also seems that indigenous people and minorities are not only unwilling to learn dominant languages, they are also unwilling to learn and maintain their own language. Learning them is usually forced.

### 3.5 The use of multilingualism

Multilingualism is a term used in sociolinguistics to refer in the first instance to a speech community which makes use of two or more languages, and then to the individual speakers who have multilingual ability (Crystal, 1995:253). South Africa is multilingual and the mother-tongue/first home language is the most appropriate language of learning everywhere in the world.
The term multilingual can refer to an individual who uses two or more languages, a community of speakers in which two or more languages are used or speakers of different languages (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2008:1).

### 3.5.1 Multilingual individuals

A multilingual person in the broadest definition, is one who can communicate in more than one language, be it actively, through speaking and writing or passively, through listening and reading. Multilingual speakers have acquired and maintained at least one language during childhood, the so called first language (L1). The first language, sometimes also referred to as the mother tongue is acquired without formal education, by mechanisms heavily disputed (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2008:2).

It is acknowledged that all pupils will need very strong proficiency in at least one other language, and that for most pupils English will be a language of high priority. The concept of multilingual education in South Africa is framed in the policy document, in the context of adding a second and even a
third language to each learner’s linguistic repertoire in ways which would best guarantee both academic and linguistic success.

The new language policy offers the best possible opportunity for those who do not have English as a first language, to learn it well enough to use it in institutions of higher learning and for employment purposes in the mainstream economy. It is acknowledged that all pupils will need a very strong proficiency in at least one other language and that for most pupils English will be a language of high priority.

Krashen, (1996); Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) provide copious evidence of the failure of most children who are plunged too quickly into English without strong support in the school for their home language. They are of the opinion that the majority of children whose home language/s have a lower status than English are never likely to achieve more than 40% in their final school examinations for English if they are plunged too quickly into an English mainly or only education.

In other words, the view that the earlier and greater the exposure to English coupled with a proportional decrease in the use of the mother tongue will
result in better proficiency in English does not hold up to scientific scrutiny. Rather, where use is made of the mother tongue in education, it is less likely the student will perform well across the curriculum and in English.

In a multilingual society where a language such as English is highly prized, there is only one viable option and this is bilingual education where adequate linguistic development is foregrounded in the mother-tongue/first home language whilst the second language is systematically added. If the mother-tongue/first home language is replaced, the second language will not be adequately learnt and linguistic proficiency in both languages will be compromised (Ramirez et al, 1991 and Thomas and Collier, 1997).

When education is at issue, it is important that the attitudes of civil society are taken into account. In this regard, there are some who argue that parents believe that the sooner their children are exposed to English as the language of learning, the sooner they will gain proficiency in it. There is no statistical evidence to support this perception.

Implications of the new language-in-education policy include the need to use the official languages as languages of learning alongside English. This
means that school textbooks and materials must become available in languages other than English, and therefore, systematic development in the area of terminology and translation will be necessary. The development of and investment in African languages as languages of learning and teaching will bring the best possible returns.

3.5.2 Multilingual education policy

Krashen (1996) is of the opinion that bilingual education for each child within a multilingual education policy does not mean a choice between either English or an African Language. It means both. It means developing the first language and adding a second language in the best possible manner to ensure the successful learning of the second language.

Heugh (1999) identifies the importance of early mother-tongue/first home language literacy and home language maintenance for successful education. Malherbe (1977) says a multilingual approach to education would boil down to mother-tongue first home language maintenance plus good provision of English; or use of English for up to 50% of the day alongside the mother-tongue.
He says this would require careful planning and implementation programmes and these would include the updating of terminology, textbooks which include African languages for content areas of the curriculum and in service teacher education. The in-service teacher education needs to include English language upgrading programmes for up to 40% of teachers bilingual teaching methodology for all teachers and learner-centred teaching methodology. This option would then require an investment from the side of government.

An English- mainly approach is adopted which would require extensive in-service teacher education to raise the existing proficiencies in English to first language levels for up to at least 95% of the teaching corps. New textbooks would need to be carefully written by second language experts across every area of the curriculum in order that the English language levels are adjusted.

Language planners like Alexander (1995) have called for a definite commitment to the establishment of multilingual schools; schools which use more than one medium of instruction to fulfill the Constitutional provisions.
However, there are few teachers who are adequately prepared for teaching practice in such multilingual schools, and the teaching materials are not yet available for the higher grades. Financial constraints on the school budget often make it difficult for the state aided schools to hire new teachers for the African languages which are now being promoted in the schools (Deumert, 2000:413).

In South Africa English is the only language which has the capacity to deliver quality education to the majority; African languages do not. English has played a significant role in higher levels of education and the economy. At the same time an attachment to and high value accorded English does not necessarily imply that an attachment to indigenous languages is proportionately reduced.

Most of the African language speaking parents are making an explicit choice in favour of English, particularly as political changes have made it possible for increasing numbers of African language speaking people to enter higher levels of the economy, mainstream political activity as well as educational environs from which they were previously excluded.
The National Education Policy investigation report, Language (1992) is quoted by Ridge (1996) as his source of evidence that when offered a choice, significant numbers of black parents have opted for English as the language of instruction for their children, even from the first year of primary school.

Children mix two or more languages with their home languages. It is undeniable that South Africans are often bilingual and multilingual, they do not appear to be confused about linguistic identity of their communicative acts, and the vast majority clearly identify with a dominant first or home language (Ridge, 1996:26).

The scientific evidence from international research indicates that children need at least 12 years of learning their mother tongue language or language of their immediate environment. Most children across the world live in multilingual contexts, and have a range of languages or dialects when they go to school. Ridge (1996) says the logic of child-centered school education everywhere is to use the language/s which children bring to the classroom and to build on this.
If the language the children bring to the classroom differs from the standard written form then the standard written form is added to the repertoire of the child so that literacy can be established successfully. If this language is not a language of wider communication, then it is normal practice also to add the language of wider communication which has greatest currency in the wider community (Ridge, 1996:27).

Wolff (2000:23) is of the opinion that there could be no successful and competitive national development of multilingual states in Africa without due recognition of the big three ‘M’s namely multilingualism, multiculturalism and modernization of the mother tongues; and mother tongue education.

Any education which deprives children of their mother-tongue/first home language during education, particularly in environments characterized by social marginalization, cultural alienation and economic stress, as is true for many communities in Africa, will produce an unnecessarily high rate of emotional and socio-cultural cripples who are retarded in their cognitive development and deficient in terms of psychological stability (Wolff, 2000:23).
He continues to say that:

– faced with heavy institutional multilingualism, particularly in urban agglomerations, with English as the preferred target language to which they have only restricted access and largely in the form of inadequate role models...joblessness and juvenile delinquency are just two of the likely social consequences; the other is the emergence of new languages filling the vacuum. Educationist, linguists, sociologists have barely begun to look at a totally new set of problems arising from this consequence (Wolff 2000:23).

This definition shows that first home language is important as language of learning and teaching.

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter three gave definition of the status planning. It concluded that developing the first language and adding a second language is the best manner to ensure the successful learning of the second language. It showed that isiXhosa speaking learners who are fluent in isiXhosa are also fluent in
English. The chapter also showed that African students are abandoning their languages although they have choice of learning them.

This chapter indicated that it is important to use and maintain African languages with specific reference to isiXhosa. The chapter reveals that learners need very strong proficiency in at least one other language besides English. Finally it showed that there is a need for development of, and investment in African languages with special reference to isiXhosa as languages of learning and teaching.
Chapter 4

Corpus planning

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at corpus planning. It presents the development and the maintenance of African languages at educational institutions, with specific reference to isiXhosa.

4.2 Corpus planning

Kloos (2003:32) defines corpus planning as:

-the linguistic form of a language and attempts to identify variables that modify the nature of language itself. Specific examples of corpus planning would include the creation of new terminology, spelling, production of dictionaries and textbooks, magazines, newspapers, standardization of a language and so on.
According to Kloos (1986:78) corpus planning means the codification of a language, that is, the development or adaptation of a written form, the choice of a standard language, the modernization of change of terms, the manifestation of orthographic, lexical and grammatical norms.

Halliday (1972) calls corpus planning “internal” or “linguistic” planning, whereas he defines status planning as “external” and “social” planning. Wikipedia (2008) refers to corpus planning as prescriptive intervention in the forms of a language which may be achieved by creating new words or expressions, modifying old ones, or selecting among alternative forms.

Corpus planning aims to develop the resources of a language so that it becomes an appropriate medium of communication for modern topics and forms of discourse, equipped with the terminology needed for use in education, and administration.

Crystal (2000) explains that the corpus of a language comprises a set of written, audio, video, multimedia recordings which have been made along with all transcripts of speech, whether transcribed from tapes or from face to face conversations.
face interaction, and any other materials that are available such as letters, place names and historical documents.

Corpus planning is often related to the standardization of a language, involving the preparation of a normative orthography, grammar and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a speech community (Wikipedia, 2008:2).

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000), corpus planning refers to determination of standards and norms for a language, as well as the introduction of new words and technical terms.


The use of the Latin alphabet introduced by the missionaries as the writing system of some African Languages is an example of graphisation. Standardisation is a direct and deliberate intervention by society to create a
standard language where before there we just “dialects”, that is, non-standard varieties (Hudson, 1980:32).


Language standardization is the process by which an authoritative language body prescribes how a language should be written..., how its sounds should be pronounced, how its words should be spelt, which words are acceptable in formal situations, and what the appropriate constructions of the language are.

The basis upon which language bodies make their decisions is very often the linguistic behaviour of the dominant community in the society, and it is the variety spoken by these people that generally becomes the standard language of the broader community.

Smit (1996:58-59) argues that the standard varieties for writing were picked randomly by the missionaries, with the effect of creating different languages, for example isiXhosa, where there was a dialect continuum. This created communication problems between speakers of different varieties of the same
language. Mini (2003) claims that standard isiXhosa is based on the Ngqika variety, which is only one of the many varieties of the language.

4.2.1 Modernisation

Modernisation refers to the creation of new terms for new concepts, and it is typically a concern of majority and national languages in industrialized countries (Fettes, 1997). According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) modernization in most cases consists of borrowing and occasionally adapting new technical terms from the language in which they were invented, and is therefore known as technicalisation.

English being the main language of scientific and technological innovation, in most cases modernization takes the shape of borrowing new words from English, and also Afrikaans. As pointed out by Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) corpus planning in Africa concerns both the development of African languages and the Africanisation of the ex-colonial languages.

English and Afrikaans technical terms are widely used and occasionally Africanised to fit into the lexicon of an African language, for instance
isiXhosa. For an example pneumonia is inyumoniya in isiXhosa, short (there is a short here) in Xhosa kukho ishort apha, iradio, iradiyeytha, tafel, in isiXhosa itafile, and so many other words.

The tendency to borrow English/Afrikaans terms into African languages can be interpreted as one of the consequences of English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). As pointed out by Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) the politicized nature of South African languages adds an ideological and symbolic component to the issue of language purism.

The development of new terms to make African languages compatible with modern academic discourse and new knowledge would be the best. NCHE(1996) suggested that various centres for the development of African languages should be established throughout the country. The University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa developed a trilingual dictionary, that is Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa.

The development of isiXhosa and other African languages for academic purposes is a crucial issue. Most of the students interviewed especially in the Faculty of Arts at NMMU seemed confident about the possibility of
developing isiXhosa to be used as language of learning. In the Faculty of Science and Economics students who filled the questionnaire wrote that there is no need for the development of isiXhosa as language of learning and teaching.

Students voiced out that there must be a creation of new technical terms in isiXhosa. Students feel comfortable about borrowing and ‘IsiXhosa-isation’ of English terms to fit informal conversation. Also students supported the belief that the use of their mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching would help them understand things better and would improve their academic performance.

English was considered as something one must have in order to find a good job and consistent with an observation by Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000), it was identified as a key to upward mobility. Students are still afraid of taking isiXhosa as a course because they are influenced by the negative perception that isiXhosa does not take one very far, if at all, in terms of job opportunities.
4.3 The official indigenous languages

The new language policy provides for the development of indigenous languages so that the languages can function beyond the traditional domains of the home, family and immediate community, in domains such as media, education system, science and technology (Department of Education; Department of Arts and Culture, 1996).

The major official indigenous languages are isiZulu and isiXhosa, and the minor official languages are Tshivenda and isiNdebele. There is a real need to develop indigenous languages so that students can access science and technology through the medium of their native languages. Godman and Veltman (1990:196) say this need has the economic benefits of making science and technology and other higher domains accessible in the indigenous languages.

The main challenge will be for each language community in cooperation with government structures to take the lead in developing their own language so that they will have access to science and technology through that language.
The government and language activists must sensitise the communities to the benefits of projects such as lexicography project for they contribute to language development and ensure language maintenance. Recent research shows that in urban areas English is steadily intruding into the family domain for daily communication particularly among the younger generations (Bowerman, 2000; de Klerk, 2000b).

Romaine (1994:50) explains that typically a community which was once monolingual becomes bilingual as a result of contact with another usually socially and economically more powerful group and becomes transitionally bilingual in the new language until their own language is given up altogether.

Researchers show that language shift from isiXhosa to English is currently taking place among the wealthier and more privileged members of the isiXhosa speaking community, both on a practical level and on a socio-psychological level (Kamwangamalu, 2004:428).
Another finding of de Klerk’s (2000b) study shows that there is considerable internal conflict in the minds of both parents and children undergoing the shift as to the future of isiXhosa language and culture in their lives.

If the trend towards language shift as described in both de Klerk’s (2000b) and Bowerman’s (2000) studies continues, one can project that in the next generations to come, the indigenous languages especially isiXhosa, are the most likely to be replaced by English, especially in urban communities. Should this happen the result will be linguistic genocide.

Linguistic genocide as defined by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) occurs when languages are systematically killed as a result of contact with more powerful languages. Education will play a vital role in stopping linguistic genocide in the indigenous languages, because it has been cited as one of the key factors in language maintenance and shift.

Demos (1988:67) concludes that educational attainment is a vehicle of social and geographical mobility and that college education is particularly likely to encourage the development of critical values incompatible with maintenance of traditional forces such as language. The practices suggest that a higher
level of education has a negative effect on the ethnic first language retention, particularly in urban communities.

In these communities parents consciously choose English for the education of their children at all levels of schooling, including primary, secondary and tertiary education. The number of students studying African languages especially isiXhosa at universities including NMMU has been declining drastically since 1996.

Unless these communities make deliberate effort to maintain and promote their own languages, the chances are that the languages will face the same fate as the Khoisan languages and will face eventual death (Kamwamgamalu, 1998b:122).

Lopes (1997:27) suggests that the educational authorities must succeed in explaining to parents, teachers and children the implications of teaching and learning through a certain medium of instruction (first home language, language of wider communication, or both), and succeed in convincing them of the pedagogical and cultural advantages associated with promotion of first home language education and with promotion of individual and societal bilingualism.
Luckett (1992:18) says:

- until education resources in the African languages are developed to a higher conceptual level and not unless these languages are perceived to facilitate access to the wider society and economic advancement, the attraction of English as opposed to the African languages will continue to be overwhelming.

4.4 The status of African languages with specific reference to isiXhosa

African language speakers have been made to believe that the status of their language is below that of English. This perception has discouraged and influenced negatively literate Africans from speaking, taking their languages as a course at schools, and developing those languages. One student who was interviewed said that she was told at a former model C school that she was not civilized if she could not speak English and isiXhosa is a language of ‘lower status’.

Other students said they were severely punished when they were caught speaking isiXhosa. The government assigned bodies like the Pan South
African Language Board and the Commission for the Promotional and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities that protect and promote the African languages by introducing events like heritage day.

Section 6 par. (2) of the South African Constitution of (1996:2) states that:

Recognizing the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.

Government is using these tools, especially education, to restore the dignity of the African languages. Section 29 par,(2) of the South African Constitution states that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or language of their choice in public educational institutions where the education is reasonably practicable.

This constitutional right gives African children a right to choose to be taught and to learn in their language. Although the constitutional right applies,
parents prefer English medium schools and institutions for their children, so that they can look forward to a “better future”. (Granville et al, 1997:7) say:

It would be a mistake to assume that parents are simply naïve or misinformed in recognizing the value and importance of English as if its only power were symbolic power. South African parents believe correctly, however unfortunate this may be, that English also has material power. It provides entry to the middle class jobs and to middle class pays tickets.

Granville et al (1998) also believe that children should be given education in the language that has material power in order to shape their future. If the African languages are not the languages of power, then the speakers of these languages should be allowed to empower themselves in the language of power, which is in this case English. This poses a challenge to the Africans to empower their languages in all respects and thereby encourage interest in African languages.

African languages were historically disadvantaged by the previous South African Nationalist government and did not enjoy full official status until
1994. Kaschula & Anthonissen (1995) say ironically, however, the recognition of 11 (9 African) official languages today is a direct result of the implementation of Apartheid policies to facilitate the ideas of separate homelands, in each of which a different indigenous African language became the official language alongside English.

In predominantly black schools, especially those located in rural areas, African languages continue to be used as the medium of instruction for the first four years of primary school, much as they were in the apartheid era. However, recent trends in language education suggest that in these schools, even where no qualified English teachers are available, English is increasingly being used, in whatever form, as the medium of instruction from grade one onwards.

Preference for English as a medium of instruction is mainly due to economic considerations. As Bendor-Samuel quoted in (Eggington and Baldauf, 1990:100) points out, a language must ‘fill a hole’ in the community for the teaching of that language to be viable and meaningful.
Accordingly most black parents are opting for English medium education from day one of schooling because of the instrumental value of the language. They consider education in an African language as miseducation and useless, for it has no cachet in the broader socioeconomic and political context.

Along these lines black parents who can afford to do so send their children to formerly white schools to expose them early to English and quality education, since these schools remain the best equipped both in terms of facilities and teacher qualification. This state of affairs has not helped the new language policy to achieve its goal of promoting multilingualism in education.

On the contrary even in predominantly black schools, there seems to be a general trend towards the use of English as the sole medium of instruction from grade one onwards. The question arises; how does one promote multilingualism in education if African languages are not used as a medium of instruction throughout the entire educational system?
There are eleven official languages in South Africa. National and provincial governments must use at least two official languages for their business and the State has to take positive steps to advance the use of all official languages. That is according to Section 29 and 30 of the Bill of Rights.

Looking at languages actually used in official, educational and social settings, English is by far the most utilized prestigious language in South Africa, a language not representing the actual majority of indigenous African speakers. This situation will prevail if African language speakers do not take action in order to value and empower their languages.

According to Bamgbose language mainly has three objectives in education, namely literacy, medium of instruction and subject. Msimang (1992 :41) with regard to Bamgbose’s view reasons that the school is still the best place to develop and maintain a language. Msimang’s statement is in agreement with the LANGTAG report DACST (1996:70) which states that the education system is the main mechanism used to spread the developed form of a language.
The underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional language(s) and the right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. (Education Policy Document, July 14 1999.) Everyone has a right to education in the official language of their choice, where reasonably possible and all people have the right to use their own language.

In South Africa languages are officially still used in many black schools as language of instruction for at least the first four years. However, in practice the African languages are presently being used to an ever lesser extent in such schools, since parents prefer that their children be educated in English.

African parents and learners have a low regard for their national languages, since African parents prefer to communicate with their children in English. This is largely due to previous colonial educational policies. The only way in which the African languages can develop is at the grass roots level through education. Therefore the use of primary languages as “Language(s) of learning and Teaching” (LOLT) at all levels of schooling is to be encouraged.
The Language in Education Implementation Plan (LIEIP) in DOE (1997) states that a way in which to redress the underdevelopment of the African languages is to stop favouring the previous colonial languages. This means that speakers of these languages should start valuing their own languages as languages of empowerment.

The LIEIP, DOE (1997) further states that the language development of the national languages can only be achieved through the integration of own language learning into all learning process, irrespective of the subject taught.

4.5 The role of isiXhosa educators and students in the development of their language

In terms of language development, Chapter 2 of the LANGTAG report spells out the corpus development that is still needed to enable African languages to be used across the full range of public and educational domains. In terms of resources there is very little in the way of pedagogical practice or materials for teaching African languages. A lot needs to be done to bring language teaching up to date in terms of the extensive domains.
Also in terms of language development of the LANGTAG report, in terms of research, little has been done on the simultaneous acquisition of many languages in multi-lingual contexts such as our own. Little has been done on how this can impact on classrooms. In human terms, generations of black students have grown up without any public affirmation of their own language or recognition of their multi lingual competencies (LANGTAG report (1996).

Students who often speak more than five languages are seen as disadvantaged and in symbolic terms one of the consequences of all this is that students often have negative attitudes to studying their own languages and regard people who speak English fluently as educated. Based on this, government should opt for the compulsory learning of an African language.

Granville et al (1998) are of the opinion that there is a huge need to train school teachers who are faced with the new multilingual policy in schools. This training requires a transfer of resources from highly resourced centres to the under-resourced peripheries. A multilingual policy in schools, without a corresponding change in the university offerings in African languages would have a negative effect on school policy (Granville et al, 1998).
Focusing on publishing and language, Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002), also argue that publishing in African languages, (with specific reference to isiXhosa), will boost national development since educational development supported by a strong publishing base is related to national development. Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002:167) say:

Development…. is a participatory process of change in society…and includes increased equal opportunities, freedom, effective participation in democratic discourse and other valued qualities.

4.5.1 The role that schools should play

It is recommended that students be encouraged to learn at least two compulsory languages at school, one of which must be an African language (for Africans). According to Granville et al (1998), the studying of an African language as a subject should be compulsory. Teachers to be should be also encouraged to learn an African language.
Government should also consider what must be included in the curriculum. For example, grammar must be taught to a certain grade, communication skills to a certain grade because isiXhosa speaking people claim that they get bored of learning grammar from Grade 1 to Grade 12.

This is one of the reasons students do not want to learn isiXhosa as a course at universities. They think that they are still going to continue with grammar, yet at university level it is communication skills. This information specifically refers to NMMU students where the research was done.

This observation refers specifically to second language speakers of isiXhosa. At university speakers do not need communication skills but a wider curriculum which includes for example, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics.

4.5.2 The role that universities should play

Universities should develop multilingual policies which specifically recommend African languages to be studied as subjects, and in the long term for African languages to be languages of learning and teaching. An explicit multilingual policy must be seen as part of a transformation agenda for
universities and should be addressed in their Mission Statements (Granville et al, 1998).

African language lecturers should be encouraged to develop material for African languages with specific reference to isiXhosa. One of the concerns of students of the NMMU student’s concern is that there are not enough isiXhosa books available in the libraries. This could be done by encouraging and making time for lecturers to write books. If extensive resources can be put into delivery, students will be more willing to learn their language and parents will be, too.

Granville et al provide several strong reasons for recommending that an African language must be a compulsory subject in the curriculum. The reasons are redress that is making African languages compulsory will increase the status of these languages.

Competence in African languages (with specific reference to isiXhosa) can be a requirement for entry into a range of jobs and professions. It will also facilitate their use in public domains. Secondly, development which, they say will attract national resources for the linguistic development of these
languages. In addition, publishers will be willing to invest money in the development of teaching materials because they will have a guaranteed market.

The third reason is reconciliation. White South Africans have been cut off from their fellow black South Africans by their inability to speak an African language. Such language-in-education policy will enable the next generation of White South Africans to build bridges in languages in which they are not comfortably superior.

4.5.3 The role that the media should play

Media are a form of technology used to communicate information. They refer to various means of communication. For example television, radio and the newspapers are different types of media. The study investigated the NMMU students’ attitudes to the frequency of reading newspapers written in two languages, English and isiXhosa, listening to the radio and watching television.
Concerning the three aspects compared reading newspapers, listening to radio and watching television in the isiXhosa language, students do not read newspapers written in isiXhosa, do not listen to Umhlobo Wenene which is the isiXhosa radio station and do not watch SABC 1 which is the isiXhosa television channel. One reason for not reading newspapers in isiXhosa is that there is limited choice of newspapers in that language in Port Elizabeth.

The newspapers that are available in Port Elizabeth are written in English and there is only one isiXhosa newspaper which is available on Wednesdays only namely *Ilizwi*. In terms of language preference in the print media, more university students prefer the one that is written in English. The old isiXhosa speaking people prefer the print media that is written in isiXhosa.

The positive attitudes to English among NMMU students would perhaps be a product of the global influence that English has had. It would also be accounted for by the dominating influences exerted by the English language over other African languages. The use of English by isiXhosa speaking people and students in Port Elizabeth confirms a claim advanced by Batibo (2005:20), who argues that in Africa:
The ex-colonial language was seen as a vehicle of modernization and technological advancement and as a link with the developed world, as well as a means of social promotion and access to white-collar jobs.

The official languages of the NMM university are English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, but English is the preferred medium of teaching, learning and assessment in most programmes, with the exception of language and literature departments where other languages are studied.

The SABC television should promote isiXhosa by having more isiXhosa programmes, especially programmes focusing on academic information, like communication skills. Umhlobo Wenene FM, the isiXhosa radio station is promoting isiXhosa but students do not even listen to the station.

They prefer English stations like Metro. Metro radio station should encourage isiXhosa students to listen to Umhlobo Wenene, for there is a lot that is done by Umhlobo Wenene to promote isiXhosa, for example on Tuesdays and Thursdays there are specific isiXhosa programmes dealing with isiXhosa vocabulary and literature.
In the case of the printed media like newspapers, newsletters, journals, there is not much effort put in promoting isiXhosa. It is also important that parents must take responsibility for balancing their concerns for social and economic empowerment with what is in the best interests of their children and learning. It is also recommended that they must also help to invest new developmental opportunities for isiXhosa.

### 4.6 Language loss

There is a growing appeal of English in comparison to isiXhosa among isiXhosa students. There is language shift among generations of children who now attend English medium schools. Their competence in the mother–tongue/first home language is already decreasing Schlebusch (1994:98). Despite energetic attempts by the State to legislate and entrench language rights, little is being achieved on the ground to maintain isiXhosa.

Many teachers are not equipped or trained to teach isiXhosa because students do register but not in significant numbers. Prospects for the establishment of adequate training facilities are not promising. The support
among mother-tongue/first home language speakers of isiXhosa for their own language is worryingly very low.

This attitude is attributed to apartheid policies of the past while the Nationalist Government ensured the development of the nine indigenous languages that these languages must be inferior if they were reserved for black people (de Klerk and Gough, 2002).

This attitude shows now in rising registration figures of isiXhosa speaking children at English-medium schools, and in increasing evidence of a lack of support from mother-tongue/first home language speakers for their indigenous languages. IsiXhosa children speaking English at home and English at school are indicative of an identity crisis.

Recent studies indicate that a strong home language foundation acts as a support in learning a second language, making it an easier and faster process as observed by Kagan and Garcia, (1991); Moran and Hakula, (1995). It was also found that most of the academic learning that was taking place in the first language easily transferred to the second language when a strong foundation was provided in the home language.
There is also mounting evidence that a connection exists between home language loss and the educational difficulties experienced by many learners using another language for learning, according to Minami and Ovando (1995); Moran and Hakula (1995).

Mclaughlin, Blanchard and Osani (1995), say it is doubtful whether children who already develop neither their first nor second language can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Schools and parents need to help dispel the myth that young children readily pick up languages and that immersion or exposure is all that is needed.

Learners, especially those attending former Medium C schools, claim that isiXhosa is difficult because the language system is different from that of English and Afrikaans. They also have a fear and uncertainty about the role of isiXhosa in future jobs. Learners say that English remains the language that is attached to important jobs, so they regard isiXhosa as not an important language. This is one of the reasons why they have a negative attitude towards isiXhosa.
Some learners have an interest in isiXhosa but they say they do not have the necessary foundation from primary school. At tertiary level it then becomes very hard to catch up. Learners should be given the opportunity to develop and value their home languages, and cultures. Emphasis must be placed on the advantages of the use of isiXhosa as language of learning.

Many research initiatives, like de Klerk (2000) in other multi-lingual countries focus on the link between learning, cognitive development and language. Without exception these research initiatives prove that learners learn and develop best when using their first languages for learning. Also, should another language be used for learning, their languages are sustained.

Programmes that include the establishment of support groups that meet regularly and frequently to collaborate in creating linguistically, culturally and developmentally, should be initiated to help learners. Any necessary changes to the syllabus should be done. It is important to note that much attention does need to be given to the syllabuses of African languages themselves, particularly at secondary school where entirely inappropriate materials and syllabuses have survived the apartheid era virtually intact. (PRAESA- Occasional Papers No. 6 30).
Parents and teachers should be involved with learners and guide them.
Parents and learners need to realize that African languages are very important; with specific reference to isiXhosa; and that they play an important role in children’s development; as reflected in the Language-Policy Education Policy.

Learners do not really know the benefits or the importance of studying isiXhosa. Learners who do not take isiXhosa as a subject or course report that they have only a vague idea of how they might need isiXhosa, for example in Law and Medicine. They say they are not clear about the specific roles that isiXhosa is supposed to play in the present and in the future.

Some students say they do not see the relevance of isiXhosa because they can speak it anyway, so it is unnecessary to learn it. This is surprising because English speaking students can speak English but still learn it. Some learners say that when they finish school they will emigrate. Therefore, they do not think that isiXhosa will be any advantage whatsoever.
4.7 Language death

Richard (2008:1) says there are a number of reasons for the ultimate disappearance of a language, namely:

- no native speakers
- no written form and
- absorption by another Lingua Franca

Rickerson (2004:1), with regard to definition of language death says: when speakers of a language die, the language dies too, and they disappear when they are wiped out by their enemies, for example in wars. This definition states that it is possible for any language to disappear or die. The dominance of some languages threatens the survival of some languages.

Some languages are lost gradually in bilingual cultures as indigenous tongues are overwhelmed by the dominant language at school, in the market place, on radio and television. In this case the dominance of English may threaten the survival of isiXhosa.

Rickerson (2004:2) says, indigenous people sometimes abandon their language to overcome discrimination, or fit into a majority culture.
As children stop learning them, the languages slowly wither away. Rickerson (2004:3) is also of the opinion that once a language is gone, it is gone. It is important to know and keep in mind that wherever people are, and whatever they do, language makes a difference.

However, African languages will be on the endangered or dying list if their speakers do not maintain them. Richard (2008:2) says, one of the reasons which may result in death of a language is that there are ‘no native speakers’. He states that if the number of speakers of a language dwindles, the language becomes increasingly endangered to the point of extinction.

He further says that if grandparents do not use a language like isiXhosa with their children, when these are parents themselves they will tend to use very little, if at all, with their own children, preferring the use of another lingua franca.

Finally the youngest generation abandons the language entirely, never learns it or moves away to seek their fortunes elsewhere, in a township where the language is not used or known. With this generation, the language finally dies.
If a language exists with only a spoken, traditional form, passing down the customs, traditions and elements of the language through historians or storytellers, with a distinctive absence of written material, this could also contribute to the demise of a traditionally spoken language form, like that of Khoikhoi people.

Richard (2008:2) says that the pictorial forms of a language may exist on non-permanent or semi permanent media such as animal skins, rock or cave painting, crudely formed parchment like materials or carvings in tree trunks, logs or even as tattoos on human skin. These may disappear or die in future because they have no written form.

Absorption of cultures and languages by another lingua franca may cause the disappearance of those languages. In order for isiXhosa language not to die, it is necessary to protect it to avoid absorption by English.

Mufwene (2006:2) says the loss of competence in the language due to lack of practice may lead to language death. He continues to say that when the
process is experienced by all speakers of a language and when it can no longer be learned by their children, it can be characterized as dying or dead.

Mufwene (2006:3) is also of the opinion that languages compete with each other only to the extent that they are weighted differently by their speakers. They then spread or contract because more or fewer speakers use them, just like their structures change because their speakers modify them or prefer some variants over others. These changes spread within the population in all the above cases. English is spreading as an economically powerful lingua franca. Also the loss of linguistic diversity has been correlated with loss of cultural diversity.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter defined corpus planning and showed that the underlying principle is to maintain first home language while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional language(s) and the right to choose the language of learning and teaching. It also revealed that there is a need to train school teachers who are faced with the new multilingual policy in schools.
The chapter explained the roles which educators, schools and media should play in promoting African languages because if there is no development and maintenance, that may result in language loss and death.
Chapter 5

Acquisition Planning

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on acquisition planning. Focus will be on the background of isiXhosa language, attitudes towards isiXhosa and death of languages.

5.2 Acquisition planning

Acquisition planning refers to organized efforts to promote learning of a language (Cooper, 1989:157).

People know perfectly well how languages are learnt and yet they interfere with their language being learnt all the time Newmark (1966). Languages are learnt best when the focus is not on language learning but on the message contained therein. When a child’s first language is well developed
and maintained, it is easier for the child to learn a second language (De Klerk, 1995: 26).

It is not advisable to let the child acquire a second language right from the onset at home before acquiring the mother tongue/first home language. To try to acquire two languages at the same time confuses a child. One parent said that her child stutters because of that. By the time the child goes to school he must already know the first language.

By encouraging children to use their own languages, one is not only helping them to feel accepted, but one is also acknowledging the importance of first language development.

In addition to all the factors of empowerment, status and recognition, first language development is central to second language development Robb (1995). Language educators agree that the more proficient students are in their first language, the more proficient they will be in their second language. If a child feels alienated from the school environment and is not encouraged to use her/his own language s/he will not learn as well as if s/he has the opportunity to express herself/himself in her own way.
As Elsa Auerbach (1993:16) says prohibiting the native language within the context of English Second Language instruction may impede language acquisition precisely because it mirrors disempowering relations. Languages develop together in the compartments of the brain, they interact and knowledge is transferred. By negating the first language, one is retarding the development of the second. Motivation or attitude towards learning a new language is perhaps more important than aptitude.

5.3 Language acquisition

Children acquire their first home language/mother tongue through interaction with their parents and the environment around them. There is an innate capacity in every human being to acquire language; as experts suggest. A first language is acquired through exposure to the language and meaningful communication.

The second language acquisition is acquired almost identically to the first language acquisition. The learner needs a source of natural communication in order to acquire language.
5.4 The background of isiXhosa language

There are eleven official languages in South Africa and isiXhosa is one of the languages. IsiXhosa falls under Bantu language and is also a representative of South-western’s Nguni family. With this fact South Africa is known to be isiXhosa’s native land especially in the Eastern Cape.

IsiXhosa is one of the most widely spoken indigenous languages in South Africa and it is now one of the official languages of the Eastern Cape Province. The apartheid policy of separate education in the mother tongue, initiated in 1948, while based on ideological and not on educational grounds, ironically had the potential to promote black consciousness and Africanisation and instill some pride in distinct ethnic and linguistic identities.

But the policy failed, largely owing to a deep suspicion regarding the intention of the policy to force blacks and whites to produce a confined and isolated semi-literate labour force (Mawasha, 1982:25). Under-resourcing,
overcrowding, and impoverished curricula accelerated the disaster (Heugh et al., 1995:42).

It was therefore felt that English, rather than mother tongue education, would open doors to advancement. Black people widely believed that their children already know their own indigenous languages, and since these languages did not facilitate access to participation and mobility in the wider society, they were not perceived as being important in education as English was (de Klerk, 1997:99).

The continued dominance of English has led to the disempowerment and sociopolitical disadvantage of non-English speakers, whose languages are marginalized as second rate, even by their own speakers (Barkhuizen and Gough, 1996). As a result, when all South African schools were opened to all races from 1990, formerly whites only English medium schools were overwhelmed with applications from non-English children because of the powerful appeal of these schools in terms of what they could offer formally disempowered speakers of African languages (Coutts, 1992:42).
The formerly whites only Afrikaans schools have not attracted as many black pupils because they continue to teach through the medium of Afrikaans, which is not positively perceived by South African blacks, owing to its negative, politically motivated connotations.

5.5 The African languages of South Africa

The African languages of South Africa comprise mainly the African languages of which four distinct groups can be distinguished, namely the Nguni languages (isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, and siSwati); the Sesotho languages (Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana); Tshivenda and Xitsonga. The Nguni language group is the largest with about 18 million speakers, followed by the Sesotho group with a little over 10 million speakers, the Tsonga with almost 2 million speakers and the Venda with nearly a million speakers.

The African languages are primarily used for everyday oral communication and enjoy limited use in some higher domains, particularly in the media and education. In education for instance the official African languages are used as a medium of instruction only in the first four years of primary education.
at predominantly black schools. After this they are taught in some schools, often in English as optional subjects throughout the remainder of the educational system, including secondary and tertiary education.

The official African languages are also used in the media, especially on the radio and to a lesser extent on the television and in the print media. As a result of the demise of apartheid, increasing numbers of black South Africans have been flocking to urban areas in search of employment and better living conditions.

5.6 Attitudes towards the isiXhosa language

In the interviews conducted, it has been discovered that isiXhosa children had first acquired isiXhosa as mother tongue, with English encountered later through crèches and preschools. Among the parents interviewed some had strongly believed in early exposure to English, and made concerted efforts to speak the language themselves. This is not bad or wrong but it is not wise for parents to encourage their children to lose or to see isiXhosa as an inferior language. This can result in a terrible loss of respect and disregard for culture and traditions.
Safeguards should thus be made so that the language is appropriate to lend the necessary dignity to particular functions. It is lamentable for instance that in the intermingling of cultures one culture dominates the other to the extent that the values of the dominated language get eroded within the process (Somhlahlo, 2000:127). It is so debilitating to see eminent people actually priding themselves for not knowing isiXhosa and actually declaring it insignificant.

IsiXhosa must be protected from western influences and experience. That is why Dressler (1988:184) as quoted by Mcmahon (1995) says:

Language death occurs in unstable bilingual or multilingual speech communities as a result of language shift from a regressive minority language to a dominant majority language.

Many African language speakers moving into the English first language schools are shying away from their own language which they seem to regard as inferior or useless. Based on the negativity of isiXhosa from both parents and children, should the isiXhosa language be allowed to die then?
5.7 Why do languages die out?

Every time a language dies, we lose part of the picture of what our brains can do. Throughout human history, the languages of powerful groups have spread while the languages of smaller cultures have become extinct. This occurs through official language policies or through the allure that the high prestige of speaking an imperial language can bring.

As big languages spread, children whose parents speak a language of a minority group often grow up learning the dominant language. Depending on attitudes toward the ancestral language, those children or their children may never learn the smaller language, or may forget it as it falls out of use (Wikipedia Free encyclopedia, 2008: 1).

If African people care about endangered languages, they will want something to be done. Are languages dying or is the rate of language death increasing? Languages have always died. As cultures have risen and fallen, so their languages have emerged and disappeared.
The widespread view that language death is rapidly increasing is based largely on general reasoning, for example, people know that there has been significant growth in international and global *lingua francas* during the same period; and we can deduce that these developments will have put minority languages under increasing pressure. What leads or can lead to language death?

Languages have no existence without people. A language dies when nobody speaks it any more. Obviously a language dies if all the people who speak it are dead; so any circumstance which is a direct and an immediate threat to the physical safety of some or all of a community is, in a way, the bottom line. Total language death occurs when all native speakers die (Wikipedia, Free encyclopedia, 2008:2).

Linguists distinguish between language death and the process where a language becomes a dead language through normal language change, a linguistic phenomenon similar to pseudoextinction. This happens when a language in the course of its normal development gradually morphs into something that is then recognized as a separate, different language, leaving
the old form with no native speakers (Wikipedia, Free encyclopedia, 2008:3).

Old English may be regarded as a dead language with no native speakers, although it has never died but instead it simply changed and developed into Modern English. The process of language change may also involve the splitting up of a language into a family of several daughter languages, leaving the common parent language dead. This has happened to Latin which eventually developed into the family of Romance languages. (Wikipedia, Free encyclopedia, 2008:3).

When causes of language death are considered, even a language with millions of speakers may not be safe, even Yoruba with 20 million speakers has been called ‘deprived’ because of the way it has come to be dominated by English in higher education (Crystal, 2000: 13).

In South Africa Afrikaans is spoken by around 6 million people, Ndebele by 1.1 million speakers, isiXhosa by 17.6 million. Experience illustrates that most of the speakers of the isiXhosa language are worried because their
main ambition is to earn enough to enable their children to learn English and not isiXhosa.

Many languages have become endangered as a result of factors which have had a dramatic effect on the physical well being of their speakers. The number of users of a language can be seriously reduced, first by catastrophic natural causes, or wiped out by earthquakes, and diseases. Besides language attitudes that some isiXhosa speakers have, there have been several reports of influenza, HIV/AIDS, cholera diseases leading to deaths of indigenous groups.

It is possible that members of the community remain alive and well, often continuing to inhabit their traditional territory; but their language nonetheless goes into decline and eventually disappears, to be replaced by some other language(s). The term often encountered in this connection is cultural assimilation, where one culture is influenced by a more dominant culture and begins to lose its character as a result of its members adopting new behaviour and mores.
Crystal (2000) says this can happen in several ways. The dominance may be the result of demographic submersion where large numbers arrive in the community’s territory, and swamp the indigenous people. Alternatively, one culture may exercise its dominance over another without a huge influx of immigration. Either way, language quickly becomes an emblem of that dominance, typically taking the form of a standard or official language associated with the incoming nation.

Nor is geographical proximity critical, for one culture to influence another. Urbanization has produced cities which act as magnets to rural communities, and developments in transport and communications have made it easier for country people to reach them.

Crystal (2000:78) says:

The learning of the dominant language is virtually everywhere, there is no escape because the same transport systems which carry country people into cities are used to convey consumer products and the associated advertising back to their communities.
The language of the dominant culture infiltrates everywhere, reinforced by the relentless daily pressure of the media and especially of television and some radio stations. Crystal (2000) is of the opinion that when one culture assimilates to another, the sequence of events affecting the endangered language seem to be the same everywhere. He says there are three broad stages.

The first is immense pressure that can come from political, social or economic sources. It might be from top down, in the form of incentives, recommendations, or laws introduced by a government or national body; or it might be bottom up, in the form of fashionable trends or peer group pressures from within the society of which they form a part or again it might have no clear direction, emerging as the result of an interaction between sociopolitical and socioeconomic factors that are only partly recognized and understood.

He continues to say that wherever the pressure has come from, the result is a period of emerging bilingualism; which is the second stage; as people become increasingly efficient in their new language while still retaining
competence in their old. Then, often quite quickly, this bilingualism starts to decline, with the old language giving way to the new.

Crystal (2000) says the third stage is where the younger generation becomes increasingly proficient in the new language, identifying more with it, and finding their first language less relevant to their new needs. This is often accompanied by a feeling of shame about using the old language, on the part of the parents as well as their children. Parents use the old language less and their children even less, and when more children come to be born within the new society, the adults find fewer opportunities to use that language to them. This is what is happening to the isiXhosa language.

Those families which do continue to use the language find that there are fewer other families to talk to, and their own usage becomes inward-looking and idiosyncratic, resulting in family dialects. Outside the home, the children stop talking to each other in the language.
Wurm (1991) says:

Many languages in danger of disappearing today would not be in this position today if it were not for the attitudes of most speakers of the large metropolitan languages with whom they are in contact. Most of those firmly believing that monolingualism is the normal and desirable state for people to be in and who, in consequences, put the speakers of such endangered languages before an either/or choice regarding their language. Either they have to adopt their metropolitan language, or to remain outside the advantages stemming from its mastery in the culture in which their metropolitan language is dominant.

These attitudes completely disregard the possibility of speakers of such endangered languages being bilingual in their own language and a given large metropolitan language, and a result of cultural and social pressure from the monolingual metropolitan culture. This possibility rarely occurs to the speakers of the endangered minority languages.
The dominant language is attractive because it facilitates outward movement from the indigenous community, there are new horizons which members of the community wish to reach towards, new standards of living to be achieved, and a new quality of life to be pursued. The dominant language is necessary because it provides people with a bridge between the two worlds, an intelligibility bridge, without which their progress would be negligible.

The dominant language, by contrast, has quite another role. When it comes to endangered languages, positive attitude counts, that is how people look at their language(s) and what they feel about it when they do. Crystal (2000) says if speakers take pride in their language, enjoy listening to others using it well, use it themselves whenever they can and as creatively as they can, and provide occasions when the language can be heard, the conditions are favourable for maintenance.

Conversely, if speakers of a language are embarrassed to use their language, switch into the dominant language whenever they can, avoid occasions where the language is celebrated, that leads to negative attitude towards that language. Fostering positive language attitudes is one of the most important initiatives to be achieved in the task of language preservation.
Language declines when positive attitudes are missing. And in so many cases of isiXhosa language, positive attitudes are waiting. IsiXhosa is being viewed by their speakers as a sign of backwardness, especially by the younger generation. They have no confidence in the language. The language is not being strongly maintained even in rural areas. IsiXhosa speakers have to get their negative attitude from somewhere because one is not born with feelings of shame and a lack of self confidence about one’s language.

IsiXhosa is introduced by a more dominant culture, which is English, whose members stigmatize the people in such terms as a language which is not useful, backward and inadequate. This attitude is then reinforced through the introduction of practices which penalize the use of the isiXhosa language. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, (1986) recalled such experience from his schooldays when English was the educational norm. He says:

One of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment-three to five strokes of the cane on the bare buttocks- or
was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY.

Similar experiences have been reported from many former Model C schools in Port Elizabeth and the surroundings. IsiXhosa learners are taught their language as a third language, yet they are first language speakers.

Crystal (2000) says that if people believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is their ancestral language which has kept them down, or that they were held back from social advancement by an inability to speak the dominant language well, it is not surprising to find them antipathetic towards preservation, and unsupportive when language maintenance projects are in a place such as schools.

Crystal (2000) again says that if this view is reinforced by the opinions of the young people themselves, who may see the old language as irrelevant or a hindrance, and think of the older people who do still speak it as backward or not useful, it is only to be expected that negative attitudes pervade the whole fabric of a community. If isiXhosa language is dying here in South Africa it is because of the predominance and hegemony of English.
5.8 How can the isiXhosa language be maintained?

To face the loss of a language or culture is a terrible loss. Crystal (2000) says it is like the grief that one experiences in the process of death and dying. IsiXhosa speakers do not have to experience this grief or respond to it. To avoid this there must be growth in linguistic awareness. There must be motivation and commitment of linguists, isiXhosa speakers, community groups, community organizations, schools and government sectors.

IsiXhosa speakers must be motivated to work for their language, they need to make the presence of isiXhosa felt within the wider community. IsiXhosa speakers need to raise its visibility or profile by, for example, obtaining access to the media, by having a regular column in a daily newspaper, or having an occasional programme like cultural celebrations, religious festivals, reading and speaking slots for example on radio or television.

Speakers also have to get into the habit of using the language in all respects. With governmental support, the visibility of isiXhosa for example in areas of
advertising, public service leaflets, and banks in more and more public targets would be particularly an important thing to do.

There must be an associated growth in translation and interpreting services. Visibility can also come from the use of place names, road signs and on public signs in general. Ogmios (1997) says these usually provide a real indication of the acceptability of a language’s presence in the community. All these would demonstrate the presence of isiXhosa language.

Markey (1998:170) states that:

Speakers must increase their wealth relative to the dominant community; they must also increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community.

He says there is a need to maintain pressure on governments at international, national and local levels to make sure that something is actually done. For example, simple lists of words and phrases in response to a particular local need, such as tourist leaflets, or labels for a museum exhibition can be produced.
The promotion of the presence of the language at home is a priority because it is not a solution to develop a mindset which sees all the responsibility transferred to the school system. If there is no promotion presence in the school system at all, at primary and secondary levels, the future is bleak. One of the roles of the school is, to develop the child’s use of its mother tongue.

The knowledge and awareness which comes from the process of education can generate confidence which stands the children in good stead, as they find themselves coping with the difficulties of language maintenance. Children must know something about a language’s history, folklore, and literature. This would lead to a great source of reassurance. The school is not the only source of this knowledge, it must start at home.

Teaching programmes with good materials and trained fluent teachers are to be used. IsiXhosa language will progress if its speakers can write their language down. Johnson (1990) reflects on the differences between a written and an unwritten language:
Books are faithful repositories, which may be a while neglected or forgotten; but when they are opened again, will again impart their instruction: memory, once interrupted, is not to be called. Written language is a fixed luminary which after the cloud that had hidden it has past away, is again bright in its proper station.

When language is written down, that does not mean it will automatically survive. Once a language passes the stage where it can be transmitted between generations as the first language of the home, its future is vastly more assured if it can be written down (Crystal, 2000: 138). The written language could be in the form of grammar books, dictionaries, literature books, and these days even audio or video recordings.

Speakers must also make use of technology such as the internet where language technologies could be found, for example spelling checkers, list of words, meanings of words. There must also be the promotion of educational programmes in web pages. It is very important that linguists have an interest in the people who speak the language. They must not to look at them merely as a source of collecting data for their publications.
Linguists should see their broader role as helping isiXhosa speakers to understand what is unique about their language and culture and which forces may threaten it. Gerdts (1998:34) reflects this information about linguists:

Linguistic expertise is not sufficient for successful participation in a language program. The linguist must develop social and political skills to be an effective member of a language revitalization program.

Languages need communities and speakers in order to survive. Gerdts (1998:35) says:

The community, and only the community, can preserve a living language. If the community surrenders its responsibility to outsiders, or even to a few persons within the community (such as school teachers), the language will die. Language preservation efforts must involve the total community, and not just a part of it.

This means that to save a language demands commitment, a shared sense of responsibility, a clear sense of direction, a wide range of special skills, interest and love of the language. Texts in the language of general public
interest such as stories, poems, and newspaper articles must be written and published so as to get the language recognized as an official and important language. There is a need for work to be on a language for its speakers, with its speakers and by its speakers.

IsiXhosa speakers must own their language because to lose control of its use they will lead to a very serious matter of “possible death of the language”. They must take great pride in using their language, if this can happen then the future of the language will improve.

Linguists with the help of speakers of the language must instil a sense of enthusiasm within a community on behalf of a language. They must be able to function as fluent teachers of culture.

5.9 Conclusion

Chapter five defines acquisition planning showing that it is organized efforts to promote learning of a language. Acquiring of first home language before second language was seen as important. It showed that first language is acquired through exposure to the language and meaningful communication.
Based on these it gave the background of isiXhosa and showed that the more proficient students are in their first language, the more proficient will be in their second language. The chapter showed efforts to promote and protect isiXhosa from western influences and experiences. Finally it explained ways of maintaining isiXhosa for example that isiXhosa speakers and linguists must instill sense of enthusiasm to isiXhosa.
6.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter is a summary of the key aspects highlighted in this study. It recommends what can be done, based on all the information collected, and what strategies need to be introduced and action plans to be implemented in order to overcome the issues discussed and challenges. Africans ought to be proud of their African languages.

Several issues and challenges need to be addressed based on recommendations of this study. A number of questions still need to be answered. What are the present circumstances and situations that characterize African languages as subjects at universities and former technikons.

Based on the above question, this study has found that there is an attitude towards African languages. This attitude is from some teachers, scholars, students, lecturers, schools and university administrations, government sector and private sector.
There is a very big gap between schools, universities and former technikons. At schools the curriculum is not career-orientated and therefore not attractive to students. Curriculum restructuring needs to be revisited. Language departments are in conflict and competing. With regard to remuneration and incentives, salaries are not competitive and do not attract expertise, for example in some cases lecturers are paid more than high school teachers. School teachers prefer to go overseas for better salaries.

The history of languages in South Africa is still colonial. There is nothing done by government to develop African languages. The government has language policies in place. Language practitioners must implement them. The challenge for language planners is to demonstrate that African languages have a vital role to play in the political economy, among other things.

6.2 Internal Factors

Student numbers in African language departments are dropping, teaching posts are frozen. There is a loss of good teachers and lecturers because of
low student numbers. There are courses whose content is irrelevant to the needs of the various student groups. As indicated in the study, some African languages are taught from the English approach. There is also inadequate marketing of African languages within the universities and former technikons.

It is suggested that African languages should be taught from Grade 1 just like other languages so that learners have a fair choice and willingness to take African languages as courses at tertiary level or fair choice between languages offered. This is suggested because some learners indicated that isiXhosa is not a compulsory subject unlike English, so this reduces its chances of being taken seriously as a subject at high school and tertiary level.

Subsidies are diminishing in the faculties which offer languages. Teaching of African languages and research are in danger of not being taught anymore. There is misunderstanding of the nature and complexity of African languages by government administration.
6.3 External Factors

Based on internal factors, there is an inadequate educational language policy, that is, there is a gap between language policy and the daily practice. The excessive use and recognition of English as a language of economy and a key to success is a threat to all South African languages.

There is no confidence on the part of African language speakers in the economic viability of African languages. More white students register for African languages for conversational purposes. African languages must be marketed from the Foundation Phase. Bursaries are available for science and engineering students than for African languages students. The distribution of bursaries is not fair at all. At least DAC does offer bursaries for the study of African languages at Rhodes University.

Another question is, what would the ideal circumstances and situation be for African languages as subjects at schools and universities as they would obtain external and internal to the educational departments?
6.4 External factors to the educational department

African languages need to be promoted in South Africa regardless of colour and race. It is appreciated that the government, DAC and DOE have taken a stand on language policy. Languages which have high numbers should be taken as official languages. Government says that everybody must have English or Afrikaans and then one of the African languages that will be language of the province.

There should be a language awareness campaigns. The public needs to be educated about the importance of African languages. The public should be told that children must also be fluent and improve their African languages not the second languages only. African languages can also be taken at first language level, and not as second languages only, also in private schools.

White communities of South Africa should learn African languages also. If English and Afrikaans speakers can also learn isiXhosa and isiXhosa speakers add Afrikaans and other languages to their curriculum then some of the barriers that we now experience will fall away. It is highly appreciated
that banks are beginning to make their auto-banking available in different languages. Those are very important developments. These are the kinds of things people want to see.

Public speeches should be translated or interpreted in relevant African languages. The non-standard variety for example isiMpondo, should be allowed in the classroom, so as to enable students to speak more fluently.

Children should be guided to more formal language, for example if a child says “Iyandifrustrator lento”. S/he must be corrected by telling her/him that there is an isiXhosa word for “frustrator”.

6.5 **Internal factors to the educational departments**

Degrees and programmes should be made more useful to the outside world, for example they must include translation, terminology development, and orthography. Introduction of African languages courses for specific purposes for example law, science, mathematics and other subjects or courses can be of significance.
Universities should give consideration to allowing students to study in their African languages. Restructuring should be market-related and not focus on increasing the number of registering students only per university.

Departments of African Languages should be proactive in their academic offerings and not to wait for the department to be threatened with closure. In both educational and cultural spheres, people should promote the use and development of African languages. “We need people like President Mbeki to speak often on the English channels in isiXhosa or isiZulu, or whatever it is, and have subtitles in English at the bottom” (Alexander, 2007:19).

Strategies need to be introduced and action plans should be implemented in the short, medium and long term in order to put African languages on a stronger footing as subjects at university.

Departments of African languages should network and share ideas on, among other things, programmes and relevant pedagogies. There should be courses in African languages for specific purposes.
Degrees and programmes should be career-orientated. Departments of African languages should communicate with the department of education of the institution to train students for courses in African languages for specific purposes.

Departments should make sure that the African languages are included in the language policy of the university. There should be language awareness campaign. There is a need for the bridging of the gaps with DAC (Departments of Arts, and Culture) and DOE. (Department of Education).

Programmes should be designed towards both immediate and long term needs of communication and needs of the wider community. Department of African languages should review their existing curricula in accordance with current demands.

6.6 **Action plans internal to Universities**

There should be clear language policies in which the promotion of African languages for academic purposes features prominently and African language departments should be the watchdog over this.
Universities should encourage meaningful projects such as translation and terminology development. IsiXhosa language practitioners should be both knowledgeable and interested in the language so that they may instil the necessary enthusiasm amongst their students. Negative attitudes should be changed.

Students should be given the opportunity to decode languages which they do not understand so as to recognize that every language is as organized, systematic and valid in its own right as their own. Increased respect for a language is one way of building increased respect for its speakers. It can be argued that because language is so central to every human being, the opportunity to express and share one’s own language is crucial in building self-esteem and confidence.

6.7 Action plans external to universities

Universities should negotiate with big businesses to develop a language policy promoting African languages for clients. The African Language Association of South Africa (ALASA) should initiate networking among
academics of different universities for development of innovative courses. The financial incentive for further qualification in African languages should be re-introduced.

6.8 South African government

The South African government encourages the promotion of African languages, but could go further. If we are talking about resources, for example, is the government giving enough money at university level to promote African languages? Are there bursaries; are there language policies at universities encouraging students to learn African languages? In parliament, for instance, there are very few Africans who communicate in their indigenous languages, while they are free to do so.

The language of address in parliament is almost mainly English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans. The same applies in the provinces. It becomes very ridiculous when the government officials come and address rural or illiterate people in English.
The government should properly implement its language policy by promoting language equality and practicing multilingualism. Language equity should be encouraged through active language awareness campaigns in all educational institutions (Bamgbose, 1991: 110). Learning material must be available in isiXhosa at secondary and university level. African languages must be given higher user status in society, beyond a symbolic official status (De Klerk, 1995b:33).

6.9 Problems and solutions with regard to the general language policy

Looking at languages actually used in official, educational and social settings, English is by far the most utilized language in South Africa, a language not representing the actual majority of indigenous African language speakers. This situation will prevail if African language speakers themselves do not take action in order to value and empower their languages.

Bamgbose (1991:111) recognizes typical causes for language policy problems in Africa, he says:
Language policies in African countries are characterized by one or more of the following problems: avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation, and declaration without implementation.

Language policy looks very impressive on paper but it is often not applied successfully. A number of problems regarding the implementation of the South African language policy, particularly with regard to language equity have been identified by the LANGTAG report (1996:36-47).

The recommendation on this is that there should be monitoring to ensure that constitutional promises are implemented by applying language equality and multilingualism. Suitably qualified language teachers/lecturers should enjoy a higher status with corresponding commendable compensation. In African languages there is a lack of well-trained teachers, interpreters and translators.

Language teaching and teacher training methods should be improved and be more Afrocentric. The dignity of all languages in South Africa must be respected in all sectors of society. Parents and pupils generally have a low regard for their national languages. Many African parents never teach their

This has been observed in most of the isiXhosa speaking parents, who prefer to communicate with their children in English and insist on English schools, the former Model C schools. One interviewee responded by saying, “I have been speaking isiXhosa, now I am enjoying the privilege of speaking English with my children”. This is a view that is shared quite widely. Parents and teachers must change the negative attitudes to isiXhosa language which students might hear around them but do not understand.

From a pedagogical point of view students agreed that to study things in isiXhosa and to take isiXhosa as a course would help them, especially those with low levels of English proficiency. It would be of great importance then for the speakers of isiXhosa to agree that their language needs to be maintained so that it may not die in the long run.

The use of isiXhosa is considered more appropriate to the first year students by the students in order to help them adjust from secondary school to university. However, few students seemed to consider the possibility of
studying some subjects entirely through their mother tongue. This shows that in the most students have in mind that isiXhosa would gradually be phased out and the ultimate goal would still be the sole use of English in their final year.

This appeared to be based on the fear expressed mainly by students in their final year and as highlighted by Dlamini (2001), that a prospective employer would be suspicious of someone who received part of his or her tertiary education in an African language.

English being the main language of assessment, the use of isiXhosa is believed to help students’ understanding of the things they studied rather than improve overall academic performance. From a pedagogical point of view students agreed that to study things in isiXhosa would help them or those with low levels of English proficiency, and only in a few cases did respondents complain that it would be confusing to start using isiXhosa at university while English is officially used at lower levels.

The main concern of the students seemed to be the fear that the use of their mother tongue/first home language as language of learning and teaching
would result in lower levels of English proficiency. Contrary to this concern, this fear might be based on the students’ experience at lower levels of education.

As noted by Heugh (2000), African languages are widely used in many rural and township schools to complement English explanations, and students might attribute the inadequacy in English most of them reportedly felt on entrance to university to this prior practice. De Klerk (2000) is of the opinion that this might be a consequence of under- funding and difficult teaching conditions in such schools rather than a direct effect of code-switching.

The point raised by Dlamini (2001), that it is easier to learn English when it is also used as language of learning and teaching than when it is just studied as a language, though relevant in its own right, does not apply to the current situation.
6.10 Views on English

Research seems to indicate that many parents want instruction in English from early as possible. The impression created is that ‘some’ parents want English to replace the home languages in education. A subtler claim, that parents want improved and great access to English alongside the home for their children, might have been closer to the real situation.

Many parents, whose home language is a language other than English, prefer their children to receive their schooling in English and not in their first language. They are promoting shift from isiXhosa to English in their children. It is apparent from many responses that part of the reason for choosing English schools is dissatisfaction with conditions at local isiXhosa schools.

De Klerk, (2002) is of the opinion that the educational environment in former DET schools does little to encourage respect and enthusiasm for isiXhosa. It is recommended that isiXhosa medium schools should offer good quality education and make an effort to support the use of isiXhosa language.
Language is essential to thinking and learning, so learners must be able to learn in the language or languages which best suit them. Heugh (2001) says:

In a multilingual society where a language such as English is highly prized, there is only one viable option and this is bilingual education where adequate linguistic development is fore grounded in the mother tongue whilst the second language is systematically added. If the mother tongue is replaced, the second language will not be adequately learned and the linguistic proficiency in both languages will be compromised.

6.11 Conclusion

The first language curricula for African languages are not radically overhauled and these languages are not better resourced at schools in terms of textbooks and other learning material. If this continues to happen, elite isiXhosa speakers will shift into elite English speakers and abandon their mother-tongue first home language. Language in education policy has a
crucial role to play in ensuring that languages develop and it must ensure the survival and maintenance of the marginalized indigenous languages.

Failure to do this will lead to language loss and ultimately death. Where learners are disadvantaged because their home language is not the language of learning and teaching, it is advisable for schools to provide support for them. It has been noted that the use of English as language of learning and teaching does not seem to result in learners acquiring high levels of competence in the language anyway.


–to a child should first learn to read and to write in the language spoken in his home. When this foundation has been laid, he can acquire a full command of his own and, if necessary, of other languages; without it, there is danger that he will never achieve a thorough command of any.
Students indicated that they would like to learn isiXhosa but the problem is they do not have a proper foundation as they started their schooling through the medium of English. Also, they say that there are few isiXhosa books in the libraries so learning support materials are mainly in English with few isiXhosa books. Parents said that they want their children to learn through the medium of English but are also concerned about their children losing their identity.

Parents say they want their children to learn in English because English is the status language. Parents should encourage their children to take isiXhosa as a subject/course at school, they must encourage positive attitude towards this language, and not take it as a school’s responsibility to teach their children. It is apparent that the isiXhosa speaking children who are fluent in isiXhosa reading and writing isiXhosa are equally fluent in English. Knowing and using isiXhosa has brought gains for both isiXhosa and English. Bloch (2008:77) says:

Mother tongue maintenance and support for isiXhosa in an English hegemonic situation implies and provides a very different experience
to that of mother tongue tuition in English with the introduction of isiXhosa.

The greatest gain for the isiXhosa learners is to have a positive attitude to and confidence in learning isiXhosa. Learners should learn and know isiXhosa because that is their culture and they should not lose it.


_____________ 2007. “*Language Policy, symbolic Power and Democratic Responsibility of the Past-Apartheid*”. University paper presented at the D.C.S.


Auerbach, E. 1993. Re-examining English only in the ESL Classroom. TESOL Quarterly 27(1).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td><em>A case study of Xhosa and English literacy in the foundation phase versus English as a medium of destruction.</em> Perspectives in Education. 18(1): 65-78.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td><em>Concepts of Early Childhood Development.</em> Literacy learning and materials Development in Multilingual Settings. Perspectives in Education. 18(1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td><em>Enabling effective literacy learning in multilingual South African early childhood classrooms.</em> Perspective in Education. 18(1)</td>
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</table>


Dalvit, L. and De Klerk, V. 2000. *Attitudes of isiXhosa-speaking students at the University of Fort Hare towards the use of isiXhosa as a language of learning and teaching*. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.


Dyers, C. 2000. *Language, Identity and nationhood: Language use and attitudes among Xhosa students at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa*. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape.


Fettes, M. 1997. “*Language Planning and Education*”. In R. Wodak & D. Corson (eds.)


working papers in Welsh linguistics. 4: 81-100.


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, A.C. &amp; Hal, N.</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td><em>Someday you will know all about me.</em></td>
<td>Suffolk. Mury Glasgow publications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Wolff, E. 2000. *Pre-school child multilingualism and its educational implications in the African context. PRAESA Occasional Papers No. 4 Cape Town: PRAESA.*


Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear Reader

This questionnaire has been devised to study language planning and language policy: an analysis of perceptions of and attitudes to the study of isiXhosa. I appreciate your help by filling in this questionnaire so that I may get a better view of this opinion.

Section A General Information About Yourself

1. Sex: (circle please) Male Female
2. Where did you grow up? ..............................................
3. What is your mother-tongue? .................................
4. Which language did you learn first? ......................
5. Which non-African language did you learn first? ......
6. Which language did you speak most often when you were a child?
   .................................................................
7. Which language do you use most often now?
   ........................................................................
8. Which languages can you speak?
   ........................................................................
9. What is your level of education?
   o University: Diploma Degree Postgraduate
   o Teacher Training
   o Other (specify)---------------------------------------
List other languages you can speak adding on the listed below and tick off where you have learned them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>at home</th>
<th>with friends/neighbours</th>
<th>at primary school</th>
<th>at secondary school</th>
<th>at university</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) isiXhosa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Afrikaans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e)</td>
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<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section B: Language Status

1. What is your official language in your country?
   English    isiXhosa    Afrikaans

2. Do you study Xhosa as a course?
   Yes       No

3. If No / Yes, why?
   .................................................................

4. As the official language in my country I would prefer: (Tick off, please)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) isiXhosa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Afrikaans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Both isiXhosa and English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Do you think that…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) English will become more important in your country in the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) IsiXhosa will become more important in your country in the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Another African language than IsiXhosa will become more important in your country in the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you sometimes change from one language to another within one sentence?

a. Within one sentence

b. In a conversation in general

If yes, from which language to which other do you change?-------------------

---------------------------------------------------------------

--------

c. Why do you code switch?-------------------------------

---------------------------------------------------------------

---------------------------------------------------------------
d. In which of the following situations do you codeswitch?

6. In order to become successful in my present and future personal life I need to speak fluently

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) isiXhosa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Afrikaans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Both isiXhosa and English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Would you want your children to learn isiXhosa?
   Yes       No
8. If Yes/ No, why?

…………………………………………

9. As a medium of instruction for my children I would prefer (combination if possible.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother tongue (isiXhosa)</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) in primary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) for junior secondary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) for senior secondary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) for tertiary level</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Did you learn English before going to school?

11. What was/were the language(s) through which you received primary education?

………………………………………………………………………

12. Would you want your children to learn English already before going to school?

    Yes  No

13. Do you think in pupils in general learn more effectively in their mother-tongue?

14. Which language would you prefer examinations papers to be written?

15. My mother-tongue (isiXhosa) is needed to preserve my cultural identity.

   Yes  No

16. Knowledge of my mother-tongue makes me feel proud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. One can only get a good job in my country if one speaks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) isiXhosa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Afrikaans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) other language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you have any remarks you would want to make, please write them down here:
Section C Language Attitude

1. How well do you think you use Xhosa? Circle one of the five possibilities:

   reading       very bad  bad  medium  good  very good
   writing       very bad  bad  medium  good  very good
   speaking      very bad  bad  medium  good  very good
   understanding very bad  bad  medium  good  very good

2. How well do you think you use English? Circle one of the five possibilities:

   reading       very bad  bad  medium  good  very good
   writing       very bad  bad  medium  good  very good
   speaking      very bad  bad  medium  good  very good
   understanding very bad  bad  medium  good  very good

3. Code switching: (Please circle)
   Do you sometimes change from Xhosa to English?

      Yes  No
Do you change within one sentence?  Yes  No
Do you change in a conversation in general? Yes  No

4. Why do you or why do you not change from Xhosa to English?
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

5. Can you give an explanation why you think other people code switch?
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

6. Do you like other people’s code switching while talking to you?
(please circle)  Yes  No

7. If yes/ no, why? Why not?
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
Section C Language and Media

1. Do you regularly listen to radio programmes? (please circle) Yes  No
2. Do you read newspapers (please circle) Yes  No
3. Which radio station do you usually listen to?
   ...........................................................................................................
4. Why do you prefer the radio station you wrote on 3 above
   ...........................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................
5. When listening to radio, which language is easiest for you to understand?
   English  Xhosa  other
6. What language is easiest for you in newspapers to understand?
   English  Xhosa  other
6. If you had to write an article for a newspaper, which language would you prefer?

Section D

What do you think is the reason for Xhosa students to have negative attitude towards learning Xhosa as a course?
..................................................................................................................
Do you think Xhosa should be taught in schools and up to post graduate in tertiary level?  Yes  No
If yes/ no please say why
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

If we stop using our language altogether, do you think we can maintain the culture and identity of our community? Yes  No

Is the maintenance of our mother tongue languages the most important of all matters for our communities? Yes  No
How can we maintain the fullest use of our indigenous languages in South Africa? (with specific reference to Xhosa)
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Would you encourage your children to learn Xhosa at school?  Yes  No

What do you think of people (AmaXhosa) who speak only English and never their own language?
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
Why do you think some students always reply in English even when spoken to them in Xhosa?

Do you learn more effectively in your mother tongue (Xhosa)?

How is your attitude towards Xhosa language as your mother tongue?

Should our language Xhosa be taught separately as different subjects, or should other subjects such as Maths and Science be taught in our indigenous languages (Xhosa for the purpose of the study)?

Yes  No
Should the authorities produce versions of official letters, brochures, application forms, notices and leaflets in Xhosa?

Yes                           No

Should English people be encouraged to learn Xhosa?
If yes/no, why?

Do you think Xhosa children are losing their cultural identity by shifting away from Xhosa?
Yes                           No

If yes, what is your suggestion?

Thank you for your time.