Language issues in Education influenced by Global trends and Democracy

A case study from South Africa

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Abstract

Language constitutes an essential part of globalization and democracy. Although different dimensions of globalization are overlapping, this study mainly focuses on the cultural and political dimensions of global trends influencing education in a South African context. These external forces will always foster local responses, but it is important that educators acknowledge the power in these trends and their implications for shaping and constraining the choices available to educational policies and practices.

Schools are important institutions in a democratic and multilingual society because they both mirror the wider society and act as a role model; hence practices in the South African educational sector are the centre of attention in this study. This study attempt to show how democracy requires participation of its citizens and in this regard why linguistic issues are of vital importance. The relationship between democracy and multilingualism can be analyzed by both micro and macro dimensions. Individual linguistic competence is of significance in order to participate as a democratic citizen. On the other hand, there exist certain characteristics of a nation-state in order to be labelled a democratic society. One of these, I argue, is to adapt for linguistic diversity. This is both in line with the democratic ideal of securing the rights and interests of both the majority and minority. In addition this is essential in order to create a sense of community or belonging in the people living within the borders of a nation-state. South Africa has an explicit goal of promoting multilingualism which is assessed as one characteristic of being a citizen in this new democracy.

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1 Introduction and contextualization

1.1 Introduction

> It has to be observed that while language is our means of communication, it is not simply a neutral medium for communication… Our entire knowledge and experience of the world is mediated by language... Thus, language is a social creating, practice and activity which is more than just a way of thinking about and describing other social activities, but one which constitutes, manages and negotiates all kinds of social relations from family to citizen, to state and to the wider global community. (Simala, 2001:311)

Language is a phenomenon surrounding us from the cradle to the grave, in all spheres of our lives, thus constituting one of the most important features of a human being. The purpose of this study is to offer a contribution to the understanding of transnational forces influencing language policies and practices within educational systems in many societies. The study attempts to show why language issues are important in the era of globalization and democratization, and how education can be one of the primary promoters of democratic values. I recognize the need for contextualization when discussing such themes in different countries, but the recent democratization process in South Africa illuminates the focus of this study in an excellent manner. My intention is to focus on the linguistic education-society relationship in the dialectic situation between the local and the global (Arnove, 2003). Stromquist and Monkman ask relevant questions in this regard:

> Today more than ever, there is a need to ask, Education for what will prevail in the globalization age? Will it be only to make us more productive and increase our ability to produce and consume, or will it be able to instil in all of us a democratic spirit with values of solidarity? This solidarity will have to recognize the different interest among men and women and among the dominant groups and disadvantaged groups. (Stromquist and Monkman, 2000:21-22)

This statement suggests that incompatibility between globalization and democracy could occur if we do not ask questions related to our education systems. We need to be aware of the role of education in the tension between divergent forces. I argue that it is not possible to step around language issues in education if we are to consider this topic in a proper manner.

'Language issues' is a broad term and chosen deliberately because it embraces a wide range of questions like what language of instruction is used within the classroom, linguistic human

rights, how democracy and promotion of bilingualism/multilingualism are intertwined, how the use of a language in different societal spheres is influenced by prescribed status, policy/practice regarding acquisition of an additional language, and the dialectic process of power and language in a democratic society. The predominant influence of the mother tongue on all learning achievements, including competency in reading and writing, is important to learners all over the world and does not lose its validity in, for example, an African educational setting, as different as it may be from the European situation, and vice versa.

Forces from areas of the world previously considered far away are now affecting our daily lives. Due to this the nation-state is no longer the basic unit of analysis – we have to consider and analyze global forces as well (Arnove, 2003). Language issues in education are also affected by global trends. For example, English is a world language increasingly used as the language of instruction in schools, even though it is not the mother tongue of the students (Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003, 2004). This linguistic and educational situation, where English plays such a dominant role, is of significance to any democratic country. In addition, English is seen as the language in which to function in a global community (Brock-Utne, 2002; Brook Napier, 2004). Furthermore, trends such as global communications and the Internet have strengthened the position of English as a dominant language. Even though English is a world language, most people are at least bilingual (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). Research has been done on issues concerning bilingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, 2000; Brock-Utne, 2000; Cummins, 2000; Heugh, 2000a). The model of additive and subtractive bilingualism is used to describe different processes to acquire a second (or third) language and emphasizes the necessity of developing skills in the mother tongue in order to reach the goal of bilingualism, which is a stated goal of the South African government (Department of Arts and Culture, 2002; Department of Education, 2002). Since effective education of good quality is an important asset on the global market, language in education constitutes an important factor to discuss (Stromquist and Monkman, 2000).

In April 2004 South Africa celebrated its 10 year anniversary of democracy. The Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) values the protection of language as a democratic right (and a basic human right) in the sense that the state cannot discriminate anyone due to language. In the spirit of promoting democracy, the South African government has granted eleven languages official status (Department of Arts and Culture, 2002). Xhosa is one of those and is spoken by 17.6% of the South African population (Statistics South Africa,

2003). According to South African law every pupil has the right to be instructed in a language of his or her preference (Department of Education, 1996a). Yet many schools with Xhosa-speaking pupils only use Xhosa as the language of instruction for the first three years of schooling, and then a transition to English occurs. Since English is the mother tongue of only a small minority, the pupils use a language in education which is not a natural part of their environment. The interaction in English only takes place in the classroom, to the detriment of students' academic and cognitive development (Lee, 1996; Brock-Utne, 1998; Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003, 2004).

Decentralization of education from a national level to more local levels is one of the international trends this study will elaborate on (Arnove, 2003). This trend is closely related to democratic thinking and, according to Carrim (2001), the decentralization of education in South Africa is based on the assumptions of increased representative and participatory democracy. For example, some decisions are supposed to be made on a local level or in a governing body of every school (Department of Education, 1996b). The use of indigenous languages, such as Xhosa, is encouraged in order to promote national unity in the democratic South Africa. National unity is to be created in this post-apartheid society by fostering acceptance of linguistic diversity and equality (Department of Arts and Culture, 2002). The matter of interest, however, is what really happens "on the ground".

Furthermore, this study has taken place as part of the LOISA project (Language of Instruction in South Africa). This is a sub-project of the LOITASA project (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) which is based on cooperation between researchers in Norway, Tanzania and South Africa (Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003, 2004). One of the research activities in this project is extending the period of Xhosa as the language of instruction to cover Grade 4-6 in geography and natural science. The pupils experiencing this will be compared to the control groups which are taught through the medium of English. Hopefully, the LOISA project will throw some light on consequences of continuing with English as a language of instruction as opposed to using a language which is more familiar to the learners.

1.2 Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate how global trends are affecting language issues in education, and using South Africa as a case study. With democracy being one of these trends, the study intends to look at how democracy is related to linguistic issues. In the light of this objective, I have asked the following principal research questions:

- Is bilingualism/multilingualism viable in the era of globalization?
- What is the relationship between democracy and bilingualism/multilingualism in the South African context?

The questions are asked with a pre-understanding of language constituting an essential part of the individual as well as wider society. Despite English being a "world-language", we tend to use our mother tongues in every day life, and most "developed" countries use their mother tongues as languages of instruction within education. Within the frame of this study, I wanted to find out how important the mother tongue (in this case Xhosa) is valued in relation to English by accessible informants. In addition, the theoretical framework presented in chapter two argues that sustainability of democratic values is tested when challenged in meeting with linguistic diversity, and therefore I look at the relationship between democracy and bilingualism/multilingualism. Participatory citizens are a prerequisite for a democracy, hence making it interesting to ask whether language is an obstacle or not for participation in different arenas in South African democratic society. Before I discuss the theoretical framework, methodological issues and gathered data of the project, I briefly present a contextualization and historical background.

1.3 Contextualization

The history of South African education is important in order to understand the contemporary situation (Abdi, 2002). Although democracy has paved the way for a new educational system, the legacy of the past creates inertia in the system. The ANC has used English as a working language for pragmatic reasons in addition to signalling opposition to the previous Afrikaans-speaking government (Heugh, 2002b; Sonntag, 2003), consequently making English the language of the freedom struggle. Despite great injustice in society and education, black communities have always valued education for its potential to social mobility (Walker and

Archung, 2003). In this regard language is of major importance since there is a great lack of access to academic literature and teaching in any of the official African languages in South Africa. Graduates and scholars are often taught in English, hence creating a risk for "intellectual dependency" on the history and culture of the language used (Alidou and Mazrui, 1999:113).

According to Mesthrie (2002) Khoesan and Bantu-speaking people lived in the area of Western Cape when European immigrants arrived from the 17th century onwards. The latter group eventually consisted of different language groups, such as Dutch, Portuguese, German, and French. These groups became known as the Dutch community, and were in struggle for power with the British who captured different areas of South Africa several times (Mesthrie, 2002). The Dutch community in particular imported slaves from other African countries, the East Indies and India, which resulted in a large colored community especially in the Western Cape. From the beginning of the 19th century European missionaries arrived and put up the first schools for the black and colored population while the State catered for education of the white population. I will take a closer look at the language issue in education during apartheid and post-1994 in the following since these eras in particular are important to contextualize this study, but first I find it necessary to emphasize another factor.

Distinctive racial hierarchies of social organisation and power have always underpinned South African Society (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999). Although the 'race' ideology may be the most familiar feature of apartheid, this was not something new introduced by the National Party when they gained power in 1948. Segregation of the people along lines of colour was something also used by the British, but the policies under apartheid might have been both more explicit and efficient than before. Mesthrie explains one of the reasons:

> The apartheid governments of 1948 onwards enforced separation of peoples along the lines of colour, with the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the pass laws. The latter were aimed at channelling black male labourers to where they were needed (industries and white farms), while keeping their families in the rural areas. (Mesthrie, 2002:18)

Despite slavery being abolished, making race a judicial term (pass laws) whites could continue to control the blacks and make use of their manual labour when and where it was needed. The concept of race is not an innate quality but an ideology (Maré, 1999). In contemporary South Africa the terminology of race, now changed to 'population group', is still in use. As explained in Census 2001:

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Statistics South Africa continues to classify people by population group, in order to monitor progress in moving away from the apartheid-based discrimination of the past. However membership of a population group is now based on self-perception and self-classification, non on a legal definition. (Statistics South Africa, 2003:vii)

Although it is important to monitor progress from previous discriminatory actions, it is a paradox that South Africa claims a non-racialist society and still continues to use race terminology (Maré, 1999). Despite the claim of Census 2001 that the membership of a population group is based on self-perception and self-classification, I have doubts that 'whites' would classify themselves as 'black African' or vice versa. This suggests that people of South Africa in fact still use this race terminology in their every day life without consistently questioning the concepts. Race is made a significant factor of one's identity when it is important information in a census. In addition, the 'Rainbow Nation' metaphor used to describe South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 2004) "is concerned to project an image of different racial groups coming together to live in peace and harmony" (Taylor and Foster, 1999:337). It is possible to question if it is really a good metaphor because of the diverse population of the country which may encourage bringing one's racial separateness out in the open, not one's common South Africaness. I do agree with Taylor and Foster (1999:339) that "a non-racial South Africa is still far from realized". For the purpose of this study it is then interesting to question education in such a context. Thus I will take a closer look at education during apartheid before moving to contemporary South Africa.

1.3.1 Education during Apartheid

Education often systematically reaches out to large segments of a population. Therefore, education can be used as an agent for government policy. In general whites received more schooling than any other part of the population during apartheid, in fact, some parts of the South African population did not receive education at all (Christie, 1986). Most of the pupils in South Africa received four years of schooling, thus only qualifying them for unskilled labour, as was often the case with black African pupils. The "apartness" of apartheid became evident with social and economic consequences. Kallaway (2002:2) speaks of this era as "one of the most dramatic cases of institutional educational injustice in the history of the twentieth century". Education was used as a tool for oppression and subordination and it was called 'Bantu Education'.

Bantu education was the education the apartheid regime provided for the black ('Bantu') population, beginning in 1953 and continuing until 1993. According to Walker and Archung (2003) Bantu education policies introduced an inferior curriculum into black schools that focused more on non-academic training and was designed to produce unskilled and semiskilled laborers among Africans. An interesting point to make in this regard is that the policy makers of Bantu education might not have regarded this as an inferior education or only as education to create a compliant pool of semi-skilled workers (Fleisch, 2002). The Eiselen Report, on which the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was based, was concerned with a solution to the weaknesses it had identified in the existing system. One of those weaknesses being education not related to "Bantu culture" or the need of "Bantu society" (Kros, 2002). Eiselen suggested bringing the school and the community closer together by relating all schooling to each child's cultural background, i.e. race, ethnicity, and language. This was a top-down policy in which white 'experts' were claiming to protect Bantu culture and tradition of which they knew very little (Reagan, 2002). By the means of this education, the child would be prepared for its role in society (Abdi, 2002). For the black population that would be a subordinate role as employees in the white-controlled economy or using their professional education serving within the black communities as lawyers, medical doctors, nurses, teachers, and so on (Davenport and Saunders, 2000; Abdi, 2002; Heugh, 2004). The facilities of this education was poorer, fewer expenditures per pupil, and poorly trained teachers than for the white population (Kok and Iannici, 2003; Walker and Archung, 2003). The De Lange Commission reported in 1978 that nearly all white teachers had twelve years of schooling and one-third of them had a degree, while only 2.45% of African teachers were degreed and only 62.9% had passed Standard Eight (Grade 10) (Davenport and Saunders, 2000). Abdi (2002) reports that only 20% of African primary and high school teachers finished high school themselves, and 2.6% held university degrees in 1981. Obviously this created a difference between schooling for the different population groups since the teachers were only allowed to teach pupils of "their own" group.

In 1955 a booklet titled "Bantu Education: Oppression or Opportunity?" was published in defence of the Bantu Education Act due to the criticism received. The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs[1] (1955) saw its opportunity to explain why Bantu education was necessary. The white government felt a duty "of bringing the message of Christianity to the Black man,

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[1] A number of powerful Afrikaners were represented in this organization and had been working for separate development of the races since the 1930s (see Holmarsdottir, forthcoming).

and of helping in the process of civilising a people who have spent countless centuries in the isolation of Darkest Africa" (ibid.:2). It was claimed that this education was not inferior compared to others, and there would be no lack of emphasis on leadership and on advanced education for the talented in order for Bantu themselves to occupy every position needed in their own society. The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs used arguments like their willingness to relieve the churches of the burden with educating the Bantu, and in doing this controlling the education to be more in tune with the own culture of the Bantu which, in turn, would receive more education than ever before in their history. In addition, an argument of economy was used in the defence of Bantu education. The government showed its kindness by providing education for the Bantu since tax was mostly paid by the white. "The Union government provided the funds, out of State Revenue, for practically the total expenditure connected with Bantu Education" (ibid: 35). Besides, it was claimed that more money was spent on education of the Bantu in South Africa than in any other African country.

One particular feature of Bantu Education, which is of particular interest to this study, was that of mother tongue instruction. The apartheid regime consistently favoured the use of the vernacular in schooling in order to anchor the African child in his/her own culture (Davenport and Saunders, 2000; Reagan, 2002). African language speaking parents and pupils opposed such schooling and interpreted this policy as a mechanism to limit access to higher education as well as economic and political power (Heugh, 1999; Reagan, 2002). One interesting point to emphasis in this context is the matriculation pass rate during this era (Christie, 1986; Kok and Iannici, 2003). Mother tongue education was phased in and maintained for 8 years of primary school and, according to Heugh (1999:303), the pass rate increased dramatically from 43.5% in 1955 to 83.4% in 1976. The use of a familiar language as language of learning and teaching could very well partially explain this increase.

Afrikaans and English were also a part of the Bantu education syllabus and in the early 1970s the government wanted to increase the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. It seems like the black population felt that "if they had to choose between English and Afrikaans, the former was of greater pan-African relevance" (Mazrui, 2004:72). The ANC served as the most powerful symbolic centre in the anti-apartheid struggle, and they used English as its working language (Maré, 1999; Sonntag, 2003). Therefore, serving as one of the factors making English the language which symbolized access to international ideas and the freedom struggle with an increasingly enhanced status (Heugh, 1999; Mazrui, 2002). When the

government wanted to impose an increase of Afrikaans as a medium of education in African schools, the resistance reached a climax with the Soweto riots of 1976. The language issues were not the only factor which provoked these riots, but it was an important one. Africans protested against Afrikaans, not the mother tongue education, and in favour of English (Mazrui, 2002). The government moderated their intentions and many of the primary schools for black pupils started to use English as the medium from Grade 5 onwards (Murray, 2002). Sonntag (2003) suggests that the apartheid regime succeeded in bringing blacks and the English language together. Heugh comments:

> This year [1976] is remembered for the rebellion and the resultant compromise with regard to language-in-education policy from government. It should, however, also be noted that it was the end point of a period during which the fruits of 8 years of mother tongue instruction could be seen in the matriculation results. (Heugh, 1999:303)

The matriculation pass rates for African speaking pupils started to drop from more than 83% in 1976 to 49% in 1994 (Kok and Iannici, 2003). It is not a far fetch to suggest the language of instruction might have been the main contributor to this situation.

On the other hand, both the ANC and the Soweto uprising in 1976 contributed to the liberation (Nekhwevha, 2002). Nekhwevha (2002) and Abdi (2002) claim that education was an important process towards liberation. Despite Bantu education marginalizing black South Africans, in particular, it contributed to the struggle against apartheid and eventually its fall. A change in education occurred with the new government in 1994.

1.3.2 Education in post-apartheid South Africa

Educational policies in contemporary South Africa are not made in a historical vacuum, but reflect concerns about past practices. In addition they are to be consistent with the goal of a democratic and non-racial language policy (Reagan, 2002). There are no longer policies segregating education of different population groups. Schools may employ any teacher of their wish, regardless of colour, and pupils are free to choose any school to attend. Eleven languages are given official status: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Sepedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu (Republic of South Africa, 2004). In addition, the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) grants every child the right to receive education in the language of her/his choice as long as this is "reasonably practicable". Mazrui claims that

Although South Africa has declared eleven official languages (theoretically reducing English to one-eleventh of the official status), in reality the new policy only demotes Afrikaans, the historical rival of English in the country. English has continued to enjoy the allegiance of Black people, almost throughout the country, as the primary medium of official communication. (Mazrui, 2004:72)

The paradox is that with desegregation and non-racialism as goals in the new democratic South Africa, English is gaining grounds. Both local conditions as well as global forces seem to operate in the overall advantage of English (Alidou and Mazrui, 1999; Sonntag, 2003). African language speaking people often identify English as a language of liberation (Heugh, 2000a; Nodoba, 2002). English has also acquired additional value since it is widely used in higher education institutions, while African languages are not used (Mazrui, 2002). Despite the possible option of using mother tongue as the language of teaching and learning, the majority of schools use English and, to some extent, Afrikaans when that is the mother tongue of the pupils (Murray, 2002).

As we saw in the previous section, historically African teachers in general have little professional training (Davenport and Saunders, 2000; Abdi, 2002). In addition, they often are required to teach in their second or third language without training in bilingual teaching. According to Walker and Archung (2003), such a situation contributes to teachers' poor grasp of fundamental concepts in the content areas in which they teach. The result could be a continuance of segregation, but now along economical lines, i.e. pupils with parents not being able to pay school fees in schools where the teachers have adequate training, and as a result may receive an education that could be "inferior" to that of those more well off. Maré assess this as an obstacle to democracy:

No society can call itself democratic while children remain out of school until such time as their grandmothers receive their pensions to be able to pay their school fees. (Maré, 1999:256)

Koelble (1998) claims that from a general Western and uncritical perspective, good triumphed over evil when apartheid gave way to democracy. Still obstacles exist, both domestic and global, which justify questioning whether South Africa can develop a participatory and social democracy. This is to be discussed in the following, but first I would like to present a brief glance at the province in which this study took place.

1.3.3 The Western Cape

This province is one out of nine South African provinces and constitutes 10.6% of the total area and 10.1% of the population.

Table 1.1 – Key numbers on Western Cape

Western Cape	
Capital:	Cape Town
Principal languages:	Afrikaans 55,3% Xhosa 23,7% English 19,3%
Population:	4 524 335
Area (km2):	129 370
% of total area:	10,6%
GGP* at current prices (2001):	R136 062 million
% of total GDP**:	13,8%

* GGP (Gross Geographical Product) = GDP of a region
** GDP (Gross Domestic Product)
(Source: Republic of South Africa, 2004)

Composition of the population and languages spoken is somewhat different than the average in South Africa. The following numbers are drawn from Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2003):

Table 1.2 – Composition of population and official languages spoken in Western Cape compared with the South African average

	Composition of population (%)			Composition of official languages spoken (%)	
	Western Cape	*South Africa*		*Western Cape*	*South Africa*
Black-African	26,7	79	Afrikaans	55,3	13,3
Colored	53,9	8,9	Xhosa	23,7	17,6
Indian/Asian	1	2,5	English	19,3	8,2
White	18,4	9,6			

As noted in these tables, there is a divergence in composition of population and official languages spoken between the province of the Western Cape and South Africa in general. The historical background of this area, with the first white settlers' colonies and importation of slaves, are factors contributing to explain this phenomenon (Davenport and Saunders 2000; Mesthrie, 2002). Slave trade was abolished by the British government in 1807, but freed slaves often continued to work for their previous owners and Afrikaans was often used as the medium of communication. The former slaves came to constitute a mixed segment of the

population which continued to rise through creole births, i.e. a mixture of white, slaves and the indigenous Khoikhoi people (Davenport and Saunders, 2000). Together they acquired an informal identity as 'colored', which was made a judicial term from 1948.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

A theoretical framework has underpinned this investigation. This is discussed extensively in chapter two. The concepts of 'language issues', 'globalization', 'global trends', 'democracy', and 'multilingualism' are defined. It also consists of a discussion on how national systems of education are a political dimension of significance to the research questions posed and how democratization has contributed to decentralization of decisions within education. Another global trend discussed is the increasing use of English in the educational sphere. In addition, I mention how the global trend of democracy and human rights affects language issues. Democracy is further elaborated on when discussing several aspects of the relationship between democracy and multilingualism, such as individual rights, identity, education of democratic citizens, power relations, and the significance of access to public discourse in a deliberative democracy.

Chapter three examines the methodological aspects of this study emphasizing the qualitative character and discussing factors such as design, sample, different qualitative research methods used, reliability, and validity. I also touch upon the process of field work and how the specific position being a researcher influenced the study conducted.

Analysis of data is performed in chapter four and five, in which the first of these chapters is occupied with how the global trends of national systems of education, decentralization, global English, and democracy and human rights have affected languages issues in South African education. Secondly, the same outline as in the theoretical framework is used to discuss different aspects of the relationship between democracy and multilingualism by using the sample of this study in addition to literature available.

Chapter six contains a final discussion trying to tie the theoretical perspectives used, methodology and data obtained together in order to answer the principal research questions asked in this study.

1.5 Limitations

When both the researcher and many of the informants do not have English as their mother tongue, and still this is the only common medium in which to communicate, the language creates an obvious limitation to access of information. Despite one of the focus group interviews being conducted in English, the vocabulary is limited and the conversation can not go on as fluently as if everyone had the same mother tongue. English being a foreign language creates a less rich description of the issues at hand.

Time constraints also limit this study. In five weeks it is impossible to become very familiar with the society investigated, as is often the case in ethnographic studies. Preparations in advance were necessary and done when conducting the literature review and an extensive use of the Internet, especially the government's official web-sites. Still time in the field did not allow as many visits to the fours schools of the sample as I wished. In addition, I only visited schools C and D once. Due to this background it is possible to make some comparisons of the schools, but not enough to reach firm conclusions.

It is also important to remember that in a qualitative study like this, the analysis offered is the researcher's own interpretation of the data at hand. This makes the conclusion in this study a reflection of my own interpretation, and not necessarily the "truth" (Bryman, 2004).

2 Theoretical framework

> We have noted repeatedly the likelihood that facts are, in the first instance, theory-determined; they do not have an existence independent of the theory within whose framework they achieve coherence. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:306)

All research is based on certain theoretical understandings. When conducting a study, you start with an interest for a specific topic. Generally this is not something pulled out of thin air, but often related to a prominent problem in contemporary society and ongoing research, and thus situated in a specific historical context and a specific tradition (Welch, 2003). The "facts" this study is trying to reveal are influenced by the theoretical framework used in the study. On the other hand, the objective of the study and research questions presented in chapter one constitutes factors, which determine what kind of theoretical framework that can be productive. First of all I want to clarify what kind of language issues this study is focusing on, followed by a brief look at the concept of 'globalization', not exhaustive, but enough to understand different global trends influencing language issues in education. In the last part of the chapter, I elaborate on democracy and different aspects of its relationship to language and multilingualism.

2.1 Language issues in education

Language can be a hegemonic tool of power (Sonntag, 2003). By using a language only known to the minority in a society, a lot of people are excluded from participation outside their immediate sphere, thus language constitutes an unequal structure of relations. Multilingualism is a widespread phenomenon, both on a micro level with individuals skilled in more than one language and on a macro level with nation-states having several languages spoken within their borders. Education is influenced by society and when multilingualism prevails, educational practices are of importance. The status a language is given in society is often reflected in the practices at school. This study intends to look at some of these practices, e.g. if the language of instruction is the mother tongue of the pupils, and what reasons are given for the choice of the language in use. South Africa is a country with eleven official languages to cater for its diverse peoples (Republic of South Africa, 2004). The government states that multilingualism is a resource and democracy is supported by granting language

equity and language rights. Hence, it is interesting to take a closer look at language policy in education, both on a national and local level, and try to find out whether there is concurrence or discrepancy between policy and practice. Since the government also encourages learning of other South African languages, this study intends to investigate what the requirements are of fluency in a second language. If there is a difference in status among the languages, then maybe we can find different expectations towards skills in high status versus low status languages within the school environment. Language issues in education are inseparably linked to the teaching of languages of power, job opportunities, availability of teaching materials and trained teachers. These factors also need to be taken into consideration when assessing forces influencing linguistic practices in education. An assumption of this study is that there exists a relationship between democracy and bi-/multilingualism (see the discussion in the last section of this chapter). Thus it is of interest to this research to investigate whether use of mother tongue, in this case Xhosa, restrains or promotes participation in the local and national democracy.

2.2 Globalization

To define 'globalization' is not easy because the meaning is contested and the concept is multifaceted (Held and McGrew, 2000). The user's profession or background influences what she/he means by using this concept. Different definitions may not even be contradictory but complementary. It is also difficult to get a perspective on globalization because we are right in the middle of it, and in a hundred years, historians may define this phenomenon differently. Some consider this phenomenon a significant historical development, while others contradict this by conceiving it as a mythical construction (see Baylis and Smith, 2005 for a summary). Nevertheless, forces from areas of the world previously considered far away are now affecting our daily lives and thus forcing educational researchers to consider and analyze global forces as well as the regional and national context. As an example it is possible to use the survey of OECD Programme for International Student Assessment – PISA (OECD, 2004) which is conducted every third year. The survey investigates knowledge and skills students have acquired near the end of compulsory education, which are seen as essential for full participation in society in industrialized countries. Many questions can be asked about what the survey really measures and so on, but the point to emphasize in this context is the debate the results of this survey creates in the national media in general and the educational sector in

particular. Results from schools in Japan and Korea are ranked against results in far away countries like Norway or Sweden. When this influences the national debates, it illuminates that educational activities and practices in one part of the world are of significance to another part of the world. This can be seen as part of globalization, especially if we use Giddens' definition of the concept:

> Globalisation can … be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanciated relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space. (Giddens, 1990:64)

It is not uncommon to think of globalization as an economic phenomenon. The creation of a global free market for goods and services is often the prime example. National borders are no longer obstacles in trade or economic transactions (Hernes, 2001). It is possible to say that there is an integration of world financial and capital market when for example the petroleum industry in Kuwait and Iraq stagnated during the Gulf War in 1991 which resulted in an increase of prices in the rest of the world. When one country suffers economic decline this often affects the economy in other countries. Smith and Doyle (2002) use the concept to describe the spread and connectedness of production, communication and technologies across the world. This is possible due to a well developed information system. Communication is possible over immense distances in an instance because of sophisticated technology such as the internet. This innovation enables diffusion of ideas and knowledge easily and rapidly. The technological revolution we have experienced the last decades has led to complex interaction between cultures, politics and economy worldwide. Carnoy (1999) views this information technology and innovation as the foundation of globalization. In order to compete in the global market there is a necessity of productivity linked to the generation of knowledge. If globalization is defined as a 'free market', educational policy makers look to market 'solutions' in educational matters. As a result of market forces education becomes a commodity (Patrinos, 2000).

On the other hand, globalization is not only about economy. It may cover other aspects of life as well. Eriksen (1998) points out a very important aspect of globalization when he is talking about de-localization or phenomena no longer limited by space and time. The Olympic Games

can be watched on TV simultaneously all over the world. We do not have to be at the Olympic site in order to share the experience. Coca-Cola is familiar to people in remote corners of Africa even though it is an American product. This can be called a globalization of culture. We are moving towards integration in a larger system. A similar process is visible in the political arena since webs of transnational connections are made in, for example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union, the African Union and the United Nations. Democracy is the prominent political form of government and fundamental human rights are recognized in most nation-states (Waters, 2001). Societies become more and more complex and none are isolated or acting in a vacuum (Davies, 2004). Waters (2001) points out how globalization involves systematic interrelationships between individuals, which all are affected by each other in a way that we see a unification of human society. From another perspective, global trends and culture are always interpreted locally and have a local character due to difference in influence, world view and knowledge of the people involved (Eriksen, 1998). Thus global forces and globalization are of a dialectic nature, i.e. global trends and events influence local practices and vice versa (Arnove, 2003; Baylis and Smith, 2005). Due to this increased interaction, most sectors in society are influenced in one way or the other. From an educationist's point of view this is rather interesting because the increasing interconnectedness of societies pose common problems for educational systems around the world. According to Pennycook (1994) the content of the classroom, both *what* is taught and *how* it is taught, reflects attitudes towards society in general and the individual's place in society in particular. When it comes to language in education, a whole system of power/knowledge relationships are in function and globalization is a factor influencing this. Therefore, I now turn to different global trends influencing linguistic issues in the educational sector.

2.3 Global trends

What is the meaning of a 'global trend' in this study? This could be defined as commonalities of practices among disparate cultures due to external forces influencing internal politics (Waters, 2001). On the other hand, there will always be local responses to those external forces (Eriksen, 1998; Arnove, 2003). Although different dimensions of globalization are overlapping, this study mainly focuses on the cultural and political dimensions of global trends influencing education. Burbules and Torres (2000) emphasize that educators must

acknowledge the force in global trends and their implications for shaping and constraining the choices available to educational policies and practices. Often these trends are reinforced by state policymakers in the sense that they use these "greater forces" as an argument for changes, leaving the nation-state "no choice" but to play by a set of global rules not of its own making (Burbules and Torres, 2000). Let us then have a quick look at some of these trends important to choices regarding language issues in the educational sector.

2.3.1 Creation of national systems of education

A political dimension of globalization significant in this study is the creation of national systems of education. Education is an important issue in all societies, consequently making it a contested topic (Davies, 2004). However, mass education is a relatively new phenomenon and now emerges as a global trend. Since the industrial revolution there has been a need for systematic education of the population within a nation-state. Reading and writing are necessary skills in today's societies. On the other hand, a national system of education can be an efficient way of creating a common sense of shared identity necessary to keep the nation-state together and language has always been important in achieving this task (Kymlicka, 2001). The fact that national systems of education exist in most countries world wide made it possible for delegates from 155 countries to meet in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 and discuss education (UNESCO, 2001). Although a lot of disagreements existed (see Brock-Utne, 2000 for a discussion), countries committed themselves to work towards educational goals including universal primary education and reduction of illiteracy in the population. These goals were reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000 (UNESCO, 2004). These themes are now globally discussed on national education agendas.

Since national systems of education and access to primary education are nearly universal, we experience an internationalization of ways of knowing, i.e. what knowledge is deemed important (Samoff, 2003). The content of schooling has always in this sense been related to power relations. Paths of influence on the educational content are multiple, varied and often not obvious. As an example, many ex-colonial countries have an educational system influenced by their previous colonial powers, e.g. British ex-colonies tend to have a system similar to the British both in organisation, examinations and, to some extent, content (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Brock-Utne, 2000). Today these countries often experience an educational sector dependent on external aid. To some extent, the aid they receive also decides the content and language of instruction in schools since the donors often

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provide necessary educational materials (Brock-Utne, 2000; Samoff, 2003). American economic and political interests abroad have, for example, led the United States to contribute large sums of money towards teaching of English in many countries (Pennycook, 1994; Alidou and Mazrui, 1999). The British Council is promoting English in other countries and values it as an even greater economical asset than the North Sea Oil (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994). This pattern contributes to reinforcing existing power relations, i.e. previous colonial powers or the elite of the country, often educated in the North, are those determining what knowledge and language is of importance or given status (Mazrui, 2004).

2.3.2 Decentralization of education

Despite national systems of education being a global trend, another trend is to reduce the central government's role within the educational sector (Samoff, 2003). Decisions regarding education are often left to provincial governments or even the individual school with teachers and parents. This is supposed to constitute to a more democratic form of government (Olowu and Wunsch, 2004). Even though it seems admirable in a democratic sense, decentralization of education does not necessarily guarantee local governance. The educational sector is too important to the national government to totally let go of the power over this sector, thus we often tend to experience decentralization more in the policy than in practice (Olowu and Wunsch, 2004). But on the other hand, this could be quite convenient to those holding power because the responsibility of the results of the sector are maximized on the side of the local administrators despite the minimal power over the actual situation. Olowu and Wunsch (2004) suggest this as one explanation when the democracy is fairly new and the government politically insecure. For example, when South Africa has granted her citizens linguistic rights, the citizens must be able to exercise those rights having access to adequate material and economic resources (Stroud and Heugh, 2003). That is problematic in a country with a high unemployment rate and poverty on the increase. Heugh states that

> Those who are effectively marginalised by virtue of their language do not know that they have the right to object, and even if they did know, without the necessary requirement of literacy, would find it almost impossible to act upon this right. (Heugh, 2000b:25)

On the other hand, the *right* to act is actually given or decentralized to the citizens making it possible for the government to deny their responsibility for the citizens not exercising their rights. Then linguistic rights become more a passive right of citizens, not an obligation of the

government. Consequences for the linguistic situation within schools of this trend of decentralization will be examined in the data analysis of this study.

2.3.3 Global English

"The linguistic dimension of globalization is the ideal focus for an attempt to understand the relation between politics and culture at the turn of the millennium" (Sonntag, 2003:1). Language is the main means through which knowledge is conveyed (Mda, 2000). This makes the language of instruction used in school of utmost importance. Learning through the mother tongue improves the outcome of the pupil (Cummins, 2000b; Heugh, 2000c; Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003; UNESCO, 2004). Despite this, linguistic globalization is an important dimension of globalization, which pushes forward a global English hegemony (Arnove, 2003; Sonntag, 2003). English is a globally used language and often associated with globalization, both as a cause and a product. Through our English skills we are able to communicate with people world wide. Widespread knowledge of the language enables us to interact, hence making this a part of the cultural dimension of globalization. English is a language often used in the public sphere, i.e. television, newspapers, the Internet etc.

Sonntag (2003) asks whether global English is a medium for transmitting democratic values or if it is alienating people from their basic human rights. She emphasizes that an increase in democracy and global integration is positively correlated with linguistic politicization arguing that:

> In the South African case… global English and global economic integration have accompanied democratization, although there is dispute over any casual connection. At any rate, most South Africans have not challenged global English hegemony under their new democratic banner. (Sonntag, 2003:118)

Since language issues in education are important on the political agenda, it is even more interesting to have a look at linguistic action within the schools. Likewise, it is possible to see a pattern of action dependent on local language politics which is concurrent with Arnove's (2003) apprehension of the dialectic process between global trends and local responses. The trend of English as a lingua franca in domains like economy and science, influence the choice of language of teaching and learning (Phillipson, 1992). Education in the mother tongue looses ground to English and this practice alters the status a language is given. This study will take a closer look at how different statuses are ascribed to Xhosa, English and Afrikaans by their difference in use within the public sphere and educational practices.

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2.3.4 Democracy and Human rights

Democratization is a global trend as well as internationalization or globalization of state actions through alliances and diplomacy. According to Waters (2001), this makes the nation-state the level of impact. Through democracy, citizens are enabled to elect national political leaders rather than supranational ones. On the other hand, Chomsky (2003) holds the opinion that more and more decisions regarding society are out of the public arena and in the hands of "the market", which are increasingly international and unaccountable to society. This can turn out to be, at the best, a limitation of democracy especially because the language of the public sphere then might be a language of the minority of a nation-state (Prah, 2001). Therefore, it is interesting within the framework of this study to find out if mother tongue Xhosa-speakers are able to participate in democratic processes on a national level in their own language, e.g. if it is possible to vote in Xhosa, in what language they have access to information surrounding the electoral process, and whether Xhosa-speakers enjoy freedom of expression in Xhosa. The relationship between democracy and globalization constitutes a web of influences and the connections are also of a dialectic character between the local and the global (Koelble, 1998). It is not only the centre who influences the periphery; democracy in each context is also home-made.

A part of the democratic trend is respect for human rights, i.e. every human being should be regarded with the same value (Koelble, 1998; Burbules and Torres, 2000; Prah, 2001). Some nation-states have not ratified the United Nations declaration on human rights (United Nations, 1948) but have adopted some of its principals into their own constitutions or in other ways respecting some of the key principals. This is an important factor when it comes to linguistic practices within the educational system, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

2.4 The relationship between democracy and language

Many factors are interacting when it comes to influencing language issues in education, thus I look to both global trends in addition to elaborating on democracy (Davies, 2004). They are not exhaustive factors explaining the phenomenon in question, but some useful tools in understanding it. Despite the actual number of languages in the world being contested, it is

possible to state that multilingualism is the rule rather than the exception in most countries. Such a situation can challenge democratic values in many respects and will be explained in the following sub-sections. Schools are important institutions in a democratic and multilingual society because they both mirror the wider society and act as a role model; hence practices in the educational sector are the centre of attention in this study. I now turn my attention to the relationship between democracy and multilingualism after a brief glance at the concepts itself.

2.4.1 Democracy

To me defining 'democracy' is like walking in a minefield. There are a multitude of definitions – each one dependent on the theoretical point of view, political preference, practical use, or academic speciality of the person involved. There will always be someone who disagrees with the way I choose to use the concept of 'democracy' in this study since my starting point is in the interest of an educationist and thus democracy related to the educational sphere in a broad sense. Democracy is a way of governing a society which involves the distribution of power and deciding what kind of values are of most importance. This is used as justification of the existing political system. But it is important to recognize that the defining act is always a process. The definition is not set once and for all, rather it changes. No democratic nation-state can claim the one and only answer to what is the ultimate and "correct" democracy or democratic values (Beetham, 1994). This will always be dependent on historical, cultural and societal contexts. Different types of claimed democracies exist throughout the world today – in an increasing number. They politically perform and practice democracy in different ways. Thus, we have a possibility of qualitative differences between democracies.

Democracy has as a basic characteristic "that all people are equal in some important respect..." and "it follows from this that all should be treated equally in certain specific political respects" (Saward, 1994:8). In what respect are the people of a democracy equal? According to Torres (1998:11) this "implies a process of participation". A simple definition of democracy is a society ruled by and for the people (Saward, 1994; Cummins, 2000). The process of participation involves elections of political representatives and citizen's equal right to take part in this electoral process. One person's voice is considered equal to another person's voice, despite differences in sex, ethnicity, language, religion etc. Thus, the policy performed by governments should correspond to the expressed preference of the majority. If

the rule of the majority is to prevail in a democracy, the safety, rights and needs of the minority or marginalized groups also needs to be attended to. Thus the need for some minimal rights appears, such as the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to equal treatment under the law, the right to adequate health care and adequate education, to name just a few (Saward, 1994). It is not enough that the democratic society consider these rights or freedoms, they must be guaranteed each citizen in spite of the will of the majority and they must be protected by a judicial system in a way that they become constitutionalized. This is concurrent with Torres' view (1998) that the individual rights are ranked over collective rights. Otherwise severe injustice could be done to many of the citizens in a democratic society, and then it will not be possible to call it a democracy.

The relationship between citizens and the state and among citizens themselves is related to the distribution of power in a society, and this is necessary to discuss when trying to define democracy. Torres (1998) makes a clarifying division between democracy as a method and democracy as content. Democracy as a method is concerned with the governance and distribution of power because it involves political representation, voting and elections. A hallmark for democracy is a free parliamentary system where every citizen has the opportunity to vote, stand for election and be elected. The politically dominating group needs the majority's votes in order to stay in power. If the government conducts their task openly and accountably to the voters, they can hope for a re-election. Otherwise another political party or representatives will be given the power. In this manner the system of free elections function as a corrective to those in power.

Democracy as content involves citizens' participation in public affairs and thus implies that the people have power to take part in decisions regarding their own lives in the wider society (Torres, 1998). In addition equal rights for everyone are important. Unfortunately, equality within a democratic nation-state does not always imply equality of status of languages spoken. According to Honing (2001) one of democracy's strictest test is the challenge we experience when we have to work, live and share not just with people with whom we have a great deal in common, but also with those with whom we just happen to be bound with due to us living within a common nation-state. The practice of living peacefully together with people we perceive as "foreigners" put our democracy to a test and one of the factors involved may be of a linguistic character.

2.4.2 Multilingualism

Weinreich (1953:1) described 'bilingualism' as the "practice of alternately using two languages". When I use the term 'multilingualism' in this study, I am referring to the same practice as Weinreich, i.e. the capability of functioning in at *least* two languages, preferably more. Multilingualism could be analyzed in two perspectives: a micro perspective where the linguistic competence is related to an individual and a macro perspective where the society is functioning in more than one language. Language is a prerequisite to be able to interact with our social environment. In many contexts a person can speak more than one language due to exposure to different languages within the family, another language spoken outside the home, education, a necessity to perform business etc. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) defines a bilingual speaker according to a combination of linguistic identification (done both by the individual herself and others), different levels of competence and capability to function in two languages. By emphasizing these criteria, she sees the potential of a positive relationship to and a high level of communicative skills in both languages. Often we learn an additional language in school. For linguistic minorities or marginalized groups it is important that their first language is given status in the educational sector because that is the only way to reach the most desirable goal - additive bilingualism (Cummins, 2000b; Desai, 2000; Kymlicka, 2001). Additive bilingualism is the process where you learn a new language and still keep and develop your first language (Cummins, 2000b; Heugh, 2000a). It is of utmost importance to develop skills in both languages in order to enhance cognitive, linguistic and academic growth. The main factor to reach this goal is the *status* of the mother tongue or first language in the educational system (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The opposite of additive bilingualism is subtractive bilingualism. This implies that you learn a new language with the risk of the first language being displaced or replaced, and the first language is not being learned at a high level (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Hence, you become a weak bilingual speaker.

In a macro perspective multilingualism describes a situation within the nation-state. Monolingual people are a minority in the world. There are approximately 200 countries, but roughly 4000-5000 different languages, though the number is contested (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). Thus the most common phenomenon is multilingual countries and the exception is a monolingual one. Despite this situation, different status is often ascribed to the different languages within a country. Some are official, some are national, and some languages are not recognized at all. South Africa is a country with eleven official languages "to cater for South Africa's diverse peoples" (Republic of South Africa, 2004). Switzerland has 4 national

languages, but only 3 of them are counted as official (Swissworld, 2004). A language being official implies that it is used in official administration, official communication and national institutions. National languages are, in short, languages recognized by the nation-state as separate languages spoken within its borders. Hence, an official language has more status than a national language. But there is no guarantee that several official languages within a country are ascribed equal status. In many African countries with several official languages, often ex-colonial languages enjoy more status than the African language(s) (Brock-Utne, 2000). An interesting analysis in this regard is Ferguson's (1972) research on of how varieties of languages are ascribed different status. One of the most important features is diglossia, i.e. people possessing skills in more than one variety of a language, is the specialization of function for 'high' and 'low' varieties of the language. High varieties of the language are used in the public sphere within religious ceremonies, official speeches and in the media, while low varieties of the language are used in the private sphere like everyday conversations. It is an important asset of a social actor to know when to use the high versus the low variety. Not possessing that skill shows that a person does not understand the social context at present (Ferguson, 1972). These ascribed differences in status could be applicable to bi-/multilingualism as well.

Language is a powerful form of social identity. We tend to use this factor together with other determinants such as religion and ethnicity to categorize each other. In this way we socially construct identities which we use to ascribe certain characteristics, abilities and social status (Banks, 2001, 2002). In addition, proficiency in more than one language facilitates "interpersonal, academic and social communication, expands intellectual horizons, and encourages appreciation and tolerance for different cultures" (Burbules and Torres, 2000:21) in the context of globalization or internationalization. In the light of this democracy and multilingualism are not separate isolated entities, but interrelated and dependent on each other. Different aspects of the relationship are presented in the following section.

2.4.3 Individual rights

Some rights and freedoms are necessary to secure a democratic society (Saward, 1994). Such rights and freedoms have economic implications for the nation-state and politicians must make compromises in many matters (Burbules and Torres, 2000). Using multiple languages in the society in general and the educational sector in particular can be difficult due to high costs

involved when e.g. interpreter services need to be catered for, teaching materials are necessary in more than one language, qualifying teachers in linguistic matters etc. Space constraints do not permit me to enter this debate. On the other hand, we must keep in mind that democratic politicians have more than economic matters to consider when deciding linguistic issues.

Treaties have been issued by both the UN (1948) and the European Council (1992, 1995) concerning the individual rights of people in general and minorities in particular (Åkermark, 2003). Although the *European Charter for regional or minority languages* (1992) does not include the languages of migrants, the Charter still recognizes the importance of the relationship between linguistic rights, human rights and societal needs. All treaties recognize the responsibility of the nation-state to ensure equality and integration of minorities. Language is often seen as a representative for the cultural values of a group and when this language is not recognized, the whole group can perceive its existence threatened. Granting minorities linguistic rights can reduce conflicts and they are treated as equals (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, 2000) argues for the responsibility of the state to provide an educational system where bilingualism is seen as a necessity. Those individuals, whose mother tongues are not the official language(s), need to become bilingual in order to communicate within the different spheres of family and society[2]. All the children in a country should be given the same chance to participate and become active citizens, despite their mother tongue being different from the official language(s). Education in a democratic society supportive of the linguistic rights of the individual can become a tool for citizenship education and a sustainable democracy. The political rights of a citizen surrounding the electoral process are also taken into consideration when educating citizens in a way that enables them to understand the political message and practicalities of the electoral process (Torres, 1998).

From a micro perspective, the right to use one's own language increases children's opportunity to learn in school (Banks, 2001). Strong academic and conceptual skills in the mother tongue are crucial in achieving good skills in an additional language. The intellectual and academic resources of bilingual students will also increase if the first language is

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[2] It is not only linguistic minority groups who should become bi-/multilingual. This is an asset in *every* democratic citizen and important when it comes to equality.

maintained (Cummins, 2000b). Furthermore, this is about equality and the right to be given the same opportunities as citizens of a nation-state since minorities and marginalized groups are then given the same chance to define their own future as the majority or those in power (Cummins, 2000a; Rassool, 2000).

Are linguistic rights a human right to be taken care of in a democracy (Cummins, 2000a; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000)? Persons belonging to minorities need to be at least bilingual in order to exercise fundamental democratic rights – such as free elections, freedom of speech etc. According to the above mentioned international treaties (UN, 1948; European Council, 1992, 1995), every cultural identity is worthy of respect. Language is an essential part of cultural identity (Cummins, 2000b). To empower marginalized groups the democratic society should help them acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function as democratic citizens (Banks, 2001). Access to information and public debate has an obvious empowering potential, which I will discuss later (van Dijk, 1993, 2000; Rassool, 2000). Thus, in my opinion, the linguistic rights of minorities and marginalized groups should be considered a human right, which the democratic society must not neglect. Even though this has economic implications, such as translations, extra financial recourses channelled to the educational sector and so on, the economic, societal, judicial and political implications by neglecting linguistic rights will, in the end, far exceed the additional expenses.

2.4.4 Identity in a multicultural and multilingual society

Construction of a nation-state is dependent on a successful construction of some sort of shared identity. In order to experience a sense of shared community within geographical borders, a capability of imagine something in common is necessary, and boundaries to "The Others" have to be made (Honing, 2001). Anderson (1990) defines a nation as an *imagined* political community in which language, especially the written language, is a significant feature. National language policy is a part of how the national identity is created. Through language the people define themselves both in relation to the material and social world (Rassool, 2000). Thus, the national language mediates the reality of its speakers. It is both something used in communication with each other as well as a mean of creating a national "identity". In this sense, the people with the national language as their mother tongue are those empowered to define the factors of a common national identity. In addition to language, shared values, symbols, historical heritage and other factors also creates a sense of belonging and a shared

"national culture" which is necessary to preserve a nation-state (Osler and Starkey, 2000; Kymlicka, 2001).

A country with a totally homogenous culture and linguistic situation is rather the exception than the rule in the contemporary world. But a population tends to view their culture as one when facing a "Foreigner" without consideration of the different sub-cultures existing side by side in society (Honing, 2001). It is possible for citizens to share a national identity, and yet have different ethnic, religious, sexual or political identities. Identity is not a question of 'either-or', it is a matter of 'both-and'. Multiple identities are a fact in the modern world (Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan, 2002). In a democratic society, the respect for diversity and provision of opportunities for diverse groups to maintain their culture, language and identity, is important. A democratic population is protective of an including community, which grows in the meeting with divergent comprehensions. Thus, the society might experience a diversity of citizens with a sense of allegiance to the democratic nation-state (Banks, 2002).

Language is a powerful form of social identity. Together with other hallmarks like religion and ethnicity we categorize each other in social groups. We must not forget that these are socially constructed identities and not something objective (Banks, 2001, 2002). Different parts of an identity are made relevant in different situations. What we make relevant in social interaction are contributing to the creation of an identity, i.e. both the way an individual perceives himself and/or characteristics ascribed by others. When an important part of your identity, for instance your mother tongue, is not given any value by wider society, bicultural ambivalence can take form and the feeling of a necessity to choose between two cultural identities occurs. A sense of shame of the non-valued part of your identity is common (Cummins, 2000b; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). This can result in an inability to act as a citizen in society. According to Cummins (2000b) underachievement of students that have experienced long-term devaluation of their identities in the broader society is great. In the light of this we experience the importance of recognition of ones identity in order to be a citizen prepared for and capable of participation in a democratic society. All of us need to belong somewhere and Davies (2004) argues for acknowledgment of multiple identities and multiple loyalties in order to achieve this sense of belonging. If the language of instructions is not the mother tongue of the pupils, this could set off a train of events which alter people's perceptions of self and others on a large scale. Other parameters are of significance as well,

but identity is of importance as an aspect of the relationship between democracy and multilingualism.

The educational system constitutes an important tool in multicultural and multilinguistic nation-states when creating a national identity. Necessary qualities for a democratic citizen can be taught in addition to a tolerant attitude which appreciates diversity. Educating democratic citizens is also about inculcating particular habits, virtues and identities (Torres, 1998; Kymlicka, 2001).

2.4.5 Education of democratic citizens

> How can individuals be citizens in any true sense if they have no comprehension of the official language as used by the law, by the news media, by the schools, by employers, or by the social services? (Heater, 1999:111)

Being a citizen is a role that needs to be learned. Every citizen must acquire knowledge of the social, legal and political system in which they live in order to be able to operate in society (Heater, 1999). Schools need to participate in this endeavour which was a part of the intention of the educational sector in the outset. Dewey (1997 [1916]) describes how the creation of the nation-state required a change in the administration and purpose of the educational sector. Schools came under governmental control and the primary aim of education was to create a citizen subservient to the superior interest of the state. Since education also holds a socializing function not only controlled by the nation-state, there exists a delicate balance between meeting both the societal and national needs (Dewey, 1997 [1916]). If education is to be a social process of educating democratic citizens, we first have to define what kind of society we want. The values that sustain the social reality form education (Freire, 1985). Democratic values include both freedom of speech and the need for a political opposition working as a correction of power. Freire (1985:7) is using the concept of 'conscientization' about the process in which human beings participate critically in a transforming act. The educational system should reject to work as a tool for domination and mere transference of knowledge, and instead be of a humanistic kind where the aim is liberation and a common creation of and joint quest for new knowledge (Freire, 1985). Since an attitude like this challenges the elite and those holding power, this is an extremely important part of education of democratic citizens because they are able to be active participants in the democratic society.

In this scenario it is difficult to neglect the importance of schools. The education sector effectively reaches a large portion of the population and in order to teach democratic values the school must be a role model. Poulsen-Hansen (2002:113) makes a valuable comment in this regard: "We cannot beat democracy into the pupils or students. The teaching style must mirror the subject or topic." Hence the interaction between different groups within the classroom is important since democracy also is concerned with how to handle conflicts and disagreements in a peaceful manner (Kymlicka, 2001; Davies, 2004). How to think and behave towards others who are different from us and attitudes of teachers are important topics in this regard. Differences in culture, language, and religion should, in a democratic society, be seen as necessary in education of democratic citizens. We need the diversity – both in the classrooms and in the society.

> As the liberal should know, no way of life, however rich it might be, can ever express the full range of human potentiality. Different ways of life therefore correct and balance each other and restrain each other's partialities. They should therefore be judged not only on the basis of what they are in themselves, but also in terms of their contribution to the overall richness of society. (Parekh, 1995:203)

We need differences in society because this balances and corrects it, in addition to cultural diversity helping us to see our own culture, with its values and limits. Diversity is possible as long as we have some sense of shared commonness. When giving space to diversity, minorities and marginalized groups can function as the conscience for the democratic nation-state. This justifies the question whether the state manages to treat all its citizens with equality and equity according to democratic values or not.

Cummins (2000a) stresses how important it is to value language as a right and a resource instead of focusing on it as a problem. Ruiz (1988) is, however, problematizing the language-as-right approach and sees a language-as-resource approach as more fruitful. By educating democratic citizens, this can not be ignored. The use of the student's mother tongue as a language of instruction upgrades the status of a language in society and contributes to the promotion of bilingualism or multilingualism (Ruiz, 1988). In addition it helps the development of self-respect and identity in each citizen (Brock-Utne, 2000; Erickson, 2001). To learn an additional language increases the cultural repertoire of a citizen and is, according to Erickson (2001), a necessity to master success in the modern, global world. In addition this will help people to live side by side in a multicultural society, and the balance between cultural, national, and global identifications may be equalized (Banks, 2002). Through participation we are able to learn and evolve democratic skills (Poulsen-Hansen, 2002). Thus,

it is important to empower *all* the citizens in a democratic society, also by promoting multilingualism in every way necessary, in order to enable them to participate and in that way educating them as democratic citizens. To return to Freire's (1985) way of thinking, the problem is that education of democratic citizens encourages critical thinking and conscientization which is crucial to the existing social reality. It is challenging those in power, the existing hierarchy and dominating groups. Thus, to be aware of the power structure is important.

2.4.6 Power in a democratic and multilingual society

No matter how we define democracy, one way or the other it implies involvement of the population. The distribution of power is supposed to be different from other forms of government in the sense that power is not concentrated within a small elite and the population have a legitimate right to question those holding power. In this way power structures are more visible in a democracy than in any other form of government. On the other hand, Bourdieu (1991) introduces the concept of 'symbolic power' which is of utmost importance in the discussion of the relationship between democracy and multilingualism. Symbolic power is a kind of concealed power where the dominating group defines the world or "reality". This makes hierarchies disguised as natural by both the dominating and dominated groups. In a discussion of language, the symbolic power is present because one language or a group of languages are assessed as more legitimate and dominant than others. The language(s) of the state "becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured" (Bourdieu, 1991:45). A value system is established. It is important to remember that the symbolic power only can be effective when it is accepted and justified by the dominated groups as well.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) uses the theories of Galtung and Bourdieu to discuss different kinds of power. *Innate power* is the intellectual, physical and psychological recourses we inherit from our parents, though they have to be negotiated as relevant in a social context. *Resource power* counts the material and non-material resources available to you, e.g. economic capital and/or language. The *structural power* is a kind of power you possess by virtue of your position in the society. Resource power and structural power are convertible into each other, e.g. using money for education which can eventually bring a powerful position. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) divides the population into an 'A-team' and a 'B-team' where the A-team

represents those who, in Bourdieu's conception, posses symbolic power. The 'A-team' socially constructs their resources as the valid norm in society, which also implies decision of what language is to be valued as a linguistic recourse. To climb the social ladder from the B-team towards the A-team requires a starting capital (language, culture, formal education) in order to be able to convert this into valuable capital. This starting capital has to be validated as capital to start with, and if the A-team doesn't do that, they can stay in power and in a vicious circle continue to decide what kind of recourses are valuable. Monolinguals are a powerful *minority* in the contemporary world. They are often the A-team defining what kind of language is regarded as linguistic capital (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In this situation, equality as a superior democratic value is often set aside.

The above-mentioned structure of power have implications in the educational sector and can create problems for immigrants, refugees and marginalized groups – often considered as part of the B-team. Davies (2004) emphasizes the necessity to learn about society power, the political system, rights and citizenship in order to challenge the system. The problem is that since there is a strong relationship between education and the nation-state, education can never be "neutral" or objective. It reflects the power relations and structures in the wider society and is central to the hegemony since it is often legitimating the existing power structures (Torres, 1998; Davies, 2004). Schools tend towards equilibrium rather than challenging existing social patterns. Cummins (2000a, 2000b) describes two different kinds of power used in an educational context. First of all, the coercive relations of power exists when someone dominant exercises power over someone who is subordinate, e.g. in a teacher-student relationship. In the opposite case we find collaborative relations of power where the educator is concerned with cooperation in order to empower the student to achieve more. The mindset of the teachers creates the basis of expectations, assumptions and goals set for culturally diverse students. Failure of bilingual students is often caused by coercive relations of power, but on the other hand, success of students is often a consequence of the interaction between the teacher and student, i.e. use of collaborative relations of power (Cummins, 2000a, 2000b). The educational system sends a message of a normative character since what is accepted, respected, and seen as normal is presented in the classroom community. The symbolic power is represented here as well as in the wider society and these power and status relations between dominant and dominated groups have a major influence on the students' progress and achievement (Cummins, 2000b). Thus, the power relations in a democratic and multicultural society are visible in this context.

Since language is a political matter, a problem will arise if two (or more) languages are used in the school because this affirms the experiences and cultural starting point of the students and communities speaking those languages. This will challenge the existing symbolic power with the hierarchical system of social relations between different groups in society (Cummins, 2000b). Different status of languages results in linguistic hierarchies in democratic societies. The function of languages is related to the power of the social classes using them. Lindgren (2000) illustrates this by an example from Finland. In the18[th] century only the lower classes spoke Finnish. The upper classes spoke Swedish, which was a sign of social standing. A change occurred at the end of the 18th century when the upper and middle classes started to use Finnish as well. Then Finnish changed to a national language, and neither Swedish nor Finnish were longer connected to the class structure.

Reproduction of the dominant power relationship within the school and the larger society can take place if different cultures and languages represented in the classroom are not given respect and legitimacy. If the educational system is to educate democratic citizens it must be able to improve inter-group relations among both dominating and dominated groups (Banks, 2002). In contemporary South Africa the African languages Ndebele, Sepedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu are accepted as national languages. Even though they have equal official status with English and Afrikaans, in practice knowledge of *English* and, to some extent, Afrikaans constitutes a cultural capital which is used as a demarcation of social status (Alexander, 2000). Research has found that some assess African languages as not properly equipped for use in high-status functions and that African languages are not only underestimated by those speaking European languages, but also by African speakers themselves (Nkabinde, 1997; Brock-Utne, 2004). This resembles the characteristics of symbolic power where both the dominating and dominated groups are concurrent in their view of "reality" (Bourdieu, 1991). These attitudes are not immutable to change. Desai (2000) promotes the idea that only through practice those attitudes can change. Thus, there is a need for the use of African languages in all domains of society, and especially in education. According to Desai (2000) there is a need for mother tongue education in order to upgrade the status of all languages. A part of the remedy could be use of both a European language such as English *and* an African language as language of instruction in schools – for *all* citizens of South Africa, including those whose mother tongue are English or Afrikaans. Then status is given to African languages. In a democratic country with eleven official languages there is an

obvious need for the citizens to be at least bilingual in order to have a viable democracy and try to avoid the reproduction of power structures.

In a democracy it is always important to forefront issues of power and domination, class, ethnicity, language and gender (Torres, 1998). This is a way of challenging the power in the society which is of importance in order to secure a sustainable democracy which contains democratic values. In a democracy with divergent interests, the ability to negotiate, to influence and have a voice is important. Language is the main instrument for such activities (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). Equal rights to influence collective decisions assume the ability to understand what is going on and to participate in the public discourse which takes place in both oral and written language. I will now turn to this aspect of the relationship between democracy and bilingualism.

2.4.7 Deliberative democracy – access to public discourse

> Deliberation is a democratic way for a diverse group to grapple with shared problems and try to reach a shared decision about what to do. It is thus an authentic democratic activity and arguably the single most important activity in which democratic citizens must engage. (Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan, 2002:169)

This is an interesting "twist" of democracy when we discuss the relationship between democracy and multilingualism. The main feature of the deliberative democracy is the public discourse which takes place in political speeches, news, books, academic discourse etc. In this discourse, the 'reality' is socially created (Phillips and Jørgensen, 2002). To be able to participate in this discourse a good command of language is of major importance. According to Kymlicka (2001) collective political deliberation requires mutual understanding and trust. In order to achieve this, necessity of some underlying commonalities are required. In a democracy some of these commonalities should be mutual understanding of every citizen being equal, a respectful environment appreciating diversity as enrichment and a correction to the public conscience. Thus, both respect for different languages and the competence in the official language(s) are necessary.

In Europe both immigrants and indigenous groups, i.e. linguistic minorities, can experience problems participating in the discourse if they are not properly trained in the official language. Speakers of official African languages in South Africa do not have equal opportunity to participate in their own language as speakers of English and Afrikaans, even though they

outnumber them. This illustrates that the one who "owns" the language of public discourse can also to some extent determine the content of the hegemonic message going out to the public (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Since power in the deliberative democracy is in the access to the ongoing discourse, differences of power between groups are reflected in their differential access to public discourse (van Dijk, 1993). The access to and control over the elite discourse often belongs to the 'A-team' - the elite in a country (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). It also makes it questionable whether the majority of South Africans enjoy freedom of expression when they do not possess linguistic skills in which to exercise this right (Prah, 2001).

In a deliberative democracy the educational system, where you educate democratic citizens, becomes extremely important. In this system it is urgent to look at what kind of linguistic competence is encouraged. The necessity of a highly developed mother tongue for development in an additional language is previously highlighted in this essay. This must be taken seriously in a deliberative democracy by the educational sector, otherwise the reproduction of power structures in the wider society will occur and the education of another 'B-team' is the result (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). A deliberative democracy needs an active opposition as a prerequisite to function within democratic values. The educational sector has the capability to educate competent, active and participant citizens, hence educating towards deliberative democracy (Davies, 2004). This is yet another argument of why the educational system is of the utmost importance in a democratic society.

2.5 To sum up…

In this chapter, language issues in education are explained in addition to globalization which is a frequently used concept defined differently, but I am emphasizing cultural and political dimensions in this study. This leads to different global trends which influence a number of linguistic issues; national systems of education reach out to an increasing larger segment of the population, yet decentralization of decisions within the educational sector is a common policy. English is a language which has gained currency globally – and to some extent replacing mother tongue instruction in many countries. Democracy and human rights are values that could be labelled global trends since we experience "a wind of" democratization in forms of government world wide and basic rights often acknowledged as fundamental.

I have tried to establish some aspects of the relationship between democracy and multilingualism in this chapter. Being monolingual, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (1988), restrains the individual to a limited societal context. In a democracy, which requires participation, this is not a favourable situation. Multilingualism broadens the repertoire for interaction and promotes mutual respect, tolerance and equality, which are democratic values as well. Thus, individual rights have an improved status within democracy than in any other form of government. Multiple identities are also possible and by allowing diversity, the democratic country can provide citizens with different identities still feeling an allegiance to a common nation-state.

The educational system holds an important position within a democracy, both as a role model and taking care of individual needs. Citizens can be educated in democratic values like respect and tolerance when multilingualism is not seen as a problem but as recourse. Tolerance of linguistic diversity within the classroom can be used as a litmus test of our democratic values. It is important to be aware of the power structures manifested in the classroom because they reflect the relations in the wider society. Collaborative relations of power enable the students to become self-confident participants in the society, hopefully in a way that they also can have a voice in the public discourse.

> [T]heory only becomes worthwhile when it is used to explain something ...Without theory, research is impossibly narrow. Without research, theory is mere armchair contemplation. (Silverman, 2001:294)

The intention of this study is to use the outlined theoretical framework above to understand data collected. In addition, this framework has guided the collection itself. I will try to avoid the pitfall of 'armchair contemplation' and create a discussion between this theoretical framework and research conducted. But first of all it is important to explain the methodological thinking behind this investigation; therefore we now turn to this issue.

3 Research methodology

> Qualitative data, with their emphasis on people's 'lived experiences', are fundamentally well suited for locating the *meanings* people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives: their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions and for connecting these meanings to the *social world* around them. (Miles and Huberman, 1994:10)

The starting point in this study is the research questions presented in Chapter 1 which partly set the conditions on the fruitfulness of different methods. As noted in Miles and Huberman's quote (1994), qualitative methods are particularly suited to get an insight into peoples' world view. As a result this study makes use of qualitative research methods, which will be discussed in this chapter. The data in this study are not intended to test any theories, but rather to be used in a discussion between different theories and the data itself. Data collected will, in addition, be used to illuminate the connection between the research questions and the experienced world of the participants in this study by giving them a voice.

In qualitative research the instrument itself is the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1998). This could lead to a question whether this kind of work really fulfils the criteria of being scientific since it is merely impossible for a human being (the researcher) to be objective, thus making it difficult to be a non-biased instrument in the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985:331) however, argue that "it is dubious whether "perfect" criteria will ever emerge; until then, humility in asserting that a "new and truer (more natural?) path to knowledge" has been found will be wise." On this backdrop it is necessary to constantly be aware of the researcher's role in influencing the outcome of the research and especially assess my role as an "outsider".

3.1 The researcher as an "outsider"

There are different levels or ways of being an "outsider" when conducting research; one is the researcher as a foreigner in the country or society in question, another is the researcher as such being an unusual element in the every day life of the people involved in the study. Looking at the first way of being an "outsider", several questions can be asked in regard to the researcher conducting research in a foreign country or society. How "foreign" am I to the society in question? Is it necessary to spend a long time with the people in the societal context

I am suppose to study in order to get authentic data or do I have to be an "insider" or "native" in order to accomplish that? On the other hand, maybe I am more objective as an "outsider" looking at the society with a bird's-eye view? The other way of being an outsider is by simply being a researcher in an every day life situation. Thus, creating questions like; how much do I influence the behaviour of the people I involve in this study? Does my presence make the data less scientific?

Being a researcher in a foreign culture does not necessarily make my observations less authentic. Obviously I was assessed as a foreigner since I am from another country[3]. On the other hand, I speak a language that most of the people I met could, in varying degrees, communicate in. In addition, South Africa is a multicultural country trying to establish itself as a "Rainbow Nation". Thus the colour of my skin and language I speak (English) is not "foreign" to the present situation. My cultural background is, of course, different from the context of the study and that could influence the data obtained since my own culture is a part of my pre-understanding. Yet is it possible to have freedom from biases at all? Kirin Narayan (1993) experienced how difficult it can be to obtain data despite being an "insider" in a culture. She points to other factors than just cultural identity as playing a part in the interaction between people arguing that "factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status" (Narayan, 1993:672). She suggests rather that researchers should be generous, which entails letting the people, that we focus our attention towards, know that they are subjects with voices, views and dilemmas which are reflected in our text. Thus people should *populate* our writings. This is something I will attempt to do in presenting my data in chapter four.

On the question of whether I, as an "outsider", am more objective, I would point to the fact that any social actor has the ability to get to know new cultures. A kind of professional distance is necessary in order to study the culture as an object (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1998). However, how objective is it possible to be? It is important to acknowledge that my personal background and my professional interest can be a limit to my purview and undermine my objectivity (Narayan, 1993). On the other hand, knowledge about society is

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[3] Since I am from Norway by no doubt I would be foreign to the South Africans. My experience is that when they meet new people, they would ask "What is your name?" and then "Where are you from?" Thus my national identity is revealed.

subjectively based and created in an interaction between different social actors, hence creating *inter*subjective knowledge. This requires both a theoretical understanding of the content matter investigated from the side of the researcher *and* letting the people in the study speak. In the end the goal is not to be merely objective, but to try to create knowledge about society together with other people. In addition, it is possible to ask whether qualitative researchers strive for objectivity at all. Interpretation of data in this study is *my* interpretation and only *one* possible understanding of 'reality', thus underlining the importance of providing enough data for people to make their own interpretations or judgements.

A researcher will always be an "outsider" or an "alien substance" in an every day life situation. Her/his presence will, in one way or the other, influence the people s/he is studying. Is this possible to eliminate? One possibility when conducting observations is to conduct them for a longer period of time. This can, in many cases, reduce the "outsider" role of the researcher on the societal context, because people may tend to assess the researcher as more of an "insider" after a certain period of time. This is, however, time consuming and a "luxury" few researchers really experience. Is it really necessary eliminating the influence of the researcher in order for a study to be called 'scientific'? No, I don't think so, but it is important to try to understand _how_ we influence the context we are in and take that into consideration when analysing data and discussing findings. According to Silverman (2001), no research is "uncontaminated" or value-free. Every human being is a constructor of social reality, and everyone is interpreting the reality and acting accordingly (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1998). Knowledge in social science is not something "pure" in the sense "the one and only truth". Knowledge is situated, negotiated, and a part of an ongoing process (Narayan, 1993).

Thus, I go to the work convinced that my research and my perspectives can be a part of the knowledge creation as good as any. Being an "outsider" is not necessarily a drawback, it can be turned into an advantage as well. How, then, did I go about trying to reach some answers to my research questions?

3.2 Design

Bryman (2004:27) defines a research design as a "structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data." In other words, it is a framework

for the collection and analysis of data. This is necessary in order to produce systematized knowledge which is the content of science (Kvale, 1996).

The main objective of this study is to investigate how global trends and democracy are affecting language issues in education and this question guides my use of methods (Silverman, 2001). My interest is to study the social and cultural context in depth and detail (Patton, 1990); therefore, a qualitative approach has been chosen. In addition I chose the form of a case study, which is an intensive and detailed examination of a setting or case (Bryman, 2004). Furthermore, South Africa gives a suitable context for my research questions to be answered which makes this case an exemplifying one.

Originally the design consisted of methods like non-participant observations in classrooms, semi-structured interviews with teachers, local officials, and parents as my main informants, evaluation of test results of the pupils taken previously in the project, policy document analysis and a literature review. The emphasis on semi-structured interviews in this investigation came into existence because this method is appropriate for studying peoples' own understanding of the meanings in their lived world (Kvale, 1996). A literature review is always important in order to gain knowledge of a society and understanding of the questions you are about to study. This also gives a theoretical perspective necessary to be able to make a discussion between theory and data. Policy documents are informers of certain trends in society, intentions of politicians, establishment of democratic thinking and so on. All these elements are important to put together, like pieces in a puzzle, to get the wider picture and the value of the different elements in relation to each other.

Along the way, the design changed somewhat. New strategies were added, like following the news on television and debates in a couple of English newspapers. This was important due to the questions related to democracy. The use of visual data by video recording sessions in classrooms were used to ascertain whether there was a difference between what was actually said about the interaction in classrooms and how people acted in that context. Silverman (2001) uses the theories by Saussure to make a distinction between *language* and *speech*. "The latter are not determined by language, which only provides the system of elements in terms of which speech occurs" (Silverman, 2001:198). Possible divergence disclosed by video recording would be important data to collect in this study. My sample was also expanded during the process. I included two more schools in my observation and I interviewed more

people than I anticipated due to access, necessity and curiosity. Interviews with the parents changed into focus group discussions instead of one-on-one interviews due to practical considerations. Access to test results of the pupils taken previously in the project became very difficult because of limited access to people working within the project, and consequently excluded from my data collection. The change in sample is discussed in the section "Sample".

All in all I evaluate the design appropriate to the research questions. The methods are not exhaustive but they are complementary because the interest is not with the individual elements but with their relations (Silverman, 2001). The data collection became less in depth than planned due to circumstances outside my control. On the other hand, the data was collected from a wider audience than anticipated. The latter making the study more comparative since I received the opportunity to visit more schools than the original design. Thus it can be argued that "one of the strengths of qualitative research design is that it often allows for far greater flexibility than in most quantitative research designs" (Silverman, 2001:253). This brings us into the actual process of field work.

3.3 The process of field work

> Qualitative inquiry designs cannot be completely specified in advance of fieldwork …
> A qualitative design unfolds as fieldwork unfolds. (Patton, 1990:61)

Unlike research in a laboratory, field work is about dealing with people and society. The result is often many uncontrollable factors that may influence the research. Unforeseen incidents like a driver showing up late, a national strike among teachers, interviewees not keeping appointments can all happen in the process of field work. This makes it necessary for the researcher to improvise and be flexible and this is one of the strengths of a qualitative approach. Even though the design is meant to be a structure to guide the methods used, Bryman (2004:324) is also aware of "alternative avenues of enquiry that might arise" during the process of field work. This does not necessarily lead to "bad", superficial or unscientific data, on the contrary, it can strengthen the research. In social science research, knowledge of the societal context is of importance in order to secure against wrong generalizations on attitudes and behaviour. People are always acting within a certain social context which guides their behaviour (Goffman, 1992). How is it possible to identify this context? One possibility is to grasp every chance to speak to as many people as you meet in the process. As a result it

may be possible to gather nuanced information of the impression people are seeking to give, hence the flexibility of field work provides innumerable opportunities.

My study took place in Cape Town, one of South Africa's largest cities with a population of approximately 4.5 million (Republic of South Africa, 2004). Coming from the largest city in Norway with less than 500 000 inhabitants, yet an extensive public transport system, I was not prepared for the transport challenges that met me in Cape Town. Since I do not drive, I was totally dependent on transport by others. High crime rates and poor safety were used by others as arguments for me to not use the local mini-busses. The University of the Western Cape organized for my transport back and forth from campus every weekday, but when I was supposed to enter the townships to do observations within the classrooms or other activities, the driver was reluctant to take me into the townships. This minimized my access to both the parents and the teachers since it became difficult to enter the community. Interviews with teachers became more like informal conversations as opposed to semi-structured interviews due to time constraints. In addition I was able to send some questions to a teacher in school B by regular mail that he then responded to. Due to difficult living conditions, the parents had to be invited to the school in order to interview them. Thus I had to change the planned one-on-one interviews into focus group discussions and since I needed an interpreter in some of the situations with the parents, time was limited. Despite these obstacles, I believe I was able to obtain relevant and sufficient data.

The process of field work can also have a "snowball" effect on the sample (Bryman, 2004; Patton, 1990). People you meet along the way can point you to other people that could be helpful in the research. Since I was at the university every day, some of the staff knew what I was studying and they were able to provide me with other contacts, which led to new sources of information.

3.4 Sample

When conducting social science research, the sample often consists of people. If the purpose of a study is to be able to generalize the conclusions to a larger population, this sets certain premises for the sampling. Different types of research can have different desired generalizations (Hoyle et al., 2002). "Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on

selectively small samples … selected *purposefully*" (Patton, 1990:169 – emphasis in original). This research aims at drawing conclusions about a specific target population, Xhosa-speaking South Africans in the area of the Western Cape, as an example in order to examine attitudes or patterns of behaviour regarding language issues in education and how they are influenced by certain external forces. The motive behind this purposeful sampling is to provide an information-rich case in order to learn a great deal about the issue at hand (Patton, 1990; Hoyle et al., 2002; Bryman, 2004). How was the sample selected?

Since this research took place within an existing project, the schools in which to observe the pupils, interview parents and teachers were not chosen randomly, but were already part of the ongoing project. Even the specific classes in which to observe was determined since the project was being conducted in Grade 5 within schools A and B and included both experimental and control classes. The parents participating in the focus groups were mostly chosen and contacted by the interpreter[4]. Silverman (2001) argues that there is a possibility of reading about other studies, comparing your own findings to them and then discuss generalizability. This study was within an ongoing project, thus giving me an opportunity to read about previous findings in addition to read about other relevant studies in general (Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003, 2004). Thus, as mentioned already, purposeful sampling was used in my research.

The sample can be chosen on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions. In this case the purposive sample included interviews, discussions and informal talks with government officials, official organizations like the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and other people working with human rights, a Xhosa newspaper journalist and some student teachers, to mention a few. Moreover, I took the initiative to visit two other schools in addition to those within the LOISA project. Several questions occurred in my mind during observations and talks at schools A and B, thus I took the initiative to visit schools C and D, which were outside of the LOISA project. School C was chosen due to its proximity, belonging to another socio-economic group than schools A and B, and the language of instruction being both English and Afrikaans. School D was chosen according to some of the

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[4] The interpreter, Vuyokazi Nomlomo, is a PhD student within the LOISA project and a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. Her doctoral research focuses on the use of Xhosa as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Western Cape. Her mother tongue is Xhosa.

same criteria. This gave me the opportunity to gain a broader perspective of differences between schools in relation to factors like socio-economic status of parents, size of classes, recourses available, language policy and so on. A short contextualization of the schools is necessary.

School A is situated in a large township. The pupils constitute a homogenous group in the sense that they are all Xhosa speakers, they experience difficult living conditions and poverty. According to the principal, 75% of the children are foster children because the parents are dead due to HIV/AIDS or other reasons. They often live within the extended family, e.g. with aunts, uncles or grandparents. Foster children are not obliged to pay any schools fees, hence minimizing the resources of this school. A high unemployment rate and high crime are some of the hallmarks of this area. Most of the teachers are Xhosa mother tongue speakers. Since the start of the project two years ago, the school has had several principals and the present principal had only been in his position for a month when I conducted my research. His current focus was mostly on every day routines like teachers being punctual and pupils not being outside of their classrooms whenever there was a session going on. The language of instruction is Xhosa from Grade 1 with a transition to English from Grade 4 onwards.

School B is located in another township not far away from school A and with much of a similar context. The school building is made of concrete and the classrooms are equipped with a black board, scientific posters on the walls and textbooks, as in school A. Both pupils and teachers are Xhosa mother tongue speakers and this is the language of instruction until Grade 4 when there is a transition to English. Some of the children seem over-aged for their grade. Posters with arguments of protecting against HIV/AIDS and reducing intimate relationships are visible several places in the school.

School C is located in a predominantly white affluent suburb, which used to be mainly Afrikaans speaking. The school fees at this school are very high, which allows the school to hire additional teachers to keep the teacher-pupil ratio down. According to the teacher I interviewed, all the teachers at this school are bilingual in English and Afrikaans. The school is a parallel medium school, i.e. they have classes using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and classes using English as a medium. A second language is taught from Grade 1, Afrikaans or English respectively. In addition, they teach the children some Xhosa from Grade 4 by

sharing a Xhosa-speaking teacher with two other schools in the vicinity. Parents choose the language of instruction for their child by sending them to the English or the Afrikaans class, but the deputy principal advises the parents to send their children to a class, which has their mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The school is heterogeneous in the sense that the pupils are black, colored, Indians and white. On the other hand, the vast majority of pupils are from the local community, living in houses or villas often with servants or housemaids, hence from the upper socio-economic classes in society.

School D is the largest school in this study and it is located in a township or suburb which consists of what the principal calls a 'working class', neither rich nor poor, but most of the parents have employment. The living conditions are generally better here than in the environment of schools A and B, but not comparable to the community in which school C is situated. Like school C, this is a parallel medium school with one class in each grade level taught in Afrikaans and the rest in English. In addition, the principal is very eager in advising the parents to send their children to a class conducted in their mother tongue, but often the parents choose English rather than Afrikaans as a medium. The mother tongue of the pupils is in general English or Afrikaans. Observing a session in a Grade 5 class, I thought maybe the children had another mother tongue than English due to their accent, but the teacher referred to this as a "Capetonian" dialect of English and somewhat different from, for example, English spoken around Durban which is more influenced by Indian languages. Like in school C the pupils are taught Afrikaans or English and Xhosa as additional languages, with less emphasis on the latter.

Table 3.1 – *number of learners (pupils) and educators (teachers) in the schools, distributed on gender and in total:*

	LEARNERS			EDUCATORS		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
School A	424	369	793	3	17	20
School B	465	414	879	5	18	23
School C	463	417	880	7	27	34
School D	615	589	1 204	5	25	30

Table 3.2 *– Teacher-learner ratio in the schools:*

	Teacher-learner ratio
School A	1 : 39,7
School B	1 : 38,2
School C	1 : 25,9
School D	1 : 40,1

Source: Western Cape Provincial Government, 2005 (personal communication)

All in all I conducted three recorded interviews with principals in schools A, B and D, one with a deputy principal in a school outside any of the schools in my sample in addition to one unrecorded with the deputy principal in school C, observations of ten sessions in classrooms divided between four different schools, informal discussions with the Pan South African Language Board, people involved in human rights issues, language issues and people from the provincial department of education and several teachers. The study also consists of recorded interviews with a language activist, a student-teacher, and Dr. Kathleen Heugh at PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) as well as two recorded focus group discussions with parents. Some of the interviews are not recorded because I was not prepared to conduct an interview and did not have the recorder with me. For example in the case of school C, I just wanted to thank the deputy principal for allowing me to visit the school and he only had a couple of minutes, hence I did not bring the recorder. This turned out to be half an hour interview and I had to take detailed notes instead. Then I realized the necessity in always bringing the recorder – just in case.

Hoyle et al. (2002) consider other ways of sampling than previously described. Accidental sampling takes place when the researcher takes the cases at hand. Hammersley and Atkinson (1998) talk about the factor of availability as one of importance to social science research. The researcher can be pragmatic when it comes to access to information, economical and other considerations and so on. One of the staff at the University of the Western Cape was helpful providing interviewees. She was in daily contact with several of the students at the faculty and asked me questions like: "Do you want to interview a student teacher who is also a mother with children in a school in suburb B? She is here right now!" I grasped several of these occasions and they proved very helpful in the research. This provided a "snowball" or chain effect on my sample which then came to include interviews with student teachers in addition to a mother living in a township who sent one of her children to a private school, while the other two children went to a public school close by. In addition, possibilities to

interview a deputy principal/teacher outside any of the schools in the sample, a researcher working with language issues in education and a linguistic activist occurred during the research contributed "accidentally" to an extension of the initial sample.

Is this sample large enough? According to Bryman (2004), the size of the sample necessary to support convincing conclusions will vary from situation to situation. Since this is a qualitative study with an exemplifying case, the intention is not to generalize the findings to a population beyond the case. A case study, like this one, can provide a suitable context for answering certain research questions, and from my perspective, the sample of this study is large enough to answer the research questions at hand.

3.5 Qualitative Research Interviews

According to Kvale (1996:30) the purpose of the qualitative research interview "is to obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the described phenomena." This is concurrent with Patton's more elaborated description:

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid, or meaningful than self-report data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions… The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that that perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. (Patton, 1990:278)

This qualitative research method is a way of letting the people in the study discuss with the researcher how they create and assess their social reality (Patton, 1990; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1998). In addition, this is done *together* with the researcher, who is guiding the interview, thus being a method of intersubjective interaction (Kvale, 1996).

In this investigation the choice was made to use semi-structured interviews with interview guides which made it easier to focus on the theme. This is concurrent with Kvale's (1996) definition of an interview as a conversation with a structure and purpose. An interview guide is made before the actual interview and contains a set of issues to be explored during the interview (Patton, 1990). The use of interview guides make the interviews flexible since they

merely serve as a basic checklist during the interview, that is, to make sure that all topics are covered and allow the interviewees to "run the show" using their own categories. My aim as a researcher was to focus on *their* interests and perceptions of the wider topics I brought to the table (Bryman, 2004).

Most of the interviews were recorded. This allowed me the opportunity to focus on what was being said and to follow up with questions and not be distracted by getting down accurate notes (Bryman, 2004). After every interview I also made notes to complement the actual recording in addition to reflecting on the data obtained (Patton, 1990). All the interviewees gave their consent to being recorded in advance and were ensured anonymity.

3.6 Focus group discussions

A definition of focus group discussions could be group interviews with several participants, with an emphasis in the questioning on a particular defined topic, and interaction within the group (Bryman, 2004). The purpose is to select participants that "have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group" (Krueger and Casey, 2000:4). In this study the two focus groups consisted of parents (or grandparents) of children in Grade 5 in schools A and B. As opposed to interviews, the focus groups allow for interaction among the participants who can share ideas, perceptions, and comment on each other. The interviewer herself/himself is able to remain more in the background, thus the discussion is more focused on the other participants.

To create a relaxed and comfortable environment is important in order to achieve the intention of a focus group discussion. By showing the participants your gratitude for taking time to do this, both telling them verbally and giving them a snack, the preferred atmosphere can be created. In a permissive and non-judgmental environment, it is possible to promote self-disclosure and the participants can say what they really think and feel about the subject (Krueger and Casey, 2000). The presence of the interviewer can be a factor preventing the intention of a focus group since the interviewer is a stranger. On the other hand, the interviewees also knew that in this case they would most likely never see me again, making it easier for them to open up. The parents present were also in the majority and could feel assured of getting support of the other participants if necessary.

Why did I choose to use the method of focus group discussions in this study? Access to the parents appeared difficult due to difficult living conditions, many of whom lived in shacks or informal settlements with poor lightning or no electricity or running water. When not being able to interview them at home, the solution was to invite them to the school, which was in close proximity for all the parents. Due to time constraints and access to schools A and B, it was only possible to conduct one focus group in each school. Professional considerations too indicated focus groups as an alternative to one-on-one interviews since they can produce believable results at a reasonable cost in addition to create a sense of safety for the parents (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

Bryman (2004) advises over-recruiting for the focus groups when the possibility of not showing up is high. This proved helpful in my case. The pupils were told to announce the time and place for the focus group at home, but due to a national teachers strike, uncertainty occurred and not as many as anticipated showed up. Another consideration to make is the possibility of some participants having little to say even though the topic was very relevant to them. In total three participants were present in one group and seven in the other. Some showed up at the announced time and some entered during the discussion. The mother tongue of all the participants was Xhosa with different proficiency in English. Due to this language problem, the second focus group discussion was conducted with an interpreter present. The English proficiency of the participants' in first focus group discussion, however, was regarded sufficient to conduct the session without an interpreter. Was there any difference between the two sessions? My impression was that the latter session allowed the interviewees to express themselves with longer and more nuanced sentences, creating a more dynamic discussion. The problem is that maybe some of this was lost in the translation. With the first group, conducted in English, I had more control and understood everything the participants were discussing. I could also rephrase my questions when I got the impression that they did not understand my questions.

The method of using focus group discussions consists partially of limitations as well. For example, there is less control by the interviewer, the data can be difficult to analyze due to a vast amount, and difficulties organizing a time that fits for everyone. In addition, there is a group effect to take into consideration thus making the participants expressing culturally expected views instead of their own opinion (Krueger and Casey, 2000). On the other hand,

group effects are something that occurs in the real world as well since a social actor does not exists in a vacuum, but together with other people in society and thus the respondents were able to discuss and debate the issues and, in some instances, even challenge one another.

3.7 Observations

Observations are a method where the researcher looks, listens and records the interaction in a particular setting (Silverman, 2001). Participant observations are often used by social research scientists. Many are familiar with the anthropologist staying for a long period of time in a certain community, taking part in the every day life and in that way observing social interaction. An educator could also be a participant observer when teaching classes which are part of the sample within a study. This could even happen without the pupils knowing they were observed. I was not able to conduct participant observation in this sense since much of the interaction within the classroom was in isiXhosa, a language I have no knowledge of. Hence my observations were more of a "passive" kind, though open in the sense that both the teachers and the pupils knew that I was a researcher. Since my role in the classroom was clarified from the outset, I could discuss some of the interaction with the teacher afterwards in addition to asking questions to pupils whenever appropriate (Brock-Utne, 1981). In all the classes I presented myself before the session and told them the reason for my presence and what I was going to do.

Moreover, it is believed that all social research is a form of participant observation since the researcher also is a part of the social world being studied (Silverman, 2001). In all, I was present in ten sessions; two in school A, five in school B, two in school C and one in school D. In schools A and B I was never the only observer. Since these two schools participate in the LOISA project, a Ph.D. student was conducting her observations in all the classes I attended. In addition, the project manager for the LOISA project was present in two sessions and the project manager for the LOITASA project (both South Africa and Tanzania) conducted observations in five of the sessions. In schools C and D I was conducting observations alone. The observations provided me with data like size of the classes, conditions in the classroom, pedagogical materials available, pedagogical methods used by the teachers, interaction in what language and so on. This was invaluable information in getting the wider picture necessary for this research.

It is always important to be aware of how the presence of the researcher influences the interaction in a social setting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1998). How did my presence influence the interaction in the classroom? The classes in schools A and B are accustom to having observers and "strangers" in their classrooms since they are part of the LOISA project, either as an experimental or control class. Since the beginning of the project, they have had several observers present now and then. This leads me to assess my presence as having minimal influence; they saw me as "yet another one". On the other hand, it was obvious that one of the teachers was prepared for our presence in one of the sessions. Everything was in English (as it was supposed to be in this session, but this is not usual in this school), but all the exercises were done previously and the pupils were familiar with the material. Thus both students and the teacher had made preparations for our benefit. Goffman (1992) explains actions like this as control of the impression one is exercising on others. The actions are controlled in order to sustain ones self image by hoping to control the social image received by the observer. In this session, the students most fluent in English were picked to do the reading and assignments. How credible or useful is the observation then? If this was the only session I was present, my impression would have been quite different from what I am left with after several observed sessions. This particular experience gave me the opportunity to compare what was happening in the other sessions where the teachers often were not prepared for my presence which gave me interesting observations. Moreover, these were probably more truthful and accurate classroom sessions as compared to the prepared lesson described above.

Notes were taken during all the sessions in addition to some notes afterwards. In schools A and B three of the sessions were also video recorded for the purpose of analysis later on. The value of this is discussed previously in section *3.2 Design*.

3.8 Literature review

In qualitative research, textual data are also of importance (Silverman, 2001). Like interview responses, there is a trap of treating textual data as true or false descriptions of reality. That is why it is important to remember that documents are always written for an audience (Hammersley and Atkinson 1998). For example, the language policy document for primary

schools of the Western Cape (Western Cape Education Department, 2002) could be written both as an "assignment" for the National Department, as guide lines to the schools in the province, and maybe as an expression of political correctness. The official documents are not necessarily representative of reality and they maybe merely describing the intentions or goals of the official institutions. All of these factors need to be taken into consideration when reading documents. Criteria like authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning must guide the assessment of the documents (Bryman, 2004).

Another question important to ask is whether the sources are biased. An appropriate example could be the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). According to other people I talked to working with human rights, SAHRC could be much more critical towards the issues they are set to supervise. To their knowledge it seemed like SAHRC wanted to present a nice picture of the human rights situation in South Africa instead of being a critical actor towards the government. This shows how important it is to both use textual data, in this case SAHRC's own documents and protocols, in addition to discuss this with both employees at SAHRC and other people working within the field. This gives a complementary perspective of the data present and this can be seen as data triangulation in which I used a variety of data sources (Patton, 1990). As a result this type of triangulation, according to Patton (1990), helps to increase the credibility and validity of the findings. The researcher herself/himself could also be biased when reading different literature on the subject under investigation. Literature within the field of this study was somewhat limited when it comes to literature published on the African continent and written by African authors before I left for the field. Hence I saw the need for access to the library at the University of the Western Cape important in order to read up on the continent's "own" scientific literature relevant to this study.

3.9 Other methods

Naturally occurring data, like discussions with drivers, administrative staff at the university and ordinary South African citizens, can prove valuable to a research (Silverman, 2001). In this study these data provided some fundamental understanding of the South African society. Public discourse is also interesting when studying the democratic processes. A discourse is a "particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Phillips and Jørgensen, 2002:1). Public discourse occurs mostly in the media. Even though

this was limited to television news and a couple of English newspapers, they gave me an insight into things happening in society and the themes on the public agenda. One example is the huge interest I experienced in the release of the annual report on crime. This issue was given a lot of time on television news and many columns and articles written in the newspapers, this topic was also debated among everyone I met. Even though the report showed that the crime rate was reduced, in many cases, this was not a subject in the discussions. Rather the crime as something symptomatic with the South African society was on the agenda. This concurs with Phillips and Jørgensen's (2002:5) description of discourse as "a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations – and thereby in maintaining specific social patterns."

Another method I frequently used was making notes from talks I had in addition to a field diary every day (Bryman, 2004). This was helpful when analyzing data later on. All in all, there is a lot of data gathered, but in order to use these to produce systematic knowledge, we have to ask questions whether these data are trustworthy and reliable. I will now turn to this matter.

3.10 Validity or 'Trustworthiness'

> How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290)

These questions are about the quality of a study. Instead of 'validity' it is possible to use a concept like 'trustworthiness' because validity is about truth. Is a statement true? Do I believe a statement to be true when it is not (type 1 error) or do I reject a statement which, in fact, is true (type 2 error) (Silverman, 2001)? Triangulation can reduce the possibility of committing such errors and then increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Thus, use of several sources as previously mentioned, such as interviews, focus group discussions, observations, literature review and analysis of policy documents, is part of this study. The trustworthiness is enhanced as well if you take your findings, e.g. transcript of an interview, back to the respondent who verifies it. I have sent transcriptions of interviews to three principals and asked them to comment and give

corrections, but failed to receive any answers. Thus my belief is that by not responding they have agreed to my transcriptions and have no comments or corrections to add.

Since the social world is a social construction, the existence of the "one and only truth" is impossible to find since we construct and organize our perception of our surroundings differently (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This could make it difficult to investigate what is intended to be investigated because all the participants have different perceptions of the concepts in the study (Hoyle et al., 2002). One of the underlying constructs in this study is 'democracy' and 'democratization processes'. How is it possible to measure the influence of this on language issues in education? A necessary action for the researcher is to operationalize underlying constructs like this and, as it is possible to read out of my theoretical framework, I have done that from my perspectives. Another researcher might have done this differently without one of us being wrong and the other right. The questions I have asked in the process of this study are my way of conceptualizing the underlying theoretical constructs on an empirical level. Other ways are, of course, possible and desirable (Hoyle et al., 2002).

A concept often discussed in scientific studies is external validity, or the generalizability of the study. In other words, are the conclusions of the study possible to generalize into a larger part of society (Hoyle et al., 2002)? How applicable are the results to other samples? Social science research is about people and society. How, then, is it possible for the data collected to be time and context free? This makes me wonder maybe to move from a question of generalizability to a question of transferability, i.e. how trustworthy are the data in order to transfer the conclusions drawn from the study to other contexts. Another context may not be investigated by the original researcher, thus making it impossible to know the sites to which transferability might be sought. Lincoln and Guba give the following advice:

> The best advice to give to anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate *empirical* evidence about contextual similarity; the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:295)

This makes my task two-sided; one is to make as nuanced and detailed description as possible in order for me to draw some conclusions in the end and make it possible for others later on to transfer this knowledge to another context than the one I am "sending" from (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The other task is to use available studies and literature with transferability into this context when analysing and drawing conclusions. In order to establish trustworthiness it

is important to demonstrate dependability or reliability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Hence, I am now turning to this concept.

3.11 Reliability

Unless the methods used in a study are reliable, it is difficult to convince the audience that the conclusions are valid (Silverman, 2001). In other words, demonstrating reliability is a precondition to be able to establish trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). How could this be achieved?

Questions to be asked in order to assess the reliability of a study are: How consistent are the results? Is it possible for another researcher to use the same categories? Re-testing and replicability is a traditional way of establishing reliability, i.e. another researcher should be able to draw similar conclusions by using the same material and data (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Problems occur because we are human beings with a tendency to assess the world from a particular point of view. What we notice and attend to in the field is influenced by our own pre-understanding. Krueger and Casey (2000) warn researchers of the trap of selective perception. Lincoln and Guba (1985:299) emphasise that replicability only can be determined within a given framework "and that framework is itself a construction, not an inevitable and unchanging part of "reality"". A social context can never be "frozen" in the sense that it is possible to re-test later on.

One possibility to increase reliability, though, is to include more than one researcher in the investigation. Doing the observations in this study, I often had another researcher in the classroom. Despite this, it was difficult to compare or re-test our findings since we were "looking" for different things. One researcher was occupied with how they taught science in both the experimental classes and control groups; another was more like a "controller" of the whole project as such. My focus was the observable interaction in the classrooms. Furthermore, none of these other researchers accompanied me to schools C and D because those schools were outside the project, but very relevant to my research questions. On the other hand, I have used several different sources and kept a diary in order to be able to track my daily experiences and decisions in the process in addition to confirm my conclusions/analysis or for others to replicate later on. Recorded data gives the possibility of

returning to the "raw" material for later recall and comparison, thus increasing reliability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Another question to be asked could be for _whom_ are the data suppose to be credible or reliable. Is it other researchers or the commission reading a thesis written after a study? Lincoln and Guba (1985) point in another direction when emphasising the role of the respondents who have acted as data sources in a study. Constructions used in a study are provided by the respondents and in the end, it is _they_ who must find reconstructions credible. Obviously there are many different perspectives in this discussion and establishing trustworthiness with the consumer or reader is, in my view, necessary as well. In sum, it seems difficult to create reliability in a traditional sense when conducting social science research. The goal during this study was then to be aware of the debate surrounding this concept and keeping this in mind in the "reality" of the people presented here. All this brings us to the actual data gather through the methods now described and discussed.

4 Language issues in education influenced by Global Trends

This chapter intends to take a closer look at how different linguistic issues in the South African context are influenced by global trends previously described. Discussion and analysis of data are done together with the theoretical framework presented in chapter two. Thus, the outline in this chapter and the next follows the same outline as in chapter two.

According to Narayan (1993) narratives (associated with subjective knowledge) and analysis (associated with objective truths) is not necessarily dichotomies but contiguous paths to knowledge. In social science an objective truth is not necessarily the goal. By using all data available to conduct my analysis, the intention is to approach the topic from several perspectives (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1998). Therefore, a review of literature and data from, for example, the Pan South African language Board is intertwined with the voices of the people populating my text. Triangulation of data from several sources in this way can increase trustworthiness.

> A comparative approach would help us locate points of commonalities in education objectives, content, and practices between countries and to discover to what extent convergence emerges. (Stromquist, 2002: xxii)

Countries world-wide respond differently to global trends according to their specific context and historical background, as is the case with South Africa as well. However, the local responses to global trends are not only at a national level. In this investigation four schools were visited, which revealed differences also between these schools in their response to global trends. Schools A and B are situated in black townships with a homogenous group of pupils who are Xhosa mother tongue speakers, school C is in an affluent suburb with both black, colored, Indian and white pupils probably from a similar socio-economic background (upper middle-class), and school D has mostly colored and Indian pupils and is situated in a "working-class" area.

4.1 A national system of education influencing language in education

Almost every society provides for the education of its younger members to ensure continuity. According to Morrow and Torres (2000), earlier educational systems were mostly oriented towards production of a disciplined and reliable workforce. However, currently changes are occurring in the globalized world which requires workers with the capacity to learn quickly and to work in teams. Consequently the pupils' ability to *acquire* new knowledge becomes a more important quality than to memorize the *content* of knowledge itself, in other words the *process* of learning has become more significant than the *content* of learning. Hence high skills in reading and writing are important, which in turn requires a good command of the language(s) in question necessary. How is this catered for in the multilingual South African society?

"The role of language in education is crucial because it is the main means through which knowledge is conveyed and learning acquired" (Mda, 2000:156). Mda emphasizes the importance of considering linguistic issues in education. Whereas Chinapah et al. (2000) are even more specific when they label the concurrence of language of instruction and home language as a *critical factor*.

> A critical factor in the progress of learners is the degree to which the *home language* is the same as the language of instruction at school. In instances where the home language is the same as the language of instruction, learning is reinforced directly. The learner can freely communicate what she/he has learnt at school in the home environment and her/his learning is more likely to be directly reinforced through interaction with all members of the family. (Chinapah et al., 2000:32)

On this backdrop it is interesting to have a look at the language policy in the South African educational sector.

On July 14, 1997, the Minister of Education formally announced the new Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997). One of the main views expressed in this policy is that "… being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African" (ibid: 1). The Department's approach to this goal is along the path of additive bilingualism, i.e. maintaining the mother tongue while learning an additional language. From Grade 3 onwards all learners shall be offered an additional approved language as a subject.

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The aim of this policy is to promote bi- or multilingualism and to "redress the neglect of the historically disadvantaged languages in school education" (ibid: 2). Referring to the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a), this policy grants the right to choose the language of learning within the framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism. It is the provincial education department that has the duty to provide education in a particular language of learning and teaching if there are at least 40 learners in grades 1 to 6 or 35 in grades 7 to 12, requesting the language. With such a progressive linguistic policy, the gateway for mother tongue (as long as it is one of the eleven official languages) as the language of instruction seems open. Xhosa is the mother tongue of a large segment of the population in the Western Cape (23.7% according to "Census 2001", Statistics South Africa, 2003), and according to the Language in Education Policy should be used as language of teaching and learning.

The nature of language policy is manifested by the pedagogical approaches chosen. Schools A and B in this study are situated in a Xhosa speaking environment. Almost all the teachers and pupils speak Xhosa, as well as the parents. According to the policy of the Department of Education, these schools can and should use Xhosa as the language of teaching and learning. The reality, however, is different. Xhosa is the medium of instruction in Grade R to Grade 3, and then there is a transition to English from Grade 4 onwards. Later in this chapter I will return to reasons given for this practice in these schools. However, despite English officially being the language of instruction, the practice in Grade 5 varies[5]. A quote from my field notes during observations in a science class, which is supposed to be conducted in English, describes this paradox:

> The teacher does all the teaching in English at the start of the lesson, but eventually uses more and more Xhosa when the material is new to the children and she realises that they don't understand or in order to get through what she wants (or both). Questions are asked by the pupils in both Xhosa and English – they seem curious.
>
> $(O_7, 2004-09-14)$[6]

And other observations in the same class:

> The teacher starts the lesson (natural science) in Xhosa. Tasks on the board are written in English, some pupils must read them out-loud in English (not very fluently), while others answer in English. The rest of the interaction is in Xhosa. Sometimes the pupils answer in English but mostly in Xhosa. The teacher asks all the questions in Xhosa.
>
> $(O_4, 2004-09-07)$

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[5] This investigation was conducted in Grade 5 classes only.
[6] See Appendix for coding.

In school A I conducted observations in a class which was supposed to be conducted in English:

> I enter a math session. The headlines on the board are in English ("fractions", "exercise 1"); the remaining text is in Xhosa. All the interaction is in Xhosa, except for the counting which they do in English.
> The session switches to an English-lesson, but all the instructions are given in Xhosa. Comments are given from the teacher in both Xhosa and English. Question from the book are always translated into Xhosa. Answers are mostly given in Xhosa, but some in English. Even when the children answer in English, the teacher responds in Xhosa.
> $(O_1, 2004\text{-}09\text{-}08)$

This shows a practice in the classroom which is mixing both Xhosa and English. English is *not* used consistently as the language of instruction, although this is the policy of both schools according to the principals and teachers. Neither is Xhosa used as the one medium of instruction, with English separated as a subject, which is the aim of the Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997). My observations serve to confirm the statement of Kathleen Heugh:

> It is a serious mistake to believe that teaching and learning is taking place through English in township or rural schools where the majority of pupils are from African language speaking communities. (Heugh, 2000c:19)

In the light of this it seems like both the language policy of the individual school and Language in Education Policy from the Department of Education has failed. Heugh (2000c) emphasizes the necessity of educational planning being based on the reality of the classroom in order to be effective. The reality of the classroom is the teacher asking questions in Xhosa when she is supposed to conduct the teaching in English (O_4). The reality is a teacher teaching English as a subject *in Xhosa* (O_1). The reality is also both learners and teachers mixing Xhosa and English in the classroom interaction. What reasons are given for this discrepancy between policy and reality?

In an attempt to find some answers, I asked a teacher in school B "why English is (officially) used as a language of instruction instead of Xhosa". He responded as follows:

> It is the National Government's Policy in Education, that English is still accepted as a National medium of instruction.
> (Response to a short questionnaire, T_4, 2004-09-30)

This statement points in the direction of a misconception of the official policy or that the educators are not aware of the possibility of officially using Xhosa as a language of instruction all through primary school. The teacher adds to his statement by saying that the parents have no say in this matter since it is already decided by the government. This is not concurrent with the Language in Education Policy which states:

> The parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the minor learner. Learners, who come of age, are hereafter referred to as the learner, which concept will include also the parent in the case of minor learners. The learner must choose the language of teaching upon application for admission to a particular school. (Department of Education, 1997:3)

This discrepancy between the practice in classrooms and the language policy may be due to, for example, a misunderstanding on the side of the educators regarding language policy or that they are not aware of the language policy at all. Hence it is not possible for them to implement it. Despite any explanation to this phenomenon, this practice is detrimental to the learning process of the pupils when we know that even the teachers themselves sometimes struggle with English due to this not being their mother tongue (Alexander, 2000; Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). It is possible to imagine that the pupils only reach a certain level of English proficiency during their school years if their teachers' English skills are not of a high standard. A result of this is illustrated in an interview with a teacher in school A:

> *Q:* I observed that you used Xhosa as the language of instruction in your class although it is supposed to be English. Even when English was the subject, you used Xhosa. Can you elaborate on why you use such a practice?
> *T_2:* If I wouldn't have translated everything into Xhosa, none of the pupils could understand anything and the class would have been totally passive. Their English is so poor that I even teach English [as a subject] in Xhosa. This is done in all the classes at the school all through the Grade 7, despite English being the official language of instruction from Grade 4. When we give tests to the pupils, they are in English with a translation into Xhosa. The pupils do, however, manage to give the answers in English.
>
> (Interview, T_2, 2004-09-08)

For this teacher then the lack of English skills is given as another reason for the discrepancy between policy and practice.

In research looking at the languages issue in South Africa, Vivian de Klerk (2002) claims that the language policy is not in tune with the socio-economic environment of the learners:

> Whites do not bother about African languages because the language-in-education policy, and the poor resources and curriculum allow them (force them in fact) to ignore them; blacks are abandoning their languages because the language-in-education

policy gives them little alternative. The winner, by default, will be English. (de Klerk, 2002:26)

This statement points to the lack of recourses (for example text books) in African languages as one of the factors in determining why schools choose English as a medium of instruction instead of African languages – that is, they have no choice (see also Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). As commented in chapter two, supply of teaching materials in English is ample compared to material in African languages. However, the Revised Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education, 2002) gives a possibility to evade this problem. Teachers are granted the opportunity of making the teaching material themselves. A teacher/deputy principal (T_{11}) spoke warmly about this method with me and showed me a lot of examples of cartoons, pictures from magazines and so on which she uses a lot in her teaching. Another teacher (school C, T_7) told me that they don't use text books in this school, only materials that the teachers make themselves. They have created the modules in each subject by designing texts, questions, drawings, exercises and tests. These experiences make me, to some extent, disagree with de Klerk (2002) when she suggests that poor resources is a factor forcing schools to choose English as a language of instruction. On the contrary, with Curriculum 2005 the teachers are no longer heavily dependent on textbooks and they can make use of low cost resources to reach the set learning goals – even in Xhosa, if they wish. This is, however, much more of a challenge in the township schools since they rarely have access to resources such as a photocopier which makes it problematic to distribute teachers' own-made material amongst the pupils.

Nevertheless, data in this study suggests that part of the problem is not only lack of physical resources. It seems like teachers in schools A and B are less confident with the new teaching methods than the teachers in schools C and D. Observing several sessions in schools A and B I experienced a lot of choir reading, lecturing from the teacher and passive listening by the pupils, and extensive use of traditional text and work books. A teacher in school B spoke of what she experienced being better in the revised version of Curriculum 2005 than in the original one:

> The revised one is to be implemented within 2005 and is better because it doesn't expect teachers to make their own material. There are set standards for assessment and so on.
>
> (Interview, T_5, 2004-09-14)

The principal of the same schools stated in an interview that:

> The attitude of the teacher is to get everything ready. We are teachers that need everything already prepared. Now, very few teachers these days would come with their own drawing.
>
> <div align="right">(Interview, T₃, 2004-09-14)</div>

These statements suggest that educators in schools A and B are more dependent on materials already prepared while educators in other schools (T_7, T_{11}) find it professionally challenging to use self-made materials or materials from other sources than traditional text-books. But it is important to note in this regard that this situation is most likely related to the differences in the teachers' education. Education during the apartheid era resulted in white teachers receiving more formal education than the black teachers (Davenport and Saunders, 2000; Abdi, 2002; Kok and Iannici, 2003; Walker and Archung, 2003; see also section 1.3.1). Thus it is possible to draw the conclusion of a variation between the qualifications of the teachers in these four schools.

Both teachers I spoke with in schools C and D confirm that they use some of the pedagogic techniques opted for in Curriculum 2005 in addition to other methods they assess suitable for the pupils. During observations in these two schools I found no choir reading, but the tendency of interaction between teachers and pupils with discussions and questions/answers were high. An example from school C:

> The teacher introduces the new English module by handing out a sheet on the content and then reading what they are suppose to do in this subject in this term. The pupils are eager to do activities the teacher introduces and they are creative. One of the expected activities on this module is to write an advertisement of their own house. They were given pages from an Afrikaans newspaper with a lot of property advertisement in English. The teacher asks the children why the advertisements are in English when the newspaper is in Afrikaans, and then they discussed this.
>
> The teacher introduces the new Afrikaans module in the same way she did with the previous. She starts out in Afrikaans and uses a technique where she asks the children in Afrikaans if they know the English concept. The pupils are eager to answer.
>
> <div align="right">(O₈, 2004-09-17)</div>

According to the teacher, all the pupils in this class have English as their mother tongue, hence they do not find lack of language proficiency an obstacle to the interaction with the teacher. A high level of interaction between the teacher and pupils was also found in school D:

The children are fluent in English. When the teacher asks them to tell what they did during the holiday, they present long stories and elaborate a lot. After this presentation they work in groups using adjectives they wrote down yesterday to make sentences to describe their holiday. The pupils work well in groups and are both active and creative.

$(O_9, 2004-10-05)$

Both observations and interviews with educators in the schools suggest a significant difference. Teachers in school C and D seem highly confident and able to make critical judgements of methods to use, while teachers in schools A and B appear to be more insecure and keep to familiar/"traditional" pedagogical methods. An important factor to emphasize is that the language of instruction is no obstacle for interaction in schools C and D while it could be so in schools A and B. The pupils of schools C and D generally have their mother tongue as the medium of instruction or are highly proficient in it, along with being taught by highly proficient teachers. As opposed to the situation in schools A and B where the pupils are not taught in a language which is their mother tongue or a language they are proficient in. The teachers in schools A and B are neither often highly proficient nor confident in the medium of instruction.

Returning to the language policy, the teaching style and techniques are of importance in a classroom. The National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development (NCCRD) conducted research on language in the classroom and found that:

Proficiency in the language of learning and teaching is important, but co-exists and interrelates with other factors such as teaching style and the existence of learning support materials. (NCCRD, 2000: v)

The research was carried out in four provinces where African language speakers constitute between 73% and 92% of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2003), but the research does not tell whether the teachers interviewed were black, colored, Indian or white. However, findings suggested an inadequacy in teachers' proficiency and recommend general in-service training:

The issue of proficiency should be seen in its broadest sense. It goes beyond mere communicative competence in a specific language and includes the teacher's ability to create the right learning environment through the use of language. It is about commitment to change, effective teaching and learning styles and techniques, and most of all, it is about using language to create a love of learning. (NCCRD, 2000: viii)

Teachers in schools A and B appear to have less professional confidence and this could be one factor influencing the choice of English instead of Xhosa as the language of instruction (officially) in the sense that they opt for a "familiar" way of teaching and not challenging the existent ways of doing things. The discrepancy between policy and practice in the "Rainbow Nation" does not cater for the *process* of learning in which promotion of multilingualism is substantial.

Another factor influencing the language choice within the national education system could be the status English is given through the struggle for freedom and democracy. English is the language in which the liberation struggle took place and has also been the working language of the ANC (Nodoba, 2002; Sonntag, 2003). Tollefson (2002:5) suggests that "conflicts about language policy usually have their source in group conflicts in which language symbolizes some aspect of a struggle over political power and economic resources." English seems to be the language which carries "the imagined capital of liberation", especially to the African elite of which the majority is educated in exile (Heugh, 2003:36). If English implies higher status than African languages to the African elite, this is obviously sending a message to the population and reinforcing the reality of dominance of English (Alexander, 2000). Parents in school B were clear that English is important in order to get a job. Despite job opportunities in the local Xhosa-speaking community, their attitude was that English skills are necessary in order to get "proper" jobs. It seems like they themselves value English more than Xhosa, perhaps imitating their national leaders. This reminds us of Ferguson's (1972) discussion of diglossia and how a different variety of a language is attributed either high status or low status due to use in public or private spheres. In the South African case, it seems like English is ascribed high status and used in the public sphere, while Xhosa is ascribed low status and mostly used within the private sphere.

Furthermore, South Africa has a system where tertiary education is not available in the African languages (Nodoba, 2002). Since the educational level often sets the limits to career, income, and social prestige, higher education is desirable in order to experience social mobility (McGroarty, 2002). Here, the language of the masses is an obstacle since English or Afrikaans are the only languages of instruction in tertiary education institutions. According to Mazrui (2004), intellectual dependency occurs in a situation where students are dependent on a foreign language in order to be familiar with academic work. The African elite master English, but not the masses of South Africa. Access to higher education is limited for the vast

majority due, in part, to linguistic problems, thus reproducing existing power relations. The principal in school A told me of the problems finishing the Master's degree he had started some time ago:

> It is a *problem* … I think the government needs to address this because, you know, what I discovered, in us studying, few people do Master's and Ph.D. and why? This is because you are required to write the thesis in English. You've got ideas, you put your ideas in English when the supervisor supervised you. Now, the English is not right, it is in wrong English you have presented this. … I'm doing Master's. I'm not through with my Master's because of that. I did the course work; I'm through the course work. Now, I was required then to write a mini thesis. Now, because I would probably have an English speaking pro-partner whom I'm going to take this child of mine [*child-like English*] to this person so as to correct the English which I've used there. Because the professor is not … does not want to see if the flow is OK, not correcting English again. That's why, now, the pyramid is like this [*illustrating a pyramid with his hands illustrating that only a few reaches the top*]. Now, if we were allowed to write the thesis in our own language, it wouldn't be a problem.
>
> (Interview, T$_1$, 2004-09-15)

According to the principal, if he could have done his Master's in Xhosa, he would have managed. Without the government giving students this opportunity, the majority of South Africans are in practice denied the possibility of higher education, in his opinion. Since the linguistic practice within a national system of education is of importance in creating a common sense of shared national identity, the practices on all levels of education in South Africa in reality seems to devalue multilingualism as an important part of national identity.

4.2 Decentralization of education

The education sector of South Africa encourages participation of citizens in activities involving education (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, 1996b; Department of Education, 2001). Decentralization of decisions is a global trend that has paved the way for "revitalized partnerships at all levels" (Stromquist, 2002:58). Let us have a look at one particular means which is created in order to allow democratic participation of citizens within schools, the School Governing Body, and languages issues related to this.

According to the South African Schools Act, section 2, 20 and 21 (Republic of South Africa,

1996b), the Governing Bodies of public schools[7] are given considerable powers regarding governance of their school, in general, and the school language policy, in particular (Brown, 1998; Davenport and Saunders, 2000). This is emphasized in the Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997), which gives the School Governing Bodies the responsibility of selecting school language policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and in line with the policy of additive multilingualism. The School Governing Body is to choose the language of learning and teaching and what languages to offer as subjects. Personal communication I had with people from the South African Human Rights Commission and the Western Cape Education Department confirmed the role of School Governing Bodies as the organs deciding language of instruction in every school. The Revised Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education, 2002:5) recommends "that the learner's home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible", which is concurrent with the Constitution, the Language in Education Policy and other official documents. Despite this there seems to be confusion at the grassroots level on who should choose the language of instruction and what additional languages to offer as subjects.

When the principal in school A (T_1) was asked about who chooses the language of instruction at the school, his answer was the national Department of Education. A teacher in school B (T_4) displays a similar view when he explains that the reason for not using Xhosa is that the government's policy is to use English. He also used this as an argument for why parents have no possible influence on language issues in education. Both these educators were convinced that the Department of Education was the one to decide on language. This illustrates that part of the problem is that both principals and teachers are not informed about the language policy.

The principal in school B was somehow more accurate when he answered the question of who chooses the language of learning and teaching:

> It is supposed to be parents – on paper it is parents who decide on the language of learning and teaching. But in our case it is not like in the literate communities, because some of the parents in our community haven't been to school, and some of them have been to school for a *few* years [only]. Mostly it is our influence as teachers who decide that this could be better for your child. Then we "ask" them to decide which is best. Then it has never come to our attention that they are against the models that we have

---

[7] A Governing Body comprises of elected parents, elected educators at the school and members of the non-educating staff in addition to the principal. The number of parent members must comprise a majority of the total number of members in a Governing Body, hence giving parents the majority of votes (Republic of South Africa, 1996b).

suggested to them. So I would say *on paper* it is parents, because they agree to what we're saying.

<div align="right">(Interview, T₃, 2004-09-14)</div>

Although he knows that it is the parents who are to decide this issue, he admits that the school and the teachers are the ones who actually decide. The situation is quite the contrary in schools C and D. The deputy principal (T_6) in school C is in strong favour of mother tongue education. In this school they offer some classes with Afrikaans and others with English as language of instruction on each level and the deputy principal is always advising the parents to choose mother tongue education for their children. Sometimes they ignore his advice and in the end, it is "the *parents'* choice what to do". This is concurrent with the attitude of the principal at school D, she explains:

> From my side it's my duty to inform the parents of the advantage to be taught in their mother tongue, so I encourage that if they are Afrikaans speakers, they *do* go into an Afrikaans class. I'm not always successful.

<div align="right">(Interview, T₈, 2004-10-05)</div>

In both schools C and D they recognize the right of the individual parent to choose language of instruction for their children, which is concurrent with the Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997), but here we also get the idea of Afrikaans competing with English since many Afrikaner parents want their children to attend English medium classes. On the other hand, in school B the principal mentions the involvement of the School Governing Body in deciding language policy of the school; even tough he admits the parents are not necessarily the ones who have the ultimate decision as it is influenced by the school and the teachers. In school D the principal explained other tasks important for the School Governing Body, like employment of teachers, budgetary work, decisions regarding curriculum and buying of text-books, fund raising and so on, but not the decision on language of instruction. In school C the parents are described as very committed to and supportive of the school, both through the School Governing Body and in other activities. The involvement of the School Governing Body in deciding on language issues in the school, however, is not mentioned in either schools C or D, where it seems that language issues are assessed as an individual parental choice.

The Language in Education Policy promotes multilingualism by suggesting a second language as a subject from Grade 3 onwards and later a third language if desirable (Department of Education, 1997). Where there is planned for a change in language of instruction from mother

tongue to an additional language, the Revised Curriculum 2005 advises to have this additional language as a subject already from Grade 1 (Department of Education, 2002). Without giving any *explicit* explanation, however, the Department of Education (2002:4) states that: "The curriculum provides strong support for those learners who will use their first additional language as a language of learning and teaching". Consequently they send a double-sided message when they recommend the home language being the language of instruction in addition to giving strong support for those who want to use the first additional language instead. The language policy in the Western Cape Primary Schools recommends that the first additional language should be implemented as soon as possible in the foundation phase, including Grade R (Western Cape Education Department, 2002). In the context of the Western Cape the languages opted for are Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. In School A and B there is an official change to English as a medium from Grade 4 onwards; therefore they should have English as a subject from Grade R onwards. On my question regarding this, a teacher in school B (T_4) says that English is introduced as an additional language from Grade 1 (with Afrikaans as a third language later on). The principal at the same school, however, gives this answer:

> English as a subject is started in Grade… eeeh ... a little bit of English, not as a subject but we on *our own*, we do give them some rhymes, poems, and all those things. But we put this English as a subject in Grade 3, but not as a formal sort of thing.
>
> (Interview, T_3, 2004-09-14)

This statement suggests that they have a particular practice in teaching English as an additional language, more than having a policy (which I could not obtain since they were "working on it"). Holmarsdottir (forthcoming) found that the policy in many township schools in the same area was not official, but just a practice that had been in effect in black schools since 1979 (see also Murray, 2002). The answers from the teacher and the principal also show a difference between what teachers think and the school administration. In schools C and D the policy of additional languages as subjects is very clear. They both start with the first additional language (Afrikaans or English, depending on what is the language of instruction) in Grade 2 and Xhosa as a second additional language soon after that (they were a bit vague about the time of starting).

Only in school B is the School Governing Body mentioned in relation to language policy at the school. When I commented to the principal on their possibility of teaching in Xhosa all through primary school, he answered:

That is the responsibility of the School Governing Body. But presently what happens, there is still that inside peoples mind that if children are taught in English, they get better education.

<div align="right">(Interview, T₃, 2004-09-14)</div>

In theory he is right, it is the School Governing Body's responsibility to decide on the language policy of the school, with parents as a majority. *In practice* he suggests that it is teachers who actually make the choice (see his statement mentioned previously in this section). These data suggest that there exists a confusion and/or lack of knowledge about the School Governing Bodies responsibility in language issues in all four schools. As a consequence, the language of instruction chosen in schools C and D, for the most part, is the mother tongue of the pupils, which gives them an advantage when compared to the children in schools A and B where there is an early transition from Xhosa to English as the medium of instruction. Additional languages chosen in each school is concurrent with the policy of the Western Cape Education Department (2002).

Policy documents provide strong guidelines in the decisions on language issues. The establishment of School Governing Bodies as organs in which citizens can participate in decision making does not seem to work according to the intention since they do not make decisions regarding language issues. Walker and Archung (2003) have conducted research on parents' participation in black communities in the United States and South Africa. Their results suggest that schools are not inviting the involvement of parents in the sense that parents are able to influence the direction of the school. Involvement, rather, seemed to mean support for education and educators rather than active roles in the school environment. Another issue in the decentralized system of decision making, despite creating opportunities for democratic participation, is whether ordinary citizens are at all capable of making the best decisions regarding language on behalf of the learners. Morrow and Torres comment on this:

> In the context of globalization, the shift of the locus of power and decision making away from the nation-state further erodes the capacity of marginalized group to grasp the structural processes that determine their fate. (Morrow and Torres, 2000:50)

A rather contradictory explanation for the choice of English is given by a parent in school A:

> *P₁:* No, English should be the medium of instruction. What is strange is that even at Grade 3 the homework is in English. I have never seen homework in Xhosa. So the children always come home needing some help in English at Grade 3 level.
> *Q:* But do you manage to give them help – in English?

<div align="center">71</div>

P₁: Sometimes. We make use of the dictionary sometimes if we don't understand what is meant by certain terms or words. Sometimes we are able to help.
Q: So you help them by using the dictionary?
P₁: I observe that the homework is a bit advanced; the terms they use are a bit difficult – the English. We struggle to help them so we make use of the dictionaries. So that's how things are today. The level of education is a bit advanced so I go for English.

(Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

This illustrates how the parents struggle to help their children with homework because the tasks are given in English, although the policy in this school is Xhosa in Grade 3. Nothing suggests that the children struggle any less than the parents with this. Still P₁ wants *English* as the medium of instruction, particularly because English skills opens opportunities for further education. Another argument is presented from the principal in this school:

We become futuristic, you know. We know that the kids are going to be confronted with English when they are at universities, technicons. Now, when the learners we are going to produce need to be in a position to understand English, which is the medium of instruction at university, all the subjects, all the books, all the courses they want to do at a particular level … now the books are written in English. That is why now, we are thinking of teaching them in English at an early stage.

(Interview, T₁, 2004-09-15)

This emphasize that the language of the higher levels of education influences what takes place earlier in the system, but these arguments are not in line with language policy documents in South Africa neither with research conducted within this area presented in chapter two. This study suggests that schools A and B practice a language policy that does not favour mother tongue instruction while this is the opposite in schools C and D. Morrow and Torres (2000) discussion of the decentralization of decisions as further eroding the possibility of marginalized groups, seems appropriate in this context. As far as the School Governing Bodies are concerned, making decisions on language appears to not be in their hands, but in the hands of others in the township schools. Thus in these cases the decentralization may be to the detriment of the pupils.

4.3 Global English

South Africa is one of the richest and most economically developed Sub-Saharan countries. Advanced technology is widely used and the Internet is a rich source of public information. Afrikaans, English and Xhosa are the official languages in the Western Cape Province. The provincial government uses these three languages equally on their web-pages according to the

Western Cape Provincial Languages Act (No 13, 1998) and the Western Cape Language Policy (Western Cape Provincial Government, 1998, 2001). Census 2001, which provided information on the language situation in each province, shows a majority of Afrikaans speakers in the Western Cape (2.5 million), with Xhosa speakers being almost 1.1 million and English speakers constituting approximately 875 000. A small minority makes use of several other languages (Statistics South Africa, 2003, table 2.5). Thus, English is the minority language amongst the three main official languages found in the province. Despite this it is a language widely used in the public sphere, as commented by Vivian de Klerk:

> [T]here is increasing evidence, ironically, that English is growing in its tendency to monopolise many areas of public administration in South Africa, and in many others multilingual contexts such as business, schools, […] the use of English has actually increased extensively in parliamentary debates (where speakers of indigenous languages outnumber MT speakers of English), government publications, and on all educational levels as well as the media. (de Klerk, 2002:2)

An example is the web-pages of Western Cape Educational Department. They are in English and only contain minimal information in Afrikaans and Xhosa. National television programmes too are mainly in Afrikaans or English, with news in Xhosa only three times a week. A parent in school A commented on the news:

> *P4:* We *do* listen to Xhosa news, but in some cases some issues are not mentioned on SABC1 [South African Broadcasting Corporation], so we watch e-TV which is an English medium channel.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

The parents have noticed that not all issues are covered in Xhosa, so they prefer to watch the English medium channel instead. Time allocated to news in the African languages is much less than English or Afrikaans. In addition, the parents in school B explain how popular a particular programme for children is:

> *P8:* They [the children] find it easy to learn English because most of the time now, the TV is in English.
> *P10:* The cartoons and children's Television are in English, so they must speak English, not Xhosa.
> *P10*: They learn more from these programmes than from the school.
> *Q:* Why do you think they learn more from the children's TV than from school?
> *P10:* Because there's a teacher there in TV most of the time and show them "there is a window". So they are so glad [I think they are watching "Takalani Sesame" – Sesame Street].
>
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

Such an imbalance between the languages is certainly not promoting status for the previous disadvantaged languages. It is possible to ask why money is not spent by Television stations to dub cartoon programmes into for example Xhosa which is spoken by 7.9 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2003). Dubbing programmes is a common practice in countries with far less population (Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). Instead this practice is promoting English in the public sphere. Is this improving the English skills of the children? Not according to Mazrui:

> In spite of the extensive spread of English to the earliest levels of education, and in spite of the tremendous resources invested in its promotion, there have been numerous claims of 'falling standards' of English in the education institutions as well as in the society at large. (Mazrui, 2004:41)

Although Mazrui is pointing at Africa in general, I believe this could be the case in South Africa as well. The practice shown by the data of this study suggest that English is promoted in the public sphere, at least far more than Xhosa.

The prominent status of English in the public sphere might be one of the factors why first language speakers of Xhosa strive for English acquisition. According to Sonntag (2003) and others, the black disempowered South African population, in particular, see English as a ticket to upward mobility. Instead of challenging the English hegemony, they assess it as an important and necessary commodity. According to a parent in school A:

> *P₃:* Ok, in these modern days, our children are exposed to so many things. Some go overseas or to other areas where Xhosa is not spoken. So it is much easier for them there if they can communicate through the medium of English.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

Since they consider English as *the* global language, their response is to increase teaching of English in school, even use it as a medium of instruction. A market for English is created when that is the language most often used in the public sphere, and the parents demand this with the intention of improving the future for their children. However, job opportunities do exist in the Xhosa speaking environments and, in many cases, may be the most likely option for many of the pupils in the township schools. Furthermore, the principal in school B (T₃) also emphasizes the necessity of good skills in Xhosa when working in this environment. Despite this parents seem to value English skills more. This is concurrent with Arnove's (2003) apprehension of the dialectic process between global trends and local responses. Since

English is deemed important in a globalized world, the local response is increasingly the use of English as the language of instruction although it is not the mother tongue of the children.

The political context is a factor which influences the linguistic global trend as well. Sonntag's (2003) case studies suggest that English is often the language of global democracy. And further:

> In the South African case, we saw how global English was a significant component of the democratic struggle against apartheid, precisely because it facilitated global solidarity. (Sonntag, 2003:120, 121)

As previously mentioned in this chapter, English was the most important language of liberation in South Africa. Through this language the political activists, who are now in power could communicate, not only amongst themselves, but also with supporting politicians and organizations when in exile. The global perspective of English is associated with freedom and democracy to a large segment of the population. English is assessed as a global currency and carries connotations of power and opportunities (Sonntag, 2003; Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). Reduced status of Afrikaans, which was the language of power pre-1994, is strengthening this understanding. Also English was seen as the only language capable of competing with Afrikaans. When asking parents in school A whether they experience equal status among the official language in Western Cape, the following answer was given by the parent:

> *P₅:* They don't have equal status. My observation is that Afrikaans has lower status than English, so all the children try to opt for the prestigious language which is English.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

This is also verified by the deputy principal in school C and the principal in school D who struggle with parents wanting to send their Afrikaans-speaking children to English medium classes. A student teacher I interviewed had recently had practice in a school and experienced problems with pupils from Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds. She explained:

> *T₉:* The learners are from an Afrikaans environment. A lot of people now, especially in the colored community, the parents are Afrikaans but they speak English with their children. They want to raise them in English. But obviously they are Afrikaans speaking so the quality of English that these learners are being brought up in is not the same as would be with parents who are both English speaking.
> *Q:* Why do you think they want to raise their children in English?
> *T₉:* I think it is about keeping up a global standard, the whole world is speaking English. There is this idea that English is the medium for business and to advance. A lot of the learners come from Afrikaans background; parents speak Afrikaans to each other. That is how the children get their perception of language. I would say their

mother tongue is Afrikaans, because that is the environment they live in. Now they come to school and they are put into an English class because parents feel that is …. I think it's the whole stigma that is attached to Afrikaans – apartheid and the language of the oppressor. But I think it's also to be competitive in the job market because in South Africa now you have to be able to speak English, that's a fact.

(Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-27)

Difference in status among the official languages of the province is also visible through the emphasis put on required and/or expected fluency in the various languages. A trilingual model is promoted through different language policy documents on the provincial level (Western Cape Provincial government, 1998, 2001). On the other hand, a report of the language policy in the primary schools of the Western Cape (Western Cape Education Department, 2002:7) holds that "Schools that are under-resourced apply dual medium teaching in a manner that reinforces the ideology that English proficiency is the gateway to upward social mobility and a successful life." Some schools (like schools A and B in this study), which make a transition from mother tongue education to English in Grade 4 have very marked pedagogical disadvantages that are reflected in a high drop-out and failure rate, according to this report (Western Cape Education Department, 2002), which refers to a recent study of matriculation results of the year 2000 in the Western Cape which shows:

…conclusively that students who were taught and assessed in their L1 (English or Afrikaans) performed incomparably better than those (mainly Xhosa L1-speakers) who were taught and assessed in their FAL[8] (mainly English). There were individual exceptions, and while it is not suggested that language-medium is the only causal factor at play in this case, this correlation is extremely significant. (Western Cape Education Department, 2002:23)

Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain material from this study, but language being an obstacle to pass matric is a factor pointed out by Neville Alexander as well (Alexander, 2000). English is gaining ground on the expense of Xhosa and, increasingly, Afrikaans. What are the requirements of proficiency in each of the official languages in the province within the four schools of this study?

Schools A and B use Xhosa as a language of instruction until the end of Grade 3 and then a transition to English medium occurs. According to principal in school B the teachers are in fact code mixing Xhosa and English already from the start resulting in a low proficiency in

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[8] First Additional Language

Xhosa. On the other hand, a vocabulary large enough to understand teaching in English from Grade 4 is required, on which Macdonald elaborates:

> Qualitative data from many testing and observational contexts indicates that the Std 3 year [Grade 5] is a time of trauma for both teacher and child. The children cannot cope with the sudden ("deep end") launch into a massive range of new vocabulary, structures and concepts…the vocabulary requirements in English increase by 1 000% from Std 2 [Grade 4] to Std 3 (from perhaps 800 words to approximately 7 000)…the current generation of children are developing very few of the English skills which are required for the challenge of the medium transfer in Std 3 – at least to Std 3 as it is currently conceived, with the unprepared – for advent of the formal learning of content subjects in English. (Macdonald, 1990:161,162)

This study indicates that English proficiency required being able to follow English as the medium of instruction is rarely present within this group of pupils. Without any previous systematic pedagogical approach to English as a subject from at least Grade 1 in schools A and B, the transition to English is problematic and there is a possible discrepancy between expectancy of English skills and what is realistic. Afrikaans is the second additional language in these schools, but is rarely mentioned in the data of this study, thus making it difficult to estimate what kind of proficiency is expected in this subject.

In the English medium classes of school C Afrikaans is the first additional language which is implemented as a subject from Grade 2. The teacher however (T_7), who is an English/Afrikaans bilingual, is not satisfied with the pupils' Afrikaans skills in Grade 5. English is the first additional language for the Afrikaans classes. Xhosa is offered as a second additional language for all classes, sharing a Xhosa teacher with two other schools in the vicinity. It does not seem that they put too much effort into this, talking about the difficulties of getting hold of a good Xhosa teacher, but according to the policy of the province they are instructed to offer Xhosa as a second additional language.

School D has Afrikaans as their first additional language from Grade 2 and in Grade 5 they have four lessons per week. The same kind of structure is used with English for the classes who have Afrikaans as medium of instruction. Xhosa is the second additional language from Grade 2 or 3 with two lessons per week at Grade 5. Pupils I asked think Xhosa is interesting and some are able to practice this because family members are able to speak the language. According to the teacher (T_9) they are lucky having a very good native speaking Xhosa teacher.

English is the language of instruction in all the Grade 5 classes I visited. In schools A and B none of the pupils have English as their mother tongue. Still they are expected to manage this as the language of teaching and learning – although they do not have structured training in this in advance. English is not a language they meet outside the classroom, except for some programmes on Television. English is the mother tongue of the majority in the classes I visited in schools C and D. A structured plan for Afrikaans as a first additional language was present, but adequate teaching in Xhosa (second additional language) seemed more incidental in the sense that they are dependent on external teachers, who sometimes could be difficult to get hold of. This makes it possible to draw some lines: In classes where English is the language of instruction, Afrikaans is chosen as the first additional language and thus given priority over Xhosa. In schools where Xhosa is the language of instruction during foundation phase, English is the first additional language and the language of instruction from Grade 4. Afrikaans is the second additional language. The data also indicates that fluency in Xhosa is never required at the same level as fluency in English or Afrikaans. The pupils of schools A and B are required to take exams in English in all subjects. The pupils of schools C and D are not expected to take exam in Xhosa nor even in their first additional language. This practice is giving English a currency in the present South Africa, devaluating a previously disadvantaged language such as Xhosa and in some cases also threatening the status of Afrikaans.

4.4 Democracy and Human rights

Democracy is yet another trend influencing language issues related to education. An increase in democracy and global integration further linguistic politicization, according to Sonntag (2003). Language is highly political and in post-apartheid South Africa, language and education constitute a separate section in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Chapter 2, section 29 states:

 (1) Everyone has the right

 a. to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
 b. to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

(2) Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.

In other words, democracy in South Africa has provided linguistic rights to the entire population. This is especially important to the majority who use previously marginalized languages. A parent in school B gave this comment when I asked whether she thinks the government takes sufficient measures to protect the use of Xhosa:

> *P₉:* As they say we are a "Rainbow nation", they want everybody to understand one another's language as you must understand English, you must understand Xhosa, you must understand Sotho, you must understand Afrikaans. It doesn't say: "No, you must stick to Xhosa". We must understand each other.
>
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

Despite this, Kathleen Heugh's research found that:

> Very few English-speakers believe that their language rights are compromised, whereas the majority of speakers of African languages report lack of access to services, dissatisfaction with the linguistic delivery of various services and, especially, disadvantage in job interviews. (Heugh, 2003:28)

The Constitution has provided a "watch-dog" to cater for the linguistic diversity of South Africa: the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). Chapter 1, section 6 states:

1. A Pan South African Language Board established by national legislation must
   a. promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of
      i. all official languages;
      ii. the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and
      iii. sign language

The responsibilities of PanSALB are described in Act no 59 of 1995 (Republic of South Africa, 1995). One of PanSALB's explicit tasks is to address allegations of language rights violations. After an investigation, they are to publish their findings. In looking at the issue further, I received 26 Board Notices from PanSALB: 2 from 1999, 14 from 2000, 7 from 2001, and 3 from 2002. Although this list is not exhaustive, it gives a picture of what language violations they receive complaints about and the languages involved. The results are displayed in the following table:

Table 4.1 – complaints on violation of linguistic rights (material received from PanSALB)

Violation of other official languages by use of **English only** [9]	10
Violation of **Afrikaans** rights	12
Violation of **English** rights	1
Violation of **Sepedi**/**Ndebele** rights	1
Violation of **Zulu** rights	1
Violation of the rights of African languages in general	1
Sum	26

A minority of these complaints are related to specific official African official. An overwhelming majority are related to the violation of Afrikaans linguistic rights or use of English only and thus violation of the other official languages. Heugh's study confirms that most claims are from the Afrikaans speaking community. She states:

> Of the Board's records of alleged violations of language rights during its first term of office [1996-2001], 95% of the 158 complaints came from Afrikaans-speaking persons or lobby groups. (Heugh, 2003, "Study VI", page 16)

Another interesting thing in this sample is that few of these complaints are related to education. Board Notice 2 of 2001 concerns a complaint from parents regarding language of instruction conducted in Tswana, and thus violating the rights of Sepedi and Ndebele speaking pupils in this community. The second complaint is treated in Board Notice 98 of 2002 concerning Afrikaans speaking students at the University of Pretoria receiving all instructions, tests and examination evaluation in English. Afrikaans speakers appear to be both outspoken and more aware of their language rights. Furthermore, they were influential in getting multilingualism into the Constitution and the Language in Education Policy as they were concerned for the status of their language compared to English (Holmarsdottir, forthcoming).

The annual Reports from PanSALB (2001, 2002, and 2003) contain lists of language rights violation complaints received. Information given shows the same pattern as in the previous table; complaints on violation of Afrikaans linguistic rights or use of English only (violating the other official languages) constitute the vast majority (46% and 37% respectively) of

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[9] These complaints are put forward because *only* English is used, thus violating the language rights of *all* the other ten official languages.

complaints received by PanSALB in the period 1 April 2000 – 31 March 2003. Complaints on violation of the right to use African languages make up only 8% of the material. The information in the reports makes it is possible to generate a table for this specific period:

Table 4.2 – Complaints on violation of linguistic rights (based on the annual reports 2001, 2002, and 2003)

Violation of other official languages by use of **African languages only**	3
Violation of other official languages by use of **Afrikaans only**	2
Violation of other official languages by use of **English only**	91
Violation of **Afrikaans** rights	111
Violation of **English** rights	1
Violation of **Ndebele** rights	1
Violation of **Ndebele**/**Tsonga** rights	1
Violation of **Northern Sotho (Sepedi)** rights	3
Violation of **Tsonga** rights	5
Violation of **Tsonga**/**Venda** rights	2
Violation of **Tswana** rights	1
Violation of **Xhosa** rights	1
Violation of **Zulu** rights	1
Violation of the rights of African languages in general	5
Complaints with no specific language	15
Sum	243

These data suggest that people feel their linguistic rights threatened by the increase in use of English. In this data, complainants of "English only use" are often Afrikaans speakers (75%)[10] and they are, of course, also complainants of violation of Afrikaans rights. In other words, the Afrikaans speaking population is very active when it comes to fighting for their linguistic rights in the democracy of South Africa. They are the strongest supporters of multilingualism, according to Sonntag (2003), and they have been very efficient in this struggle. After all, they are better resourced due to their previous advantaged position. Since a majority of 76% of the South African population use African languages in their every day life (Statistics South

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[10] This is an estimate done from either the names of the complainants or that the content of the complaint shows that English only is used when previously Afrikaans was used as well.

Africa, 2003), it is a striking fact that so few complaints are received from this segment of the population. Perhaps the Afrikaans speaking population is far better qualified using official channels and possibilities of protecting their language than the population using other languages (Sonntag, 2003). In addition, they may be better informed of their linguistic rights, especially if we take into consideration that the development of Afrikaans was originally in response to the hegemony of English (Mesthrie, 2002; Reagan, 2002). This does not necessarily suggest that speakers of African languages do not feel their linguistic rights compromised if we compare with Heugh's (2003) research mentioned above. Also if we take into consideration the global trend of English discussed in the previous section, it might be correct that the hegemony of English is not challenged by the speakers of African languages in South Africa (Sonntag, 2003).

In this linguistic context it is interesting to take a closer look at the possibility of conventional participation in democracy in Xhosa. This topic is to be elaborated further in the next chapter, hence participation in this section is concerned with voting in elections and gathering of information regarding politics. South Africa celebrated its 10th anniversary of democracy in 2004 in which the third elections were carried out. All the parents I asked in schools A and B confirmed they had used their right to vote in the April elections. A parent in school B said the voting took place in English, but with photos of each candidate related to their names, making it easier for those without English skills to choose. Parents in school A said the voting took place in Xhosa. I have not been able to look into this discrepancy, but politicians are obviously aware of the linguistic situation if we consider the language that they use in their election campaigns. On my question regarding this, parents in school A answered:

> *P:* On Television they would use English and then translate it to Xhosa. But the campaign was mainly in Xhosa.
>
> <div align="right">(Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)</div>

Parents in school B responded:

> *P₈:* Xhosa, both in the community and on television.
> *P₉:* And in Sotho also.
>
> <div align="right">(Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)</div>

In a talk with a journalist from the Xhosa newspaper Vukani, I was informed that, despite the fact that the content in their newspaper mostly consists of local news, the national election was covered thoroughly in Xhosa.

Thus it can be said that at least the basic possibilities of participation in the democratic processes are catered for in Xhosa. Politicians recognize the necessity of using Xhosa in the election simply because that is the language of a large portion of the population both in the Western Cape (23.7%) and the Eastern Cape (83.4%) (Statistics South Africa, 2003). In other words, they assess it necessary to use Xhosa in order to access the voters. Maybe the same voters and their children need education in their mother tongue in order to access the knowledge intended from the Department of Education through Curriculum 2005?

4.5 Conclusion

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights summarize the value of education:

> Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights….Education has a vital role in … promoting human rights and democracy. (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 13 on the Right to Education, E/C.12/1999/10, 8 December 1999, para. 1)

Sia S. Åkermark makes a valuable comment in this regard:

> In view of the fact that more than 190 states have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the above objectives concerning respect for and understanding of the identity, the language and the values of minority groups are *legally binding* upon most countries in the world. (Åkermark, 2003:20 – emphasis in original)

South Africa has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Due to the discussion in this chapter, I agree with Mazrui (2004) in the necessity of rethinking language policies related to education, especially since this sector continues to promote English despite this being the mother tongue of only a small minority of South African citizens. On the other hand, policies are dependent on the people that are supposed to implement them, which will be discussed in the last chapter. Now I intend to elaborate on how democracy influence language issues in education.

5 Language issues in education influenced by Democracy

Despite the fact that the actual number of languages in the world is contested, it is possible to state that multilingualism is the rule rather than the exception, in most countries. Furthermore, democratization has paved the way for an official multilingual situation in South Africa. Eleven languages are recognized as official, as opposed to two languages in the apartheid era. However, such a multilingual situation can also challenge democratic values in many respects, which will be dealt with in this chapter. Educational institutions are important in a democratic and multilingual society because they both mirror the wider society and act as a role model; hence practices in the educational sector are the centre of attention in this study. I believe democracy and multilingualism are interrelated and dependent on each other and a closer look at languages issues in education may reveal whether the linguistic practice actually reflect democratic governance.

5.1 Individual rights

A democratic society secures certain rights for its citizens (Saward, 1994). Education can prepare citizens for participation in both the local community and wider society. In a multilingual society such as South Africa, being at least bilingual is necessary in order to being able to communicate outside the immediate community[11]. This belief is supported by parents in both schools A and B. When I asked whether I would need Xhosa if I was to live in their community, they answered:

> *P₂:* Yes, definitely, you would need to learn Xhosa only because you would be among a Xhosa-speaking community and some … in fact *most* of the people don't understand English.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

> *P₈:* Yes, because in our location everyone speaks Xhosa.
>
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

In addition, parents also stressed the need for skills in more than one language:

> *P₃:* It's really necessary, only because the children need to go out in search for work. And in most job occasions they need more than one language so it will be easier then for them to communicate through the other language that might not be Xhosa.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

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[11] At least this is the reality for the majority of South Africans which are not mother tongue speakers of English.

> **P₈:** I think the best is when they've got both languages because when they speak English, they are not going to be able to speak Xhosa.
>
> **P₉:** Because when they are out of school, they play with other children they don't know English, so they are supposed to speak our language, Xhosa. They can speak English at school, then after school at home, they speak Xhosa.
>
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

Democracy *as content* involves citizens' participation in public affairs and thus implies that the people have power to take part in decisions regarding their own lives in the wider society (Torres, 1998). Both parent focus groups confirm the importance in being proficient in both Xhosa and English in order to function in the local community as well as the South African society in general. Is it possible for the parents to participate in the definition of their children's future by the choice of language of instruction? Linguistic practices in the schools related to parental contact are interesting in this regard. When I asked what kind of information the parents receive about the language of instruction, the principal in school B answered:

> When they apply to the school, in fact when they read the application form, which are in Xhosa, they are informed that this is a predominantly Xhosa-speaking area, and so from Grade R to Grade 3 the language of learning and teaching are Xhosa. And then we will also tell them that we *do* allow some form of … little bit of English which is taught in Grade 2 and Grade 3, because when they get to grade 4 they have to change over to English as the medium of instruction and then Xhosa as a language [a subject].
>
> (Interview, T₃, 2004-09-14)

As we saw in the previous chapter (*4.2 Decentralization of education*), in reality there is little possibility of the parents influencing this decision of language policy within the school of their children, as the quote above clearly demonstrates. The school decides on language issues and the parents are merely informed of the policy and the practice in the school. Another possibility is to choose a school which uses the preferred language of instruction. However, the problem for Xhosa speaking parents is that these schools are scarce, if they exist at all in the Western Cape (Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). According to Desai (forthcoming) schools using Xhosa as a language of instruction in all grades do not exist at all as the language of exams is only English or Afrikaans. Hence, the possibility of influencing your own future is marginalized due to linguistic obstacles.

This picture is even strengthened when we know that being taught in Xhosa for only three years has a negative impact on achievement of academic and conceptual skills in the mother

tongue, which is necessary to achieve good skills in an additional language, in this case English (Cummins, 2000b; Desai, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Kymlicka, 2001). The result could be that the children loose out on both languages which does not contribute to their capability of defining their own future in the same way as the linguistic minority in power. Hence, democracy *as content* is violated (Torres, 1998).

As highlighted in the previous chapter, linguistic rights in general and in education in particular are granted in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This is a possible factor reducing political tension and gives the impression of treating all citizens equal (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Speakers of Afrikaans have used this right extensively, as noted previously. Despite the granting of rights to mother-tongue instruction in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) and Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997) and several language policy documents implying the state's commitment to multilingualism, it is up to civil society and the individual to ensure that these rights come into effect. What measures are supposed to be taken in this regard? I will use the case of school fees as an example of the rights issue. South Africa has ratified both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, in addition to the Constitution guaranteeing the right to education (Veriava, 2003a). The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) allows schools to charge school fees, but gives the school the power to decide whether or not to do so. Veriava (2003a) points to the fact that schools often charge fees that poor parents cannot afford with the result that children are denied access to school and parents threatened with legal action. It appears as if the current laws provided to assist poor families are not enforced. The case of Sorsa and Sorsa v Simonstown School illustrates the existence of a legal basis to challenge the claims of schools (Veriava, 2003b). Without going in depth in this particular case it is possible to emphasize the point that the parents and/or the school have to take legal steps in order to establish a practice where the right to basic education (for free, if necessary) is confirmed. Faranaaz Veriava at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at Wits University (personal communication, 2004-10-01) works with school fees and other socio-economic rights issues, but told me that the right to mother tongue education was not a part of this.

Sibonile Khoza at the Community Law Centre, University of Western Cape (personal communication, 2004-09-09) spoke about "the beauty of rights" in the sense that constitutional rights secure citizens their basic needs. When asking about the right of access to

education in one's own language, Khoza emphasized the necessity of parents' participation in their children's education by helping them at home, participating in the governance of the school, etc. If they do this and change does not occur, then they might have a case – but they need to take it to court, similar to what is done in the case of school fees. In other words, the responsibility of rights is not in the hands of the state once granted, but is left in the hands of the individual. This requires citizens equipped to exercise their right, both in terms of literacy, knowledge of the consequences of education in a foreign language, and knowledge of law and economy (Stroud and Heugh, 2003). Often these skills are not present in the individuals most in need to exercise their rights and not many professionals are occupied with this particular right either. In my opinion, this illustrates, what I would call, the *ugliness* of human rights as opposed to "the beauty of rights" (Khoza, personal communication, 2004-09-09). Linguistic rights recognized by the new democratic South Africa are not within reach of the majority of South Africans. As Akokpari points out:

> Impoverished people are as a rule preoccupied with basic economic survival and thus assume an apathetic posture towards governance. To these people, human rights, for example, is a luxury, not a basic need. Apathy in turn provides propitious grounds for the pursuit of undemocratic practices by the political elite. (Akokpari, 2001:88)

Yet, the country of South Africa is able to say they respect these rights, because they are stated in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) and the Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997).

This impression of the *ugliness* of human rights is confirmed by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). A SAHRC policy paper states that:

> The SAHRC must monitor what measures have been taken by the state to ensure education in each person's language of choice and what educational alternatives have been provided. It must lobby for legislative and other measures to ensure the development and attainment of this right. (SAHRC, 1997:6)

SAHRC conducts monitoring by sending out protocols to State organs every year. When I asked what precisely was done by SAHRC "to ensure the development and attainment of this right", the answer from Vusi Shabalala at the SAHRC was:

> *This area is entirely in the hands of parents.* A structure known as a School Governing Body (SGB), together with parents, decides on the Medium of Instruction (MOI) --- a language to be used in a school setting for communication and teaching purposes. Some schools use a double MOI. In my view, it would be interesting [to see] how this decision is arrived at. It would be interesting to find out who is influential in SGB/parents meetings. So, basically, schools design [their] own language policies

based on the SGB's choice of the MOI. (Personal communication, 2004-10-06, emphasis added)

Again there is a repudiation of liability. Parents are conveniently left with the full responsibility of exercising the linguistic rights of their children, but often without the resources to do so (Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). On the other hand, the parents of schools A and B in this study do not seem to give much priority to the language issue. They always underline that their wish is that the children learn English, although Xhosa is also regarded important:

> *Q:* What do you want for your children? In what language do you want the teachers to speak?
> *P8:* I want my children to speak both English and Xhosa. We must understand each other. When we talk in English, everyone understands what we're saying[12].
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

> *P1:* When they move from Grade 7 to other schools, sometimes they need to shift to white schools, and then it would be a problem if they could not speak English. So *English* is very important.
> *Q:* But you could learn English as a subject.
> *P1:* No, English should be the medium of instruction.
> *P2:* I do understand the problem that the children have in this community, which is Xhosa speaking and they haven't started with English from Grade 1 or from Grade R. And now it's not easy in this situation so I would say "OK, they can use Xhosa and English".
> *P3:* The children are here among the Xhosa speaking community and it would be really worthwhile that they know Xhosa as well as English.
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

It appears that some parents see the issue of language as a question of either-or, not both-and, learning English is what matters and the way to do that is through using it as a medium of instruction (P1). When I asked whether they could use Xhosa as a medium and be taught English as a subject, it did not seem that the parents could fully understand the difference, or perhaps they had accepted the contemporary educational situation:

> *P9:* Here in school, they've got a period for Xhosa and a period for English. They are doing both Xhosa and English. They've got Xhosa subjects, and they've got English subjects, and they've got Afrikaans as well.
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

As we saw in the previous statement, P1 is very preoccupied with the children learning English. But he is somewhat contradictive when he says:

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[12] However, some parents earlier indicated that not all those living in the townships can understand English. That makes it possible to ask who the "everyone" she is referring to is.

> ***P₁:*** It doesn't really matter to us knowing English because we are all the same – we are all Xhosa speakers, mother tongue speakers of Xhosa. We only need English to communicate with *other* people – who also would like to learn Xhosa from us. So it doesn't really matter if we know or don't know English. We accept the fact that it isn't our mother tongue.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

This data suggest that perhaps the parents are not very interested in whether English is the medium of instruction or taught as a subject, as long as the pupils learn English. Also they see the need to have both English and Xhosa as English provides more opportunities in wider society (i.e. jobs, advanced education, etc.), while Xhosa is needed in the immediate community and with family and friends, and thus reaffirming the high status of English and the low status of Xhosa (Ferguson, 1972). Neither does it seem like the parents deliberately choose a school due to its language policy. Vicinity appears to be a more prominent factor in this regard, which P_{10} confirmed in response to a direct question (interview, 2004-09-21). Another parent makes a similar claim arguing that:

> ***P₃:*** We are *all* mother tongue speakers of Xhosa so then you *must* learn Xhosa. The children need that because they are Xhosa speakers, they are from Xhosa speaking backgrounds so they *must, must, must* learn Xhosa. In actual fact, there was no one who made the choice [of what school to attend]. They [the parents] just take for granted that since they are all Xhosa speakers, they [the children] learn in Xhosa *although* they should also learn English in order to be exposed to other worlds or to other people.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

When parents have minimal knowledge of the importance of mother tongue instruction, is their linguistic human right taken care of when they themselves are left with the responsibility to exercise this right? Maré has this to say about rights with regard to South Africa:

> It is essential that citizens not only accept that they can, and have the right to be meaningful agents in shaping their own individual or collective destinies, but that the material conditions of life are being addressed to enhance the quality of life and meet basic needs. (Maré, 1999:257)

Parents are not necessarily "meaningful agents" in this matter since they do not possess the material conditions prescribed to fulfil this role. Therefore, a need to address the language situation in the majority of schools must be done by other meaningful agents, such as the South African Human Rights Commission and the Pan South African Language Board. They are the democratic institutions created to cater for the individual rights of citizens in a democratic South Africa.

5.2 Identity in a multilingual and multicultural society

It is difficult to find a nation-state with *one* obvious common culture. Multiple identities exist alongside different sub-cultures within a country (Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan, 2002). A national identity is something that must be constructed (Osler and Starkey, 2000; Kymlicka, 2001; Breidlid, 2002). South Africa is using the concept of a "Rainbow Nation" in an effort to achieve this. All citizens are to be treated equal despite race, gender, ethnic or social origin, color, religion, belief, culture or language, according to the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Erasmus and Pieterse are problematizing the 'Rainbow Nation' discourse when they argue:

> [S]uddenly 'we are all one nation' and *equal* in our positions in this nation… This discourse ignores the fact that such co-existence is premised on highly unequal power relations systematically shaped over centuries. (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999:172 – emphasis in original)

They believe it contradictory to talk of one nation and at the same time using the concept of a 'Rainbow Nation', which does suggest significant differences among South African citizens. Furthermore, they assess the primary function of the 'Rainbow Nation' as that of legitimization of the present system and as 'glue' to keep the different elements together. Since this discourse is not confronting the institutionalized nature of racialised class power, it soothes the racially based inequalities that still exist in South African society and marginalize voices that try to point this out (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999). These are strong words, but possible to apply to the linguistic situation because language is not a neutral medium for communication (Simala, 2001). Simala states:

> Language makes it possible for us to understand and make sense of the world by providing a cognitive framework of concepts. It is through the use of such a framework consisting of words and meanings that we interpret the worlds, represent it into our minds, talk about it and exchange information with other people. *Our entire knowledge and experience of the world is mediated by language.* (Simala, 2001:311 – emphasis added)

With the increasing use of English in the public sphere, those proficient in English are those empowered to define factors of a common national identity in South Africa. Despite a Constitution promoting multilingualism, English is still the language of power and status, the home language of only 8% of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2003) with the rest striving to achieve English skills. As parents in school B commented:

> ***P₈:*** It's easier in Xhosa [schoolwork], but they must learn both. They must know Xhosa and they must know English.
>
> ***P₁₀:*** Me … I like English and Xhosa because they are the two languages … it is right to learn for us, you know. But English is a very big language because maybe my child can finish school, maybe pass matric [school leaving exam] and want to look for work. If you are looking for work in the areas of Cape Town, we meet people like you, and you don't talk Xhosa, so we must talk English. So I like English.
>
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

The parents present a wish to use *English* as a linguistic bridge in the 'Rainbow Nation' even though they assess Xhosa as essential. They also point to the need of learning English in order to speak with people like the researcher (foreigner and white, often referred to as an "umlungu"). But they also emphasize their wish that speakers of English and Afrikaans should learn Xhosa as well:

> ***P₉:*** Because we try very had to learn English and Afrikaans so they must also learn to speak Xhosa!
>
> (Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)

Despite this, there is an emphasis on English in South African society. Why is this so when Xhosa too is recognized as an official and equal language spoken by twice as many South Africans than those who have English as their mother tongue (Statistics South Africa, 2003)? According to Neuman (1994) a person's social position in society shapes his or her ideas. We know that English is used extensively by the political elite and was used as a common language in the freedom struggle (Sonntag, 2003). Mda makes a point that:

> Since the two former official languages are still very powerful and continue to enjoy privileges as favoured languages, there are no incentives for non-African language speakers to learn African languages, nor for African learners to exercise their rights pertaining to their languages. (Mda, 2000:163)

This lack of incentives could be that English, and to some extent Afrikaans, are the languages that provide access to jobs, further education, and so on. As long as the African languages are not given priority or used in these areas, they are not "favoured languages" enjoying equality as official languages.

A language represents a specific world-view (Ntuli, 2002) and in contemporary South Africa the Xhosa identity and language are not related to possibilities of social mobility, which is an obvious goal for the still oppressed majority of Xhosa speakers. Alidou and Mazrui (1999) see America's growing cultural influence as yet another factor to explain the success of English. In such a situation, the cultural and linguistic identity of the Xhosa speaking population is not

recognized *in practice*, neither by the elite in power nor by the Xhosa's themselves. The power structures embedded in language are not confronted. According to Ntuli this is related to the colonial past of South Africa:

> Language as a conveyor of thoughts, philosophies and ideologies, was deployed to empty African people of their right to define and express themselves and their sensibilities. (Ntuli, 2002:53)

As a result of this devaluation of Xhosa identity, cultural ambivalence related to both culture *and* language occurs. The principal in school A admits:

> We are a bit becoming white. You'll see … we are taking our kids to these schools because we want them to speak English. That is why I'm saying that what I'm worried about our Government – there are no plans in place to address this. A few years down the line it's going to be useless to speak your own language. You will feel inferior if you speak your own language.
>
> (Interview, T_1, 2004-09-15)

Although other researchers (de Klerk, 2002; Holmarsdottir, forthcoming) have found that language is not the only reason for parents to send their children to English medium schools, the principal illustrates with his statement that language is closely related to identity, and speakers of Xhosa can experience themselves as "inferior" if they do not speak English. This cultural ambivalence can also be illustrated by the linguistic practice at the teachers' meetings in school B as noted to by the principal. Remember that all the teachers in this school speak Xhosa.

> *Q:* When you have the teacher meetings here, with your staff, with all the teachers and you talk, what language do you use?
> *T_3:* We use English, but we allow somebody to say something in Xhosa. But we try to encourage them to speak in English, but it's not wrong when people want to express themselves more freely, then they do speak in Xhosa. When we have our minutes … our minutes are in English.
> *Q:* The minutes are in English, but when you yourself address the staff?
> *T_3:* No, we speak in English.
> *Q:* You do?
> *T_3:* And then sometimes in Xhosa, but we *do* mix, let me say that.
>
> (Interview, T_3, 2004-09-14)

The emphasis on English during staff meetings shows how the administrative staffs also influences linguistic practices within school. A practice of using English with Xhosa speakers may send a message that influences the practice within classrooms as well. Such practices could indicate an identity problem in the sense that Xhosa speaking educators find it even more difficult to make Xhosa relevant within the educational sphere. Since this creates

linguistic problems in their everyday teaching, a discrepancy between the schools language policy and practice exists. The principal in school B elaborates:

> When they get into class, when there is to be formal teaching, we need to move from the language that they know to the new language which is the second language or ….like, like English. But the problem with teachers *themselves* is that they are Xhosa speaking, so they have a comfort zone. When they are speaking to the children in English for instance, some of them say "put the picture *on* the wall" and the child wouldn't be sure whether it is *behind* or *before* or *to* the wall. Then someone would say ["put the picture *on* the wall" – he is using a Xhosa expression], and then the child will have an idea of what it means when you say "*on* the wall".
> The policy of the school says Xhosa Grade R to Grade 3, and then switches over to English Grade 4 upwards. But what happens is people are code switching there from the beginning. But when you say "Teach in English!", they would say that "The children would not understand".
>
> (Interview, T_3, 2004-09-14)

This comment suggests that despite the language policy being English from Grade 4 onwards in this school, teachers themselves struggle to manage this. The teachers' English vocabulary is often not adequate to cover the curriculum, thus they code-mix with Xhosa (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003). Furthermore, the principal suggests that the teachers' Xhosa vocabulary is influenced by English and they do not consequently teach in Xhosa from Grade R to Grade 3, as they are supposed to. I only conducted observations at the Grade 5 level, but in one of the experiment groups, which was to use Xhosa, I observed code-mixing with English (O_7, 2004-09-15). When talking about energy, both the teacher and the pupils used the concept "power stations". I asked the interpreter (a PhD-student) if they did not have this concept in Xhosa and she said that there is a concept in Xhosa, but both the teacher and the pupils are so familiar with the English concept and use this instead (see Holmarsdottir, forthcoming, for further details of this situation). According to the principal mentioned above, this is a common practice already from Grade R onwards.

When the teachers' Xhosa identity are somewhat blurred, it is no wonder that the pupils experience something similar. All identities are relational, i.e. the identity of a child is created by relations to significant role models in the immediate sphere, parents, family, peers, and teachers. Identities are created "by complex networks of concrete social relations" (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999:183). When such a high status is ascribe to English by Xhosa educators and parents, the child experiences their Xhosa language and identity as something devaluated, something to make relevant only in the private sphere, not in the public (Ferguson, 1972).

> Events, persons, objects are indeed tangible entities. The meanings and wholeness derived from or ascribed to these tangible phenomena in order to make sense of them, organize them, or reorganize a belief system, however, are *constructed realities.* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:84 – emphasis in original)

Such constructed realities are necessary in order to create a common identity. Often this is done through written history. To cater for its diverse population, a South African democracy needs to pave the way for possibilities of more literature in *all* official languages, including Xhosa. Parents in school A concluded our discussion with words like "give us more Xhosa books in the libraries", "If you return, bring books, both Xhosa and English". A novel written in Xhosa and well known in Xhosa society is *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya (The Wrath of the Ancestors)*, written by A. C. Jordan sometime in the 1960s and later translated into English. This novel is a story about the Xhosa speaking Mpondomise people. A main feature of this book is the people's struggle in the tension between modern society, traditional values and way of life. According to a language activist (interview, 2004-10-05), these kinds of books are exactly what should be re-printed in order to increase the status of Xhosa and value Xhosa identity in wider society. The only way I could obtain a copy was through the Internet (amazon.com). One single used copy was found, with a previous price of US$4.50, now at the cost of US$45! Poor people struggling to survive in their everyday life can certainly not afford such a luxury.

Breidlid (2002, 2004) points to another complex factor in identity creation. His research on Xhosa (in the sense of Xhosa speaking South Africans) culture suggests existence of a cultural clash between the modern educational system and the Xhosa culture.

> One difference between a so-called Western, scientific world-view and a traditional one is thus that while modern science tries to explain *how* nature functions, traditional world-views are concerned about *why* these things happen. (Breidlid, 2004:3 – emphasis added)

Xhosa culture in particular, as African culture in general, has a more holistic approach to life than the Western world view (Ntuli, 2002). Ancestral beliefs are then a natural part of their every day life since the world is an interconnected reality and all life is a cycle. Thus the past is important to present day life. You exist as a human being because you belong, and you belong because you exist, hence making relations with past, present and future intertwined (Ntuli, 2002). The contemporary educational system, with its emphasis on individualism,

rationality and universalism, challenges traditional African values (Department of Education, 2002; Breidlid, 2004). Both Xhosa teachers and pupils have to cross cultural borders every day since they experience one culture in their local communities and another within the school. Breidlid's fieldwork revealed that many teachers were modern science teachers at school and traditional practitioners at home (Breidlid, 2004). This constant cross of cultural borders may affect their identity, especially if society forces them to choose between one and the other, for example in giving one higher status than the other. Such a situation is also embedded in the Xhosa language. Devaluation of the Xhosa language is also a devaluation of Xhosa identity and culture. This is not preparing the pupils to be capable of participation in a democratic society (Cummins, 2000b).

De Klerk conducted research among elite Xhosa parents in the Easter Cape and reports some of their attitudes:

> Their comments reveal their deep awareness (often tinged with regret) of the low status of Xhosa, which carries with it the negative associations born of over a century of racial discrimination, despite recent efforts to improve the status of indigenous languages. They are also deeply aware of Xhosa's restricted societal functions and limited instrumental appeal. The view that Xhosa retains only a symbolic or ritualised function and has limited uses in South Africa was a frequent theme in the interviews (10 out of 26).

> Current circumstances, however, have meant that a decision to go for English has meant a decision 'not to be Xhosa'. (de Klerk, 2002:11)

This suggests that the parents do not feel a possibility of choosing *both* being Xhosa *and* South African. Related to Breidlid's (2004) discussion, the parents find it difficult to cross the cultural borders. As a result of these attitudes, parents were often deciding to move their children to English-medium schools simply because Xhosa-medium schools offered lower quality in education and made little or no effort to support the use of African languages, according to these parents (de Klerk, 2002).

As this data suggests, the education sector plays an important role in granting status to the identity of individuals and in South Africa there is still a long way to go in order to cater for diversity, both by individuals and by State organs. It is also vested in the South African system to "produce" democratic citizens as stated in Curriculum 2005:

> The kind of learner envisaged is one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice.

The curriculum aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. (Department of Education, 2002:8)

Let us now how turn our attention towards the education of democratic citizens in South Africa.

5.3 Education of democratic citizens

Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think is the nub of education. There are critical deficiencies at many South African schools. The challenge is that without the ability to read, write, count and think, it is impossible to participate effectively in democracy and in society, and it is therefore impossible to internalise and to live out the values of the Constitution. (Department of Education, 2001:4)

The "Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy" are not very explicit on the content of "critical deficiencies" in South African schools, but states that:

In general, when children read, write, count and think in their mother tongue, they do so more effectively than those who do it in a second language. If we are serious putting these skills at the centre of our educational mission, then we must all commit ourselves to the implementation of the State's policy of language in education. (Department of Education, 2001:23)

Linguistic practices in schools are important in order to educate democratic citizens prepared for the task of participation in a new democratic South Africa. The Department of Education (2001:8) states that schools are "the nursery of values" and Freire (1985) holds that the values in schools are reflections of values in wider society. I believe this relationship to be dialectical. The practices in schools are influenced by values in wider society and the schools serve as role models and influence pupils as well as educate them in a way that contributes to their development towards effective, productive, and responsible democratic citizens (Department of Education, 2001).

The required adherence to underlying principles, values and attitudes implies, in South Africa, a respect for diversity in general and linguistic differences in particular, as stated in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Furthermore, language is to be valued as a resource (Ruiz, 1988). Thus to learn an additional language increases the cultural repertoire of a citizen. The policy of the Western Cape is a trilingual model (Western Cape Provincial

Government, 2001; Western Cape Education Department, 2002); mother tongue, then a first additional language from as early as possible, with a second additional language which is not mandatory. The status a language is given and how it is valued as resource depends on whether it is chosen as language of instruction, first or second additional language.

Schools C and D do not seem to give a high priority to Xhosa since they have chosen it as the second additional language. On the other hand, they are both parallel medium schools which imply that they have mother tongue speakers of both English and Afrikaans. And since some Afrikaner parents choose English as the language of instruction for their children, the most obvious choice of first additional language is Afrikaans. The teachers I interviewed in schools C and D (T_7 and T_9) told me they are bilingual in English and Afrikaans, hence creating a need for external teachers to be hired when teaching Xhosa.

In schools A and B, English is the obvious first additional language since they practice a transition to English as a medium from Grade 4 onwards. Afrikaans is officially their second additional language but that was not much of a topic when discussing language issues within these two schools. These two schools do not have the luxury to hire specific English teachers, but rely instead on Xhosa mother tongue speakers who are often not proficient nor confident speakers of English. To hire an external Afrikaans teacher might be outside the economic scope of these schools, unlike the ability to hire outside teachers in schools C and D due to higher schools fees which are often used to hire extra teachers. Therefore it becomes clear that English appears to be the most valued resource in all four schools in this study, regardless of the pupils' mother tongue.

Freire (1985) points out that education of democratic citizens encourages critical thinking. This is supported by the Revised Curriculum (Department of Education, 2002). Critical thinking can be developed when the pupils are encouraged to ask questions, participate in discussions, and infuse the classroom with a culture of human rights based on the Constitution. This study revealed a slight difference in practices amongst the four schools. The teaching methods in schools A and B reflected more conventional and out-dated teacher-centred approaches than in schools C and D which displayed more contemporary child-centred approaches. My experience is based on fewer observations in the latter schools than in the former, but I noticed choir reading and choir answering in schools A and B as a regular pedagogical method. Certainly, the language difficulty experienced by both teachers and

learners in schools A and B may contribute to the choice of pedagogical methods. In schools A and B there was also some group work that was observed, especially in natural science, but discussions in the classroom were not observed. Interaction was more based on answers to the teacher's questions or questions raised by the pupils to the teacher. In schools C and D I observed both group work and teacher-led discussions. The pupils seemed to be used to this kind of interaction. These observations leads me back to Breidlid's (2002, 2004) research on the Xhosa culture. Hierarchy and indigenous values in Xhosa society requests respect for authority and people older than you, like teachers in a teacher-pupil interaction. In a more individualized tradition, like in school C, this respect is not as prominent, hence making it easier for the pupils to, for example, question a teacher's statement or discuss different topics with a teacher, despite that person possessing authority and being older.

Recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity and interdependence is of great importance in the education of democratic citizens in South Africa. As emphasized in chapter two, diversity is necessary in order to balance and correct society in using democratic values, and it can serve as the conscience for the democratic nation-state (Parekh, 1995; Honing, 2001; Kymlicka, 2001). Inter-group relations and handling of conflicts are necessary skills to master in order to learn democracy (Kymlicka, 2001; Davies, 2004). An interesting factor to notice in this regard is the homogeneity of schools A and B, and the heterogeneity of schools C and D. The former have only Xhosa speaking pupils, while the latter have a mixture of black, Indian, colored and whites. It is possible that the heterogeneity of the latter contributes to their education in democratic values. Both teachers and pupils have an every day life filled with a diversity of languages, values and cultures. Maybe these teachers and pupils need to assess their own attitudes towards democratic values to a large extent due to the now co-existence of previous segregated groups. Schools A and B experience a homogenous environment and are not confronted every day with cultural and linguistic diversity within the classroom. Lack of opposition and diversity do not give schools A and B the same opportunity to learn and practice democratic values as schools C and D. On the other hand, it is important to notice that school C have not experienced the oppression of apartheid as is the case of schools A and B. Perhaps school D did, as coloreds also experienced a lot of oppression, but just not to the same degree as the black population. This is, by no doubt, also influencing the practices today.

At the end of this section, it is interesting to return to the subject of School Governing Bodies because they represent institutions well suited to educate the members in a participatory democracy. The principal of school B holds the perception that engagement of the parents has increased after been given the opportunity to participate in the governance of the schools through the School Governing Body. As we saw in the discussion "Decentralization of education", the School Governing Bodies are given significant powers. They could prove to be a tool to educate democratic citizens, as it seems to be the intention of the government, if they improve their practice and encourage *all* the members to participate in the decisions, including the parents. This illuminates the idea that schools have an important role to play in this project of educating democratic citizens – not only pupils, but parents and educators as well. In this process, existing power structures are challenged, and therefore, I now turn to this matter.

5.4 Power in a democratic and multilingual society

In apartheid South Africa one of the official languages of the State, Afrikaans, was the mother tongue of the group identified as innately superior to the African ethnic groups. According to Sonntag (2003), the transition to democracy influenced the adoption of a multilingual language policy in an attempt to break down the previous regime. In addition, the Afrikaners wanted to make sure that Afrikaans would still be recognized and thus argued for multilingualism as a way to protect Afrikaans (Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2003) shows that only 13.3% of the total population has Afrikaans as their home language, with 55.3% in the Western Cape Province. In the post-apartheid era Afrikaans has lost its previous status and has no longer the monopoly of being linguistic capital. Although it is still important in many sectors, English is fast becoming the main language. A parent in school A assesses the status of the official languages:

> *P₃:* They don't have equal status [the eleven official languages]. My observation is that Afrikaans has lower status than English, so all the children try to opt for the prestigious language which is English.
> *P₁:* Even in the past, Afrikaans was never connected with high prestige, so that would be something new now if it would receive high status. That's why we can't really express ourselves in Afrikaans fluently.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

Afrikaans might have a different status among whites and coloreds compared with the black population, but the point to emphasize here is that the linguistic capital has not changed in post-apartheid South Africa in favour of the African languages, despite being spoken by some 78% of the population, of which the Nguni-languages Xhosa and Zulu constitutes 17.6% and 23.8% respectively. As was pointed out in the previous section, Xhosa does not seem to be regarded as resource or linguistic capital, rather English is what matters. According to Heugh:

> The languages of the majority were not regarded as viable alternatives; instead the language of a smaller elite, English, came to carry the imagined capital of liberation, certainly in the minds of the senior officials of the ANC. (Heugh, 2003:36)

This perception seems to be concurrent with the perception of parents in school A who emphasize the following:

> *Q:* What would you do if this school had Xhosa as the medium of instruction from Grade R to Grade 7 and English as a subject?
> *P:* No, no, no, we would opt for English. The reason is that when they [the children] go up, they need English and in our time we were taught through English. So we would really like English to be used in most of the subjects. It should be used in most of the subjects as the medium of instruction. In these modern days, our children are exposed to so many things. Some go overseas or to other areas where Xhosa is not spoken. So it is much easier for them there if they can communicate through the medium of English.
>
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

Thus, according to these parents, knowledge of English constitutes cultural capital which demarcates the class boundaries between the small upper layer of people who are proficient in English and the vast majority of people who either do not possess skills in English at all or with only very limited vocabulary (Alexander, 2000). Due to this a lot of people are excluded from participation in society, thus language constitutes an unequal structure of power relations (Prah, 2001; Sonntag, 2003). The elite, both white *and* black with English proficiency, possess both resource and structural power (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). This enables them to socially construct the norm of valid linguistic capital in South African society. They are the 'A-team' who through their own linguistic practices devalues African languages; hence their own status is retained. But we must also remember that the dominated groups are giving the dominating group legitimacy – linguistically as well as politically (Bourdieu, 1991; Sonntag, 2003). It is important not to "victimize" the majority; they are also social agents who, to some extent, go along with this system. Freire (1996) also emphasize that the oppressed enable the oppressors. Illustrative is the example of the principal in school A, who struggles with his Master thesis because he has to write in English instead of his mother tongue (Xhosa). He

does not challenge the system of linguistic practice in higher education by writing his thesis in Xhosa, although he most likely would receive support from the judicial system if he dared to do so. It seems like he has accepted this practice, thus enabling the oppressor (Freire, 1996). Neither do any of the educators in schools A and B question the choice of language of instruction. They become futuristic in the sense that they want to equip the pupils for higher education, not questioning whether it is fair that English is a prerequisite to study in these institutions, and thus excluding the majority. This is also reflected in the perceptions of the previous educational system (Bantu Education), which was conducted in their mother tongue to Grade 8. Let us take a closer look.

During the period of Bantu Education, mother tongue education was used as an instrument of the apartheid project. This was a very efficient tool in keeping people segregated and within their "expected places" in society. The black population saw English as the tool to fight Bantu Education, which they assessed as inferior and of low quality despite their mother tongue being the language of instruction. In this sense, they underestimated the value of education in their mother tongue. A comment from a parent in school A underlines this:

> *Q:* But you yourself were you taught in English or in Xhosa?
> *P₁:* For the first two grades we used Xhosa. Then from Grade 3 upwards it was English. That was before the implementation of Bantu Education. When Bantu Education came into place, it was the opposite. The education was very advanced *before* Bantu Education; we got good education before Bantu Education came into existence.
> *Q:* But not during Bantu Education?
> *P₁:* We got better education than those exposed to Bantu Education.
> (Focus group discussion 2, 2004-10-05)

The parent quoted here is most likely a grandparent, hence old enough to have experienced Bantu Education and the system prior to that. He criticizes *both* the content of Bantu Education and the medium in which it was taught. He is also very eager to opt for English as a medium today, and did not agree with the other parents in this group in the importance of Xhosa. However, the principal in school B has a different perception of Bantu Education:

> *T₃:* But if I could go back to my time, when I was at primary school, we were taught in Xhosa, everything in Xhosa, except for English as a language.
> *Q:* For 8 years?
> *T₃:* For 8 years. And then when we got to Form 1, which I would say is now, say Grade 7 or Grade 8, then we would switch to English. But the *rich knowledge* of the language that we had made it easier for us because we had the concepts in our language, but we didn't know them in English. For instance, when we used to speak of [the concept in Xhosa], we would speak of pollination, but we *knew* what pollination

meant, it meant to transfer pollen grain, whether it was by wind or it was by insects, or what. But when someone now says to you pollination, in English now, then you would know ... oh, pollination is [the concept in Xhosa], you know. *Really*, although it was apartheid education, but *that part of it* had an influence in our understanding of those concepts because we had for quite a number of years been taught in Xhosa, and then it was only when this transfer on high school level, university level, college level there wasn't Xhosa, so it went up to Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8.

Q: One might say that you had the right policy, but for the wrong reasons.

T₃: That's right. Now, it was introduced for the wrong reasons, but it was a good policy.

<div align="right">(Interview, 2004-09-14)</div>

According to this principal, Bantu Education had as a positive factor the use of Xhosa as a medium of instruction. "*That part of it*", the instruction in mother tongue, improved the pupils' results and more pupils than today managed to pass matriculation exams (Heugh 2002a, Nompucuko 2004). A parent also confirms this stating that:

P₈: The government says now … they choose: "Someone must get the subject as Xhosa, and someone as English" … to make equal, because the children when in Grade 12, they fail because they don't understand the questions. So that is why they say now this new system of education, you can learn Xhosa up to Grade 12. Do the subject in mother tongue up to Grade 12.

<div align="right">(Focus group discussion 1, 2004-09-21)</div>

Despite the principal (T₃) experiencing the positive effects of education in his mother tongue during Bantu Education, it does not seems like he is questioning the policy of English as a language of instruction in his school today, or at least he accepts the practice. One of the arguments for not using African languages as language of instruction is often the lack of vocabulary (Brock-Utne, 2004). Kathleen Heugh at the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) elaborates interestingly:

People have been saying for years that you can't teach maths and science through an African language because African languages don't have these concepts. This is a popular misconception that has been particularly advanced at this university by English speaking educators. Now, anybody who can remember anything about Bantu Education will know that during the years of Bantu Education, however awful it was, they taught maths, science, history, nursing – all sorts of things, nature studies, health studies through African languages, seven South African languages, and I can't remember how many Namibian languages, but several. They produced dictionaries, one dictionary after another, they advanced them, and they "grew" them. They were still producing dictionaries in 1996.

<div align="right">(Interview, 2004-09-29)</div>

The negative attitudes towards Bantu Education are inseparably linked with apartheid policy. But Heugh continues:

What people haven't understood about apartheid is they wanted black lawyers, doctors, nurses, and teachers. They wanted a *black* professional class in the rural area so you didn't need to have *white* people doing those jobs for black people. So they actually wanted people to be educated in order to look after their own. It was a very bizarre approach. The people were definitely educated, but the teacher training colleges taught people through African languages. So they had to understand things like teaching methodologies, psychology of education, sociology of education … all those kinds of things. So you can't tell me the terminology was not there – of course it was!

I had been under the impression, because everything I had read myself told me that Bantu Education provided an impoverished curriculum and syllabus for African speaking kids. So what the whites got was to advance their intellect, what the blacks got was to *not* advance the intellect.

(Interview, 2004-09-29)

Mahlalela-Thusi[13] and Heugh (2004) have conducted research comparing English textbooks with textbooks in Xhosa and Zulu which shows, on the contrary to people's perception (Heugh's included), that the content of textbooks in the Bantu Education era was exactly the same. *All* the pupils of South Africa had the same syllabus. One possible explanation for this is that translators were not instructed to "dumb down" the content in African languages; hence they did not do that since it is much more difficult to translate *and* "dumb down" than to only translate (Heugh, interview, 2004-09-29). Heugh is also suggesting that another factor explaining this is that the apartheid bureaucracy was not proficient in any African language, which made it difficult for them to control the content of the textbooks. A conclusion could be that the black population received a fairly good education during the apartheid era, but with the wrong ideology underpinning it.

Against this background it is possible to argue that the attitudes against mother tongue education are prevailing amongst both parents and educators in schools A and B because they relate this to Bantu Education and oppression in the apartheid era. Despite research showing that mother tongue education is the most fruitful alternative for the children (Mbude-Shale, Wababa and Plüddemann, 2004; Nompucuko, 2004), they opt for English which was the language of the liberation struggle. This illustrates how power structures are indeed present in language and how possibly a majority of the Xhosa population in the Western Cape devalues their own language in such a way that they do not opt for this as a language of instruction. Still being a dominated group, though not as obvious as during apartheid, they share a belief

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[13] This is part of her PhD thesis and Heugh is her thesis advisor.

with the dominating group in their view of what is regarded as linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Nodoba, 2002).

To choose Xhosa as the language of instruction and interaction throughout, at least, compulsory school would redistribute power from the privileged few to a larger segment of the population (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003). Despite policy documents opting for mother tongue instruction, a majority of the population is kept unaware of the positive effects of this. The result is that they are still "kept in place" in society, as was the intention during the apartheid era, with small opportunities of social mobility. Mother tongue education today, however, is an entirely different matter from that of Bantu Education, as Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir emphasise:

> The recognition of several indigenous languages as resources in the building of a democratic society indicates a will to alter the distribution of power amongst language groups. (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003:83)

As a tool for democratization, the use of the mother tongue as the language of teaching and learning would alter the power structures by also empowering the pupils who speak Ndebele, Sepedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa or Zulu. Use of these languages in all domains of society, and especially in education would upgrade their status (Desai, 2000). The problem is all too often the reluctance from educators and parents to use mother tongue as the medium of instruction since they have experienced apartheid and the use of mother tongue as a tool of oppression, thus relating these two factors. Cummins argues for the need to recognize the mother tongue as recourse:

> What educators bring into the classroom reflects their awareness of and orientation to issues of equity and power in the wider society, their understanding of language and how it develops in academic contexts among bilingual children, and their commitment to educate the whole child rather than just teach the curriculum. (Cummins, 2000:5, 6)

This quote may lead to a belief that the mindset of educators in schools A and B contribute to the reproduction of the power structure in society. The normative message they send out to both pupils and parents through their language policy is a message that English is the only means through which social mobility may occur. It also seems that parents too hold such normative beliefs. No doubt English is important, but by using it as the language of instruction instead of teaching it as a subject, the symbolic power of English becomes more prominent (Bourdieu, 1991). Neville Alexander reflects on some of the aspects of the situation:

> The most devastating insights we arrived at in the course of our work was that South African education for more than three-quarters of the children at school is based on an English as a Third Language system. In other words, while English is used as a language of learning and teaching in most black schools, the teachers who were/are using the language to teach the school subjects, including English itself, were/are in most cases not very proficient second-language or third-language speakers of English. This is the direct result of apartheid education and is, naturally, not the fault of the teachers. If there is one factor that explains the brutal attrition rate in South African schools – in 1997, some 53% of all the students who wrote the Matriculation (school-leaving) examination failed – this is surely the obvious candidate. (Alexander, 2000:172)

Through this discussion of power in a democratic and multilingual society, it becomes obvious that citizens possess divergent interests. Language is the main instrument to influence and have a voice in such a society. Equal rights to influence collective decisions are, to some extent, dependent on access to the public discourse. Therefore, the last section in this chapter will elaborate on this issue.

5.5 Deliberative democracy – access to public discourse

Deliberation is a particular way of practicing democracy. Through public discourse, participants try to reach a shared decision on how to handle common problems (Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan, 2002). "Africans talked until they agreed" (Julius Nyerere cited in Koelble, 1998:36). This represents a model of participatory, grass-root democratic interaction, and making deliberative democracy even more suited for Africa, according to Koelble (1998). In a large scale society, this deliberation takes place in news, books, academic discourses, political speeches, etc. Furthermore, the power in a deliberative democracy is in the access to the ongoing discourse, making proficiency in the language used in this discourse a prerequisite (van Dijk, 1993). Hence it is of interest in what language(s) in South Africa this discourse takes place and the possibilities for the Xhosa speaking population in this study to participate in this democratic activity.

Newspapers are mostly available in Afrikaans and English, often sold during the afternoon rush in every intersection. During my field work I did not observe any Xhosa newspapers available. Before I left for field work, I had read that two Xhosa newspapers existed from 1881 (Isigidimi samaXhosa – "Xhosa Express") and from 1884 (Imvo zabaNtsundu – "Native Opinion") respectively (Mda 2000). Asking about the existence of Xhosa newspapers, none of

my South African academic colleagues or language activists could confirm whether they still existed or not. I was not able to find those old newspapers and my assumption is that they no longer exist. Parents I interviewed told me that they read Xhosa newspapers, which are distributed weekly for free in the townships. One parent spoke of three different newspapers without being specific of names, other parents named "Vision" and "Vukani". Being "only" township newspapers may explain why they are so unfamiliar to people living outside the townships. The content of the newspapers are mostly community news and the parents told me that they are eager to read these because they want to keep up with what is going on in the community. In a talk with a journalist at Vukani (2004-09-27), I was informed of a distribution of 75 500 copies in the townships. This is not at all enough to cover the entire Xhosa speaking population of the area, but Vukani counts at least 5-6 readers per copy. They are able to hand it out for free due to funding by advertises. Both Xhosa and English are used in Vukani which also brings national news in addition to community news, especially during the election campaign prior to the April 2004 election. In addition, the parents informed me of local radio stations using Xhosa as the medium.

Parents in school A reported a lack of available books. Due to poverty they are dependent on public libraries, but access to books in Xhosa is not extensive. A parent from the township in which school B is situated claimed she had a lot of reading materials at home, such as biographies and books for study (she is a student at the university), but they are all in English and not much of this, if anything, is available in Xhosa. On the other hand, literature for children is easier to obtain in Xhosa, in addition to books and pamphlets on health issues (Interview, P_{11}, 2004-09-16).

Since tertiary education takes place in either English or Afrikaans, these are also the languages in which the academic discourse takes place (Nodoba, 2002). Proficiency in these languages is therefore necessary in order to participate, thus excluding the majority of the Xhosa speaking population since only a fragment reach tertiary level. One of my informants, a Xhosa language activist, does take part in the public discourse by writing chronicles in several newspapers, writing letters to official institutions and so on. She participated in a conference with PanSALB and she experienced their comment regarding complaints on violations of linguistic rights of African languages:

> ***PanSALB***: No, we are not getting any complaints from people with African languages, but we have so many complaints in Afrikaans.

> *Language activist:* But I've written letters to *everyone* in this country, provincial, Minister of Arts and Culture – I've written so many letters! Why don't you, from the level of Arts and Culture, have African speaking people in the committees because you will not know what is going on until you bring in someone that have the experience.
> *PanSALB*: You are right.
> *Language activist*: Is it possible to put up a language unit at PanSALB that is going to be the watchdog of what is going on in the schools because that is where everything is happening? [An answer to this question was not registered.]
> (Interview, Language activist (anonymous), 2004-10-05)

It seems like she is fighting a lonely battle for the use of the Xhosa language in the public sphere, an area so dominated by English.

When it comes to political speeches, according to the parents, most of them took place in Xhosa during the election campaign. But it is possible to question whether this is a phenomenon only occurring under such circumstances. I observed some politicians on the Television news using African languages during their visits to local communities, but that is not necessarily representative of the language in which the public discourse takes place. According to the language activist:

> The parents have a problem in the sense that … they see people in the Parliament using English. You see people everywhere using English.
> (Interview, Language activist (anonymous), 2004-10-05)

All the data available during this study indicates that English is the prominent language in the public sphere of South African society (see also section *4.3 Global English*). Mazrui makes this comment:

> This realization that English has become an important instrument for the globalization of Western liberal capitalism may, in turn, serve as a motive for more aggressive, even if subtle, effort on the part of the USA (and Britain) to expedite its spread in the rest of the world. At the same time, however, with the technology of communication under the control of the West, the increasing global dependence on English may be yet another factor contributing to the widening gap of privileges and opportunities between the North and the South, between the global Rich and the global Poor. (Mazrui 2004:16)

Language is an obstacle for people to both acquire knowledge and gain access to public discourse since this mainly takes place in English and Afrikaans (Nodoba, 2002). According to Mazrui this situation contributes to widening of the gap between poor and rich. But much more is at stake here as well. A vast majority of the South African population can not

participate in the public discourse and in this sense participate in decisions regarding their own future within a democratic society. Freedom of expression is an important feature of democracy but the vast majority of South Africans are not able to exercise this right in their own language (Prah 2001). Another major deficiency is the lack of an active political opposition through the use of African languages. A deliberative democracy needs an active opposition as a prerequisite to function within democratic values. Since skills in English or Afrikaans are necessary to participate in democratic deliberation, only a small South African elite are capable of constituting this opposition. Therefore, a risk of watering down democratic values is present.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter data surrounding the relationship between democracy and multilingualism has been presented within the themes of individual rights, identity, education of democratic citizens, power structures and access to public discourse. Although democracy has made it possible to adopt multilingualism as an official policy of South Africa and recognizing African languages previously disadvantaged, language still seems to be a major obstacle to a complete democratic society. I would claim that the linguistic rights founded in the Constitution and in several policy documents are not sufficiently catered for and that institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission and the Pan South African Language Board need to work more closely with these particular rights.

The emphasis on the use of English in the public sphere is problematic when related to democratic values such as equality. South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural country where the Xhosa population cross cultural borders when entering the schools. A recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource is important in order to be able to educate democratic citizens of South Africa. This could also increase the status of Xhosa identity, culture and language, which in turn, empower the Xhosa speaking population to participate in society. Participation in deliberation is dependent on the public discourse taking place in all the official languages, not only English and Afrikaans. The risk is of course altering of existent power relations, but an active opposition is needed in a sustainable democracy. I now turn to the closing discussion in the last chapter.

6 Bringing it to a close

The main objective of this study was to investigate how global trends are affecting language issues in South African education, in addition to how democracy and linguistic issues are intertwined in this new democracy. Language is an important part of a person's identity, but it is even more essential in a societal context. Language is the basis for communication, which is the essential medium for creating understanding between individuals and groups and a sense of shared community necessary for a sustainable society. A society is in this way *dependent* on language. Furthermore, language is a highly political question and thus a question of power in a democracy.

The principal research questions asked in this study are used as titles in the following subsections. This is used to structure the content in order to clarify the answers and arguments.

6.1 Is bilingualism/multilingualism viable in the era of globalization?

Since an intensification of worldwide social relations occurs in contemporary South Africa as well as other countries, the village, town or nation-state are no longer the only determinant on every day life of each citizen. Our lives are integrated in a larger system in which English plays a prominent role in communication. Despite this, the role of the mother tongue is essential. Language is not only a tool of communication; it is more fundamentally an instrument of thought (Mazrui, 2004). Therefore, the use of mother tongue is important for the cognitive development of the child. It is the language in which we learn best. In other words, it is the foundation on which everything else builds. In a country like South Africa where English is widely used, only 8% have English as their mother tongue. It is a language for the elite. This makes bilingualism or multilingualism not only viable, but necessary. The intensification of social relations has created global trends influencing education. Some of them promote multilingualism while others create obstacles. The global trends discussed in this investigation are not an exhaustive list but illustrates the fact that global forces are influencing local linguistic practices.

National systems of education are a world wide phenomenon where skills in reading and writing are deemed necessary. In addition, knowledge assessed important is rapidly changing, hence making the process of learning more important than knowledge itself. Home language as the language of instruction is a critical factor for the progress of the learners (Chinapah et al., 2000). The South African government has issued policies that favour teaching and learning in the mother tongue of the pupil. Multilingualism is also regarded as an important feature of South African citizens. However, several challenges must be met in order to implement this goal of mother tongue instruction and multilingualism within the national education sector. The government needs to show its willingness to promote the language policies, for example, by making public funds available to develop learning materials in all eleven official languages. If the teachers are to develop material themselves, they need to be provided with sufficient training in this method. Another factor deciding the linguistic practices in primary and secondary education is in what language higher education is available. As long as national systems of higher education are not available in the African languages, resistance to mother tongue education from parents and educators are likely to continue since higher education is regarded an important tool for social mobility. A thorough evaluation of the languages of instruction in these institutions is therefore appropriate.

Successful implementation of policies is also dependent on the people that are actually supposed to implement them. In this case the educators are of vital importance. First of all, it is necessary that the educators know about the policies, otherwise it is impossible for them to implement anything. This study suggests that a lack of knowledge of the policies present is one of the reasons why old language practices still prevail. This makes it necessary for the educators to be informed in order to acquire knowledge of both the policies and the advantages of mother tongue instruction. If not, it is likely that the language policies in South Africa will fail by the resistance from their own speakers (Reagan, 2002). Since the teachers are experiencing linguistic problems in the classroom every day and they are more aware of the difficulties learning in a second language than parents are, they are the ones that should be given a responsibility in creating a sound language policy within the school (Murray, 2002). In addition, it is not obvious that every teacher is able to teach sufficiently in a language other than their mother tongue if they are not given training as bilingual teachers. Proficiency in the language of teaching and learning is a prerequisite for a successful national education system (NCCRD, 2000).

Decentralization of decision making within the education sector is a global trend that influences language issues. It is argued that this is a more democratic form of government. A School Governing Body is set up in every South African school with the task to decide on a multitude of issues and thus given considerable power, and parents comprise the majority of this forum. When it comes to language, their task is, in theory, to decide on the language of instruction and what languages to offer as subjects. Some of the educators in this study are not aware that this is a matter for the School Governing Body, but believe this is decided by the Department of Education. Others admit that, in practice, the educators have more of a say than the parents in this forum. The parents themselves seem to believe that this is a matter for the school. Despite a confusion or lack of knowledge of the role of the School Governing Bodies regarding language issues, the schools themselves are left with the power to decide in these matters. This decentralization of decisions results in different responses at each school within the sample of this investigation. Pupils in schools C and D are advantaged compared with schools A and B since the former schools offer mother tongue instruction all through primary education, which is not the case in the latter schools.

Morrow and Torres (2000) claim that this global trend of decentralization of power and decision making are not within the capacity of marginalized groups to manage, on the contrary, it further erodes their possibilities of determining their own fate. School Governing Bodies seem like a good alternative in letting citizens participate in decisions regarding their own lives and future, but it is questionable whether everyone is adequately trained to make such important decisions. Thus to be able to make these decisions the members of the School Governing Bodies need to be given the tools to do so. The *right* to act is decentralized in the sense that linguistic rights are a passive right of South African citizens, not an *obligation* of the government. Decentralization could also be a sleeping pillow in the sense that those in charge have scapegoats to blame when some things are not working as intended. For example, when the principal (T_3) of one of the township schools is asked why Xhosa is not used as the language of instruction all through primary, he answers that this is the responsibility of the School Governing Body where parents are in majority. In this way he is implicitly blaming the parents for the result of the language practice while previously in the interview claiming that the educators are the actual decision makers in this forum. This investigation suggests that decentralization is a sensible way of involving stakeholders, but some are more equipped to take on this responsibility than others. Therefore, the language policy of schools C and D are more in tune with the national and provincial policies than in schools A and B.

Arnove (2003) describes a dialectic process between global trends and local responses. In South Africa, English is deemed important by both parents and educators due to increased internationalization. The local response is often the use of English as a language of instruction. English constitutes a cultural dimension of globalization and it is one of the factors making international communication possible. English also constitutes a kind of cultural capital. Despite only 8% of the South African population having English as their mother tongue, this language is widely used in the public sphere, both through media and by the government. Due to the global status of English and its prominent role in the struggle for freedom, English possess a high status in South African society. This is also visible in the requirements of fluency in this language compared with Afrikaans and Xhosa in the schools in this study. Those who have Xhosa as their first language have English as the first additional language *and* as a language of instruction from Grade 4, thus an expected vocabulary large enough to cope with this situation. The same requirements of fluency in the first additional language are not present in classes which are taught through either English or Afrikaans, resulting in an increase of the status of English, but a decrease in the status of both Xhosa and Afrikaans. This situation needs to be changed in order to promote multilingualism in other ways than merely through words. Proficiency in English skills are desirable and even necessary, but using English as a language of instruction is both reducing the learning outcome of the pupils who do not have English as a mother tongue and promoting **monolingualism**. A thorough knowledge of one's mother tongue is often the main prerequisite for learning a foreign language (Simala, 2001). Therefore, multilingualism is viable in a globalized world because fluency in the mother tongue enhances the possibility of acquiring skills in a second language.

Democracy and human rights are political aspects taken into consideration by an increasing number of nation-states throughout the world. Language constitutes a highly political subject in democracies, and democracy in South Africa has paved the way for official recognition of nine African languages. Protection of linguistic rights is a part of the South African Constitution. The Pan South African Language Board is to monitor any violation of these rights. However, the majority of complaints received are related to violation of Afrikaans linguistic rights or violation of linguistic rights in general by the use of English only. Few complaints are related to any of the African languages despite 78.5% of the population using one of these languages as their home language. This does not necessarily suggest that

speakers of African languages do not feel their linguistic rights compromised. On the other hand, it is possible to state that the global trend of English and its hegemony in South African society are not challenged by speakers of African languages in the same way as speakers of Afrikaans do.

Language policy and practice in education is claimed to play an important role in development of young democracies (de Klerk, 2002). Sustainability of the indigenous languages of the South African majority is important in order for their voice not to silence in the new democracy. However, this study concludes that basic rights for democratic participation is catered for in the sense that voting is possible in Xhosa and election campaigns have been either conducted in Xhosa or translated into Xhosa. But according to the following this is not enough to create a sustainable South African democracy.

6.2 What is the relationship between democracy and multilingualism in the South African context?

South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven official languages. I argue that this situation needs to be taken into account when discussing democracy. When choosing democracy as a way of governance, participation of the citizens is a prerequisite. This presupposes an empowerment of the people to be able to perform the task of participation and language constitutes an important factor in this matter. Five different aspects of the relationship between democracy and multilingualism have been discussed in this study, which I will now summarize.

First, the right to equal participation is a hallmark of democratic societies. Linguistically marginalized groups in South Africa must be empowered to do this by being given a chance to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to function as democratic citizens. Thus, education is seen as an important tool in preparing all citizens for participation, but then the education must be comprehensible to the pupils, i.e. in a language they understand. The right to learn in their mother tongue is vested in the Constitution, as is the right to choose the language of instruction. In this study parents assessed skills in both Xhosa and English as desirable, because the children are to operate both within the local Xhosa speaking community as well as in wider South African society. Thus what is needed is a solution, which considers both the global, represented by English, and the local, represented by Xhosa,

in finding a way to allow both languages a place in the pupils' lives. The result would be a "glocal" solution (Mazrui, 2005). Economical constraints and the lack of knowledge of the importance of mother tongue education are some of the factors contributing to excluding parents as meaningful agents in exercising the linguistic rights of their children. The *ugliness* of human and linguistic rights are made visible when it becomes clear that the individual has to claim these rights, which is rarely done due to difficult circumstances or lack of knowledge of these rights. Thus linguistic rights granted in the South African Constitution become out of reach to the majority of citizens. Hence, they are not able to participate in defining their own future in the same way as the linguistic minority in power, and democracy as a content is violated. Therefore, other agents in the democracy of South Africa need to cater for the linguistic rights of the people, such as the South African Human Rights Commission and the Pan South African Language Board. Consequently, a huge potential for improvement is present in these institutions and a change in contemporary practices should be considered.

Second, construction of some sense of shared identity is necessary in order to maintain any nation-state. Possessing multiple identities is a feature within every person and there is no contradiction between making one identity significant in one situation and another identity in another situation. A viable democracy must take this into consideration, respecting diversity, and creating a protective and including community. Since language constitutes an important part of every person's identity, the language policies of South Africa are important within the task of keeping the nation-state together. The concept of a 'Rainbow Nation' is signifying that differences in South African society are important, but also the need for bringing this difference together. This could prove problematic in the long run, since it is the difference that is made significant in the interaction as South African citizens and not the commonness. If this is a concept that is supposed to contribute to the creation of a national identity, the language of each pupil in the country needs to be acknowledged as an important part of that child's identity and as an important part of the identity of South African society. By increasing the use of English in the public sphere, South Africa is in a way working against its own task of nation-building because the linguistic reality of its people is neglected.

Language represents a specific world view. Breidlid's (2004) research on schooling and cultural values among the Xhosa speaking population in South Africa is interesting in this regard. He emphasizes the difference in cultural values mediated through Xhosa at home and English in school. The Revised Curriculum 2005 is presenting a knowledge system based on

Western tradition and "science". The Xhosa speaking population have another knowledge system based on a close tie to nature, ancestral believes, and respect for authority. This leads to a cultural "clash" at school when the knowledge base from the pupil's home is not the exit point for knowledge acquired at school. The cultural border crossing that both Xhosa teachers and their pupils have to do every day when entering the school yard could be problematic and an obstacle to learning. If the cultural identity of every Xhosa pupil is not acknowledged in the South African schools, this creates a devaluation of Xhosa identity. Maybe educators have experienced a devaluation of their identity for such a long time that it is their bicultural ambivalence which is visible when Xhosa teachers conduct their staff meetings in English. If Xhosa is not assessed "proper" within the educational sphere, this is sending a strong signal to both pupils and parents as well when it comes to their Xhosa identity. Mother tongue and language is much more than just uttered words, it contains other multidimensional aspects as well. Abdi emphasizes the importance of language in connection with identity arguing that:

> While the prominence of English may not be challenged in the global scene and, therefore, in emergent South Africa, it is again important to realize that one's own language is not only socially and culturally liberating, it is also a precious historical and contemporary achievement that solidifies ones identity. (Abdi, 2002:173)

Third, skills as democratic citizens are not innate, but roles that need to be learned. Knowledge of social, legal and political systems enables citizens to operate within society. Acquisition of such knowledge is dependent on skills such as reading, writing, counting and thinking. The education sector plays an important role in this endeavour, trying to meet both societal and national needs of a democracy, and this task is carried out more efficiently in the pupils' mother tongue than in a second or foreign language. Furthermore, assessing language as a resource within the South African schools contributes to the development of self-respect and identity of the pupils, who are the future democratic citizens of the country. Despite being one of three official languages in the Western Cape, Xhosa is not a mandatory subject in the schools, which generally have English or Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. When schools that have Xhosa as a medium in foundation phase also have English and Afrikaans as subjects, we may question whether Xhosa is assessed as linguistic resource by the citizens of the Western Cape who do not have Xhosa as their mother tongue. In addition, the transition from Xhosa to English in the Xhosa speaking community schools appears to contribute to the disregard of the language among the Xhosa speaking population itself. This is certainly not a way of using the educational sphere to educate democratic South African citizens.

Fourth, despite power structures being more visible in a democracy than in other forms of governance, symbolic power is present, but concealed (Bourdieu, 1991). The dominating group is defining the "reality" and hierarchies are disguised as natural. Innate power may be present in every strata of society, but the majority lack both resource power and structural power which results in them staying as the 'B-team' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The 'A-team' or political and economical elite define, through their practice, English as linguistic capital. On the other hand, English constitutes symbolic capital in the mind of the parents as well since it is a symbol of struggle against apartheid. Bantu Education, with its emphasis on mother tongue instruction, is an obvious contributor to this mindset (Maré, 1999). However, by not challenging the hegemony of English the dominated groups of South Africa are providing the dominating group legitimacy. To preserve the present situation with English as linguistic capital, the differences in symbolic power between different groups in society will prevail.

The classroom community reveal power structures in wider society by practicing what is accepted, respected and seen as normal. Having English as a language of instruction, gives an implicit statement of power relationships. English is concurrent with authority and power. The normative message sent out, when the mother tongue is not the language of instruction, is that another language constitutes symbolic power (Pennycook, 1994). As long as English is used as the language of instruction, although it is not the mother tongue of the pupils, only the people possessing such linguistic capital are privileged. It is not impossible to change this situation. During the apartheid era, Afrikaans was assessed as the language of power, while English was the challenging language and the one symbolizing freedom for the masses. This situation has changed in post-apartheid South Africa with the status of Afrikaans steadily declining. But still mother tongue instruction is viewed with deep suspicion and there is a close linkage between language and apartheid (Hornberger and Chick, 2001; Reagan, 2002). Education through the mother tongue could help to upgrade the status of all languages. The problem following this is that the power distribution will be altered from only the privileged few to larger segments of the population. However, keeping the majority unaware of the positive effects of mother tongue education, helps to preserve the present distribution of power. South Africa is a country with enormous differences among the rich and the poor. In addition, the poor will always strive to achieve better living conditions. In due time dramatic tension may occur and a democratic South Africa might be forced to take language issues more seriously into consideration in order to empower the masses, not only the elite.

Fifth, in a deliberative democracy, access to public discourse is of vital importance. This requires a good command of the language in which it takes place. Although speakers of African languages in South Africa totally outnumber English and Afrikaans speakers, they do not have access to this discourse because it is generally not conducted in any of their languages. Those proficient in English, and to some extent Afrikaans, are those who decide the hegemonic message going out to the public. This access reflects the power structure in society. If the hegemony of only a small elite in a democratic South Africa is to change, it is important that the population are empowered to participate in the discourse by using their own mother tongue publicly and request the political elite to do so as well. Another strategy is to upgrade the status of mother tongue by using it as a language of instruction in addition to having well-trained bilingual teachers helping the children to acquire the necessary skills in additional language(s). This could contribute to a population which is empowered to participate in the public discourse and being enabled to constitute a critical voice if necessary. No democracy can continue without a political opposition which, in deliberative democracies, conduct some of their work through public discourse. In contemporary South Africa, this opposition is not the linguistic majority of the country. This needs to be changed in order to create a sustainable democracy.

Two newspapers in Xhosa were established more than one hundred years ago and were still present during apartheid. During this investigation, however, I was unable to find them and only local newspapers in Xhosa exist in the townships. Since they are only read by the local community, they are even unfamiliar to Xhosa speakers living in other areas. Despite a Xhosa language activist writing comments in these newspapers it is questionable how "public" this discourse really is. In addition, the activity of such activists is often directed at authorities, not as awareness campaigns among the Xhosa speaking population. The result is that Xhosa language issues may not be a part of the public agenda and the Xhosa speaking population are not empowered to participate in the deliberative democracy.

6.3 Conclusion

Language constitutes an essential part of globalization and democracy. Education is mirroring the values of wider society and can be a primary promoter of democratic values. South Africa

has an explicit goal of promoting multilingualism in the new democracy. Linguistic practices in education are not reflecting the linguistic reality of South Africa and must change in order to create a sustainable South African democracy. A political willingness to promote multilingualism beyond mere symbolic policies is necessary. The main task of South Africa's political elite is to govern the country, but they are also in the forefront as role models for the citizens of the country. If they use English in every sphere, they devaluate the identity of the majority of South Africa's population, which is not concurrent with democratic values. English is really useful to only a small minority, not to the millions of Africans who will often not understand nor use this language outside of the classroom.

English as the only language for social mobility, economic and political progress represent a strong ideology. However, ideologies can change, but not necessarily through awareness campaigns only. They need to be changed through practice, for example, schools must choose to use Xhosa as the language of instruction all through primary and secondary school when Xhosa is the mother tongue of the pupils. English can be taught as a subject, as a foreign language, with its own didactics. Thus proficiency in both Xhosa and English would be catered for. The result would most likely be that more pupils would pass their matriculation exams and this could empower them to participate more effectively as citizens in a democratic society. In addition, tertiary education in African languages needs to be available so that students and their parents would see the need in using these languages as medium of instruction. This would certainly enhance the status of the languages and the identity of the majority of South Africans would be acknowledged, a factor which is contributing to a sustainable democracy.

Finally, some of the language policies already promoted by the government need to be implemented. Consequently there is a great need to look into the obstacles of implementing these policies. First of all, educators must be informed of the policies. Secondly, a will to take on the financial burden of producing learning materials in all eleven languages is necessary. Financial constraints can be used as an argument against this, but we must remember that the money for mother tongue education was present during apartheid, indicating that if a government really wants a policy implemented they will find available resources. This study also suggests that teachers educated under Bantu Education are in need of re-training as many still rely heavily on teacher-centred methods.

Several institutions, such as the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) and the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) are conducting tremendous work within this field. In addition, other institutions, researchers and activists have language issues in education on their agenda. It is important to note that academics as well as politicians act as role models in society. How well they manage to collaborate in their task of providing understanding of and promoting multilingualism might give the public an impression of its importance. Joining forces would also contribute to efficiency in presenting trenchant arguments, both to the authorities, the academic environment, and perhaps the population.

> Participatory democracy can be built on the foundations of identity reformation, linguistic empowerment, cultural recognition and respect for all citizens of Azania[14]. (Nodoba, 2002:352)

Nodoba emphasizes an important aspect of democracy, namely the possibility for democratic citizens to participate in decisions regarding their own lives in wider society. Respect and recognition despite differences affects the democratic value of equality. The use of mother tongue as the language of instruction in all levels of education is contributing to recognize the different identities and cultures of South Africans as well as empowering the coming generations of democratic and multilingual citizens.

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[14] Azania refers to 'South Africa'. Azania is rooted in African peoples' designation of the southernmost part of Africa – the land of black people (Nodoba, 2002).

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Appendix – coding

	School A	School B	School C	School D	Others
Teachers/ educators (T_{1-11})	T_1 (principal, interview 2004-09-15)	T_3 (principal, interview 2004-09-14)	T_6 (dep. principal, interview 2004-09-17)	T_8 (principal, interview 2004-10-05)	T_{10} (student teacher) (interview 2004-09-27)
	T_2 (interview 2004-09-08)	T_4 (answer to a small questionnaire 2004-09-30)	T_7 (interview 2004-09-17)	T_9 (interview 2004-10-05)	T_{11} (dep. principal, interview 2004-09-30)
		T_5 (interview 2004-09-14)			
Parents (P_{1-11})	P_1 (interview 2004-10-05) grandfather?	P_8 (interview 2004-09-21) grandmother			P_{11} (interview 2004-09-16) also a student
	P_2 (interview 2004-10-05) grandmother?	P_9 (interview 2004-09-21)			
	P_3 (interview 2004-10-05)	P_{10} (interview 2004-09-21)			
	P_4 (interview 2004-10-05)				
	P_5 (interview 2004-10-05)				
	P_6 (interview 2004-10-05)				
	P_7 (interview 2004-10-05)				
	In this interview an interpreter was used and often answers from all the parents was gathered, and then translated. In such cases I use only **P** for parents as a group				
Observations (O_{1-9})	O_1 (control group, 2004-09-08)	O_3 (experiment group, 2004-09-07)	O_8 (regular class, 2004-09-17)	O_9 (regular class, 2004-10-05)	
	O_2 (experiment group, 2004-09-15)	O_4 (control group, 2004-09-07)			
		O_5 (experiment group, 2004-09-09)			
		O_6 (control group, 2004-09-09)			
		O_7 (control group, 2004-14-09)			

"**Q**" is question asked by the interviewer.