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LANGUAGE POLICY FOR EMANCIPATION OR SUBORDINATION? THE 2006 MOTHER TONGUE POLICY IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

This research sought to investigate the implementation of the 2006 Education Amended Policy on the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction in Zimbabwe. In 2006 the Government of Zimbabwe amended its education policy which, until then, allowed the use of English Language only as medium of instruction beyond Grade Three level. Prior to this amendment, two indigenous languages (Shona and Ndebele) could be used as medium of instruction up to Grade Three. Beyond this level, the English Language was exclusively used as language of instruction in schools. The amendment liberalized the use of languages to allow the more commonly spoken language in an area to be used as medium of instruction prior to Form One. This research, therefore, evaluated the implementation of the said policy at two primary schools in Masvingo District, that is, Victoria and Dikwindi Primary Schools (where Shona is predominately spoken) and another two in Mwenzei District, that is, Chitanga and Rutenga Primary Schools (where Shangaan is predominately spoken). The research employed the survey research design with the questionnaire, interview and observation techniques employed to collect data. The population comprised 98 teachers, three hundred and eighty-one pupils (Grades 2 & 6 at the four schools), four school heads and two area Education Officers (EOs). The sample comprised of forty teachers, four school heads, two area EOs and eighty pupils all drawn from Victoria Junior (VJ), Dikwindi (DK), Chitanga (CT) and Rutenga (RT) Primary Schools. A total of sixteen lessons were observed in an effort to determine whether mother tongue education was being implemented.

KEY WORDS: indigenous, mother tongue, minority, growth point, Shona, Shangaan.

BACKGROUND

Language is not everything but without language everything is nothing in education (Wolff, 2006). This is an indication of the importance of language in every education system. The central issue concerning languages in education is about what language should be used as medium of instruction. For a number of years debate has been rife regarding the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction at all levels of education (Kadodo, Kadodo, Bhala and Bhebe, 2012). This is because the mother tongue has been identified by various linguists as the language that helps in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in education. As such, various conferences were held and declarations signed throughout the world stating that the learners' mother tongue should be used as media of instruction in education. The most influential of these is the UNESCO (1953) report on the use of vernacular languages in education. It provides the international context with a clear pedagogical principle, namely that school pupils need to begin their formal education in their mother tongue. Also, one of the objectives for the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (Mutasa, 2003) is to encourage the increased use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels. These declarations that prioritize the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction are meant to facilitate optimal cognitive development of the pupils through schooling (UNESCO, 2004). In this way the indigenous knowledge systems in Africa can be utilized more meaningfully. In the light of these facts, most African governments became signatories to such declarations. Mtenje (2008) notes that most governments in Africa have made numerous statements regarding the use of mother tongues in education, and have signed several declarations to show their commitment to the promotion of African languages. However, the question remains as to what extent African governments prioritize the use of these languages as media of instruction in education in their countries?

Zimbabwe, like many African countries, has promulgated a policy on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in the form of the 2006

Education Amendment Act which seems (in a non-committal way) to promote the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction. It was the intention of this research to evaluate the implementation of this policy. These researchers note with sadness that some "Language policies in Africa are notorious for remaining mere statements of intent" without being translated to reality (Desai, 1998 at www.multilingualmatters.com, Accessed 28/01/12; see also Bamgbose, 1991). Promulgating language policy is one thing but implementing it is another. This research intended to find out whether the selected schools are implementing the amended policy and if not what are the factors that militate against the use of mother tongue throughout the primary school.

Research questions

This research attempted to answer the following research questions.

1. Is Shona being used as medium of instruction from Grade One right up to Grade Seven at Victoria Junior and Dikwindi Primary Schools in Masvingo District? [Shona is the predominant language in this region.]
2. Is Shangaan being used as medium of instruction from Grade One right up to Grade Seven at Chitanga and Rutenga Primary Schools in Mwenezi District? [Shangaan is the predominant language in this region.]
3. What are the factors that either facilitate (if being used) or impede (if not being used) the implementation of mother tongue education in the said schools?

Theoretical Framework

The call for mother tongue education is premised upon the belief that the use of the learner's mother tongue is the surest way to reach a large number of people and integrate them into the national or democratic processes in a nation (Prah, 2000). UNESCO (1953) reports that pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of mother tongue because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will bridge the dichotomy between home and school. This implies that the

learner's mother tongue is seen as a facility that is likely to lead to better understanding in education and thus, should be used for the benefit of learners. According to Brimer and Pauli (in McNab, 1989:15), once at school "...given that the child is fit and well, the gravest handicap that he can suffer...is to be unfamiliar with the language of instruction." Therefore, to ensure rapid cognitive development and access to school knowledge, the use of the mother tongue is thus encouraged.

Poth (1988) at www.multilingualmatters.com (Accessed 28/01/12) notes that from the educational point of view, the use of the mother tongue guarantees a child's emotional and psychomotor development. It (mother tongue) alone sets free a child's expressive potential as it offers the child a chance to verbalize all his or her experiences. This implies that mother tongue education enables the learners to freely express themselves in a language they are familiar with unlike foreign language instruction which, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), is submersion and is analogous to holding learners under water without adequately teaching them how to swim. Thus, Dalby (in Benson, 2004) notes that in contrast to students in submersion programmes who sit listening or reciting, bilingual students participate more often in the classroom and demonstrate greater self confidence and control over their learning. The use of the mother tongue already spoken by the child enables efforts to be chiefly on the learning of content. According to Cummins (2000), since content instruction would be provided in the L1, the learning of new concepts is not postponed until the child becomes competent in the L2. Roy-Campbell (2001) observes that there is overwhelming evidence that shows that the use of foreign languages negatively impacts on the acquisition of school knowledge by the vast majority of African students. This is because the learner has to first grapple with the vocabulary of the language before mastering the concepts. Thus, mother tongue instruction is encouraged as it allows teachers and students to interact naturally and negotiate meanings together, creating participatory learning environments that are conducive to the cognitive, as well as linguistic development. After all, mother

tongue education would easily harness the indigenous knowledge and utilize it in the school system.

There are well documented empirical studies of mother tongue-based education programmes in African countries. They confirm that the use of the mother tongue helps in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in education. Awoniyi (1982) advances that we use language as an instrument of thought as language and thought are like body and soul, each influencing the other. The six year Yoruba medium primary project in Nigeria substantiates the argument above as observed by Akinasso (in Benson, 2004) who notes that the project demonstrated unequivocally that a full six-year primary education in the mother tongue with the L2 taught as a subject was not only viable but gave better results than all L2 (English in this case) schooling. Another benchmark study to the effect that mother tongue education is the best is Modiano's (in Benson, 2004) study in the Chiapas Highlands of Mexico where he found out that indigenous children efficiently transferred literacy skills from the L1 to the L2 and out-performed monolingual speakers of Spanish. Makoni, Smitherman, Ball and Spears (2003) also state that in Niger it was observed that, in the classroom, girls and women were reluctant to speak because they were afraid to make mistakes in speaking French. They further argue that, creating a classroom environment in which they were permitted to speak their community languages reduced their level of anxiety and increased dialogue, interaction and involvement in the class activities.

Following the numerous reports on positive contribution of mother tongue education, various countries have sort to transform their language policies to accommodate use of indigenous languages as media of instruction. Zimbabwe is one of such countries as it sought to realign its education system to benefit the bulk of the African learners. The Zimbabwean 2006 Education Amendment Act (Section 62) states that:

1. Subject to this section, all the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught on an equal-time basis in all schools up to form 2 level.

92. In areas where indigenous languages other than those mentioned in subsection (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorize the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in subsection (1)

3. The Minister may authorize the teaching of foreign languages in schools.

4. Prior to form one, any one of the languages referred to in subsection (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by pupils.

5. Sign Language should be the priority medium of instruction for the deaf and hard of hearing.

This policy seems to acknowledge the value of almost all the indigenous languages in Zimbabwe, even the so called minority or national languages. This research, thus, intended to assess to what extent this policy is being implemented in the selected schools.

Factors to consider in language policy implementation

Zimbabwe, like other former colonies, is affected by the colonial legacy. During the colonial era, the colonizers introduced various language policies that were aimed at dominating the colonized. The former colonizers' languages were prescribed official languages and media of instruction in education. At independence, a number of these former colonies remained stark with the former colonizers' languages as media of instruction in education. This colonial history tends to influence the language of instruction in schools. It is not uncommon that a language policy may state that the mother tongue should be used as medium of instruction but on the ground that policy may remain essentially as was during the colonial period. Makoni, Smitherman, Ball, and Spears (2003) observe that English, French or Portuguese, each a colonial legacy in its respective country, remains steadfast as the dominant language of instruction even after political independence. Most of the former colonial languages remain on the pedestal and continue to enjoy as much prestige as they did in the colonial era because they are still associated with access to economic resources, employment and higher education (Prah, 2000). This legacy has had a negative impact on mother tongue education implementation in most African countries, Zimbabwe included. During the

colonial era in Zimbabwe, the English language was associated with good life thus attracting positive attitudes towards it (Kadodo, Kadodo, Bhala and Bhebe, 2012). Symmetrically, the indigenous languages like Shona and Ndebele were not economically empowered to command positive evaluation. After all, English is perceived as offering opportunities in the global village. Given the situation discussed above, one wonders whether teachers, learners and parents at the said schools have positive attitudes towards indigenous languages to ensure the successful implementation of the 2006 mother tongue education policy. Attitudes of stakeholders should not be taken for granted since they can lead to either acceptance or rejection of a language policy (Kadodo, Kadodo, Bhala and Bhebe, 2012).

The use of mother tongue in Zimbabwe, like other African countries, is not backed by economic rewards. The Zimbabwean government, like many other post colonial governments in Africa, has shown lack of commitment to the implementation of mother tongue education by not attaching any incentives to the indigenous languages which in turn stifles their implementation as media of instruction. The expectancy-value theory argues that for mother tongue education to succeed it must guarantee that once people have learnt through it they are assured of the good life they yearn for (Kadodo, Kadodo, Bhala and Bhebe, 2012). However, sadly Prah (2000) notes that, unlike education via former colonial languages, mother tongue education has hardly been associated with access to economic resources, employment or higher education, the latter being the key to accessing whatever employment or resources available. This is the current situation in Zimbabwe and it is highly unlikely that the user community would embrace the said language innovation considering that the stakeholders are worried about what they get in turn for using a particular language.

Another problem affecting language policies in Africa has been the lack of clarity leading to vague policies. Bamgbose (1991:111) observes that

“language policies in African countries are characterized by avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without

implementation...Avoidance of policy formulation is an attractive technique because it frees the government from the unpleasant consequences of any pronouncement which some sections of the community may find objectionable".

The Zimbabwean Education Amended Act of 2006 cited earlier on is one such policy that lacks clarity perhaps bordering on avoidance. Sub-Section 2 says that the "Minister may authorize the teaching" of the said indigenous languages. Also, Sub-Section 4 says that "Prior to form one, any one of the languages referred to in subsection (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by pupils." The use of the word "may" shows lack of commitment. Likewise schools 'may' simply choose the option they so wish to pursue because the policy sounds optional in this case. It would seem here that the Zimbabwean government was uncomfortable to disregard the many voices about mother tongue education that were taking rounds the world over, but at the same time wanted to be cautious not to antagonize any community regarding the language of instruction. This could have been for political expedience. In such cases, it would be of interest to find out how schools implement such policy.

Human and material resources are other handicaps in Zimbabwe that could hinder full implementation of the 2006 mother tongue education policy. Thomas (2009) observes that most education systems that attempt to institute policies that encourage learning through a child's home language suffer from an acute shortage of teachers who speak the language as L1 or have access to these languages. One of the criteria for effective usage of local languages as languages of instruction is that there must be enough teachers to teach through that language. Absence of relevant and adequate manpower hinders implementation. The lack of instructional materials also hinders transmission of content in local languages. According to Phillipson (1992) a major limitation on the use of African languages is that there are few reading materials available in them. McNab (1989) also observes that implementation activities in developing countries are

often carried out in the context of limited resources outstripped by public demand for education. Shortages of relevant materials may critically undermine implementation. Thus, it is useful to ask whether the resources necessary for implementation of the 2006 mother tongue education policy are available. In Zimbabwe, the bulk of the teaching staff on the ground trained in the pedagogy through the medium of English. Would such teachers be competent enough to teach content via the indigenous medium? The other serious handicap is to do with material development. Reading materials in Zimbabwe are largely in the English medium. In the absence of teaching materials in indigenous languages, it becomes difficult to perceive teaching through them because this would lead to a haphazard implementation. This would be a recipe for disaster. The Malawian debacle in education following Banda's 1968 declaration of ChiChewa medium in schools (Herbert, 1992) and Ratsiraka's 1973 Malagachization (Brown, 2002) without adequate preparations are cases in point.

The above discussion has highlighted that advocacy for mother tongue education should consider the above challenges for it to be fully implemented. If these challenges are not addressed, it is highly unlikely that the 2006 mother tongue education policy would be meaningfully implemented in Zimbabwe. This research therefore, sought to evaluate the implementation of the policy in the selected schools.

Research Methodology

This research employed the survey research design to collect information on the factors noted by teachers as crucial in implementing the 2006 mother tongue education policy. Myers and Avison (2009) say that the survey is the best method for researching social and cultural phenomena since it is concerned with understanding people and the socio-cultural context within which they live. Thus, the design was suitable for this research because it is located in social psychology which requires one to obtain the required information directly from the respondents. The researchers collected information from respondents through the use of the questionnaire, interview and lesson observations. The questionnaire allowed the researchers to convert data into information as offered

by respondents (Kadodo and Kadodo, 2011). Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the ten teachers and twenty pupils at each of the four schools by the researchers in person and thereafter collected for analysis. The interviews (EOs and heads), on the other hand, yielded authentic and qualitative data that was interpreted to explain participants' views (Marshal and Rossman, 2006). A total of 16 lesson observations were done by the researchers, i.e. a total of 4 lessons per each of the 4 schools. Since observations put researchers right where the action was, this enabled the researchers to note down what they saw as events occurring thus making observational data more accurate (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The data collected through the questionnaire were presented in tables and graphs for interpretation of the views by teachers regarding implementation of the 2006 mother tongue education policy.

The participants (sample) in this research comprised 40 teachers out of a population of 98, 80 learners out of a population of 381 (from Grades 2 and 6 at the 4 schools), 4 school heads and 2 Education Officers (EOs) for the two districts. The schools that made up the population for the study are Victoria Junior (VJ), Dikwindi (DK), Chitunga (CT) and Rutenga (RT) Primary Schools. These schools are located where Shona (VJ & DK) and Shangaan (CT & RT) are predominantly spoken. All the 40 teachers were qualified, 33 being female and 7 being male. Of the 80 learner participants, 46 were female while 34 were male. The age range of the learners was between 6 and 13 years. The ages were representative of the various learners in the primary schools in Zimbabwe.

The gathering of data for this research was done between the months of February to May 2012. The selection of the teacher and pupil samples was done using randomization. The technique is favored in research as it is a probability sampling technique which reduces the chances of choosing a biased sample (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Gray, 2009). The lottery system was used where members of the population were asked to pick 'yes' or 'no' cards from a box that had been thoroughly mixed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). As for heads and EOs these were

selected using purposive sampling. In purposive sampling "participants are selected for inclusion in a study on the basis of a particular characteristic or identified variable" (Gilbert, 2008:511). Views of EOs as custodians of education policy were important in this research. On the other hand, school heads are the local managers spearheading policy implementation in schools hence the need to also gather their views on implementation of mother tongue education or lack of it. Both EOs for the two provinces took part in this research, and so did the four heads for the participating schools. There was therefore no sampling required for these two groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected through the questionnaire were organized into tables and graphs for analysis and discussion of the results. Information gathered through interviews and observations was factored into the discussion.

The teachers' responses in Table 1 question 1(a) clearly indicate that the majority of teachers in both urban (Shona) and rural (Shangaan) (90%) schools are of the view that the language of instruction matters in education. Their reasons (1b) were that if learners were knowledgeable in the language of instruction they would be able to communicate ideas, hence learners would be able to manage their examinations. Participants noted that learners would be able to grasp concepts relatively easily. This is an indication that the language used in examinations is taken into consideration by teachers when choosing a language of instruction. From the result above one would have thought that when it came to choice of language as medium of instruction, these teachers would opt for mother tongue. However, answers to question 3(a) in the same table show that 85% (of urban) and 60% (of rural) participants indicated that the learner's mother language cannot be used successfully as medium of instruction. Inadequate terminology (mathematical, scientific and technological) was cited as reasons for the negativity towards use of mother tongue. Other factors raised were inadequate resources (materials) and the examinations that still remained English Language oriented. The same sentiments were also

expressed by teachers as shown in results found in Table 3 question 6 where reservations were echoed regarding use of indigenous languages as media of instruction. Interviews with the two EOs and school heads also confirmed the same sentiments. It can be noted from this result that failure by the government to make symmetrical changes to the requirements of higher education and industry and commerce may have curtailed preference for mother tongue education (See also results shown in Table 2). In spite of the seemingly noble move towards mother tongue education, the results indicate that this has been undermined by failure to empower indigenous languages to act as access languages for both industry and higher education. Some of the reasons given show that participants had negative attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction. This indicates that the negative attitude towards indigenous languages makes it difficult for the language policy implementors and consumers to effectively implement the 2006 amended language policy. It is for that reason that 85% (urban schools) and 75% (rural schools) participants said it is useless to teach using the learners' L1 (question 4a). However, Table 1 question 2 shows that 65% in urban schools were aware of the 2006 Language Amendment Act but 65% in rural schools were unfamiliar with the policy. The result seems to also suggest that the policy innovation may not have been properly publicised to schools. If so, this raises doubts on the sincerity of government regarding the said language policy innovation. Another observation here is that the innovation was not a result of wide consultations but rather a top-down legislated policy. Research has shown that in a number of cases centre-periphery innovations suffer from tissue rejection (Obanya, 1987).

Graphs 1 and 2 show the result of teachers' and learners' preferred language of instruction. The result (Graph 1) shows that 100% teachers at VJ and 90% at DK preferred English to Shona. As for learners, 95% at VJ and 60% at DK preferred English to Shona. Graph 2 shows that at CT 50% and 70% at RT of teachers also preferred English to Shangaan. Only 30% of teachers at CT preferred Shangaan whilst 20% preferred Shona.

These researchers noted that there are a number of Shona L1 teachers at both CT and RT. There was none of the teachers who preferred either Shangaan or Shona at RT. As for learners, 85% at CT and 100% at RT preferred the English medium. Only 15% of learners at CT and none at RT preferred Shangaan to English. RT is located at one of the biggest growth points in Mwenezi District. These researchers speculate that the urbanite culture may have influenced language values of teachers and learners at RT. Interviews with VJ school head and EO for Masvingo District revealed that the VJ school community preferred the English medium of instruction because their school had an English Language background. VJ is a former Group A school which catered for the European children from the lush suburb of Rhodene during the colonial period. Other reasons given by teachers in the four schools on why they preferred the English medium to prepare their learners were that English is required in the job market since it is the official language in Zimbabwe as well as an international language. Respondents' reasons show that English is placed highly to an extent that in the majority all schools, no matter their locality, would prefer the English medium. Research findings reveal that learners prefer English because they want to do well in examinations and get jobs. Thus, despite the fact that 35% at VJ, 55% at DK, 65% at CT and 90% at RT stated that they understood better when taught in their mother tongue (Graph 3 below) they still preferred the English medium because of the benefits they perceived they would get by learning through it. In other words, most of the learners and implementors in the four visited schools have positive attitudes towards English (See results in Table 3 question7). Conversely, they have negative attitudes towards their indigenous languages regarding their education. Lesson observations carried out by these researchers revealed that at VJ instruction was strictly in the medium of English for the grades observed. At DK, CT and RT there was marked code-switching and mixing but with heavy dosage of the English language.

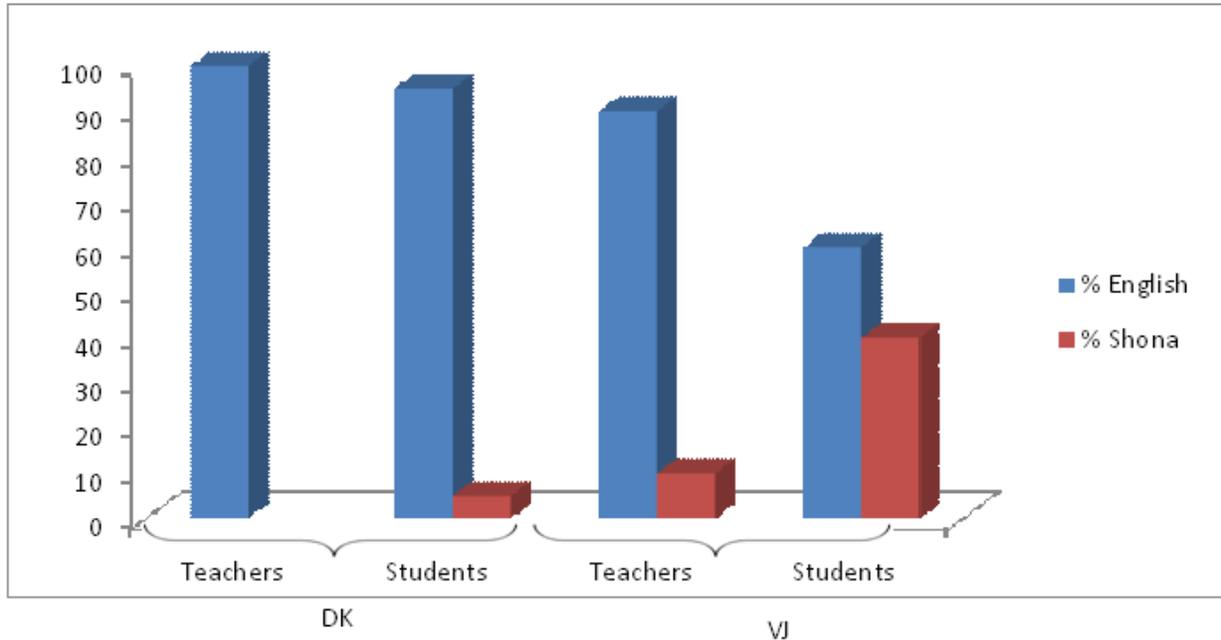
Table 1: Teachers' views on the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction

N=20 (per urban or rural)

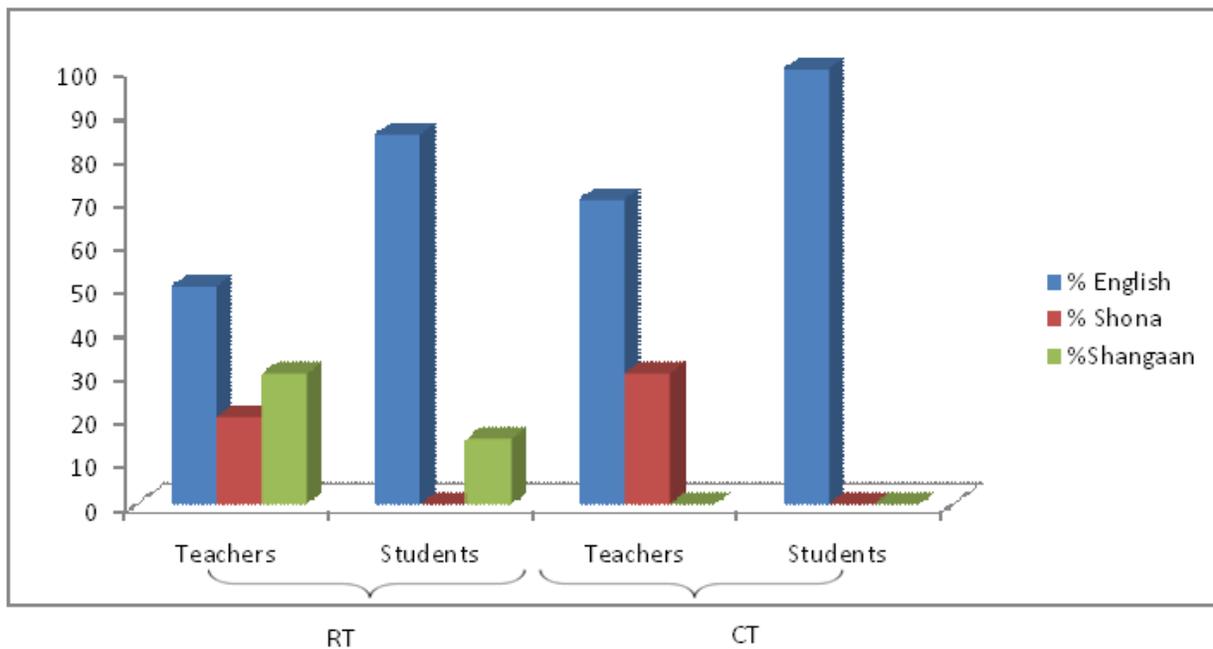
Qusn	THEME	URBAN SCHOOLS				RURAL SCHOOLS				REASONS
		YES	%	NO	%	YES%	NO %			
1(a)	The language used as medium of instruction matters in education	18	90			18	90			1(b) -it facilitates the learners' grasp of concepts -language is communication and the language used should clearly communicate ideas -helps learners manage examinations in all content subjects 1(b) – no explanations given for the No
2	Teachers are aware of the 2006 language Amendment Act	13	65			7	35			
3(a)	The learner's mother tongue should be used as medium of instruction across the primary school curriculum	3	15			8	40			3(b) Yes- it facilitates understanding and development. China given as an example 3(b) No-some words are difficult to express in the mother tongue especially those to do with reproduction -mother tongues are limited in technical terms especially in Maths and Science -all other subjects across the primary school curriculum are examined in English, so mother tongue medium is unsuitable - inadequate resources in the mother tongue language - languages like Shangaan are not recognised in external examinations
4(a)	It is useless to teach using the learners' L1	17	85			15	75			4 (b) Yes –it is pointless to teach in L1 when examinations are in English - use the language learners will use in the examination for practice purposes -books for content areas are written in English -if L1is used learners will fail examinations because there would be no one to interpret for them 4(b) No-L1 should only be used at infant level in conjunction with L2

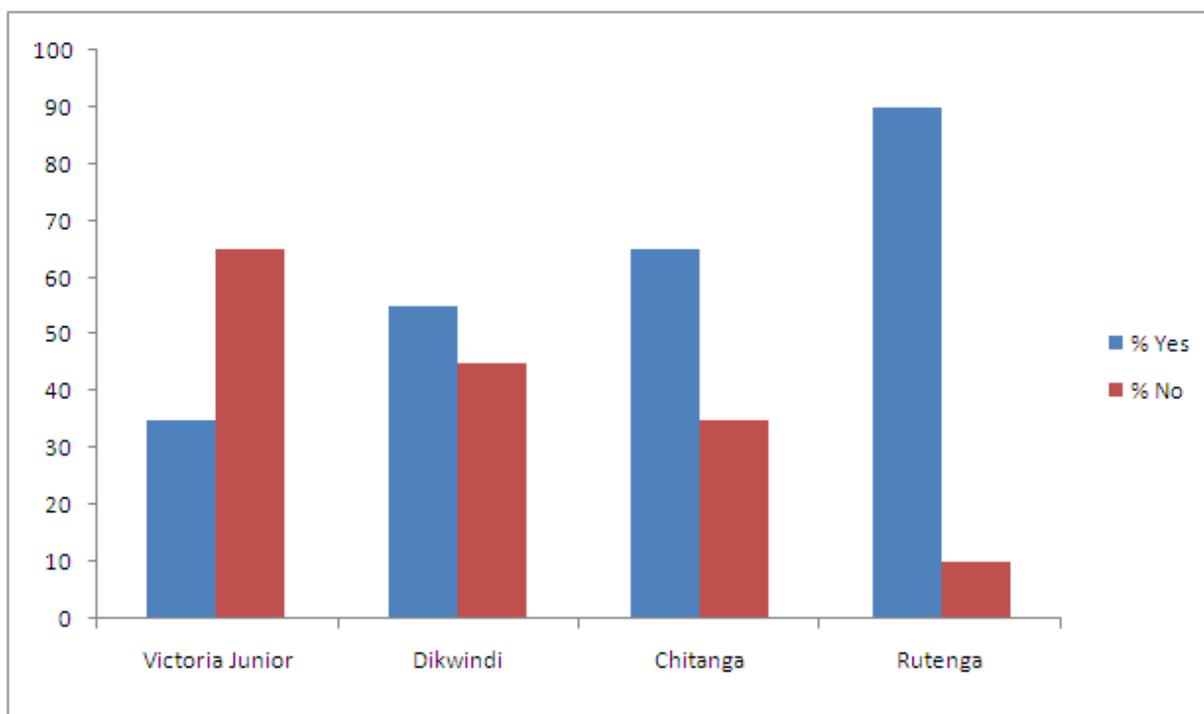
Graphs 1 & 2: Comparative graphs of preferred language of instruction for teachers and learners in the 4 schools [teachers' n=10 & learners' n=20 per school] [Question 5 teachers' questionnaire and Question 6 on learners' questionnaire]

1. Predominantly Shona speaking communities (VJ low & DK high density suburbs)



2. Predominantly Shangaan speaking communities (CT typical rural & RT growth point)



Graph 3: Learners' understanding is enhanced when taught in L1[Question 5][n=20 per school]

Graph 3 above shows information collected from learners on whether or not their understanding is enhanced when taught in L1.

As discussed earlier in this paper regarding what medium they would prefer for their education, learners still preferred the English medium.

These researchers also noted another problem that militated against mother tongue education. Deployment of teachers in Zimbabwe has never followed linguistic boundaries. As noted above, at CT and RT there are Shona L1 speakers in spite of the fact that this is a predominantly Shangaan speaking community. Some of such teachers cannot even speak a simple sentence in Shangaan. These researchers have actually witnessed cases where teachers who can hardly speak Ndebele (one of the major indigenous languages in Zimbabwe) are deployed in Ndebele speaking communities to teach infant levels. Similarly,

none Shona speaking teachers have also been deployed to teach in Shona speaking communities. In this case, teacher-deployment patterns negatively affect implementation of the mother tongue education. After all, the bulk of the teachers currently in schools in Zimbabwe were never trained to teach content subjects through the indigenous language medium. For a more systematic implementation of the said policy, teachers would thus need retraining or inservicing to reorient them for the new dispensation. None of this was done in Zimbabwe. This raises questions over the sincerity of government towards the said language innovation. During interviews it emerged that the two EOs were also not convinced that mother tongue education was the best option for Zimbabwe. In their views, the policy was as a result of indigenous language panels and commissions that-

Table 2: Learners' responses to languages used and their views on what language to be used for their education

Qusn	Theme	RESPONSE	Urban Schools				Rural Schools				Reasons
			VJ		DK		CT		RT		
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1(a)	Language used as medium of instruction	English	10	100	7	70	8	80	8	80	1(b) - English is the official language and recommended medium - because the school rules require us to use English and it is used in exams - most of the literature is written in English so we use English - English is internationally recognised - because pupils understand Shona better
		Shona	-	-	3	30	2	20	2	20	
2	medium of instruction before 2006 Language Policy amendmen	English	10	100	7	70	6	60	6	60	
		Shona	-	-	3	30	4	40	4	40	
3(a)	Language used in explaining difficult concepts	English	6	60	3	30	1	10	5	50	3(b) -simple English helps them to understand better -English so that they understand concepts using correct terms - learners understand English better
		Shona	4	40	7	70	8	80	5	50	- Shona is our L1 so it is easy to understand what is taught
		Shangaan	-	-	-	-	1	10	-	-	Shangaan is our L1 so it is easy to understand what is taught
4	The language that facilitates understanding at our school	English	10	100	5	50	3	30	4	40	
		Shona	-	-	5	50	1	10	6	60	
		Shangaan	-	-	-	-	6	60	-	-	

*N=10

Table 3: Teachers' Views on the 2006 Education Amendment Act (n=10 per school)

Qusn	Theme	Response	Frequency				Frequency			
			VJ		DK		CT		RT	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
6	Teachers' views on 2006 amendment language policy	Mother tongue should be used in infant grades and thereafter English should be used since that is where we have content books and is used in examinations	1	10	2	20	1	10	1	10
		Unless books used in the education system have been Shonalized then it is a meaningless Act	2	20	2	20	2	20	-	-
		If implemented it would lower standards of education in Zimbabwe	2	20	-	-	2	20	2	20
		It is an untimed Act because we cannot use Shona when teaching but when it comes to examinations learners are expected to use English	1	10	2	20	1	10	3	30
		Currently there are no institutions that require Shona/Shangaan. Industries should accept to employ those taught through local languages first	4	40	2	20	2	20	2	20
		It is partly good because pupils need their L1 to understand some concepts, but it is practically impossible because English is the official language which guarantees employment	-	-	2	20	2	20	2	20
7	Learner's reaction when taught in English as observed by teachers	Not interested	2	20	-	-	-	-	1	10
		Just the same as they do when taught in Shona/Shangaan	3	30	-	-	1	10	2	20
		They enjoy it	5	50	4	40	2	20	4	40
		They try to participate by answering questions.	-	-	4	40	1	10	-	-
		They understand better and positively participate	-	-	2	20	6	60	3	30
8	Challenges faced by teachers if they are to teach learners in learners L1	Some concepts are difficult to express in L1,for example in Mathematics and Science for reproduction terms	4	40	5	50	4	40	3	30
		Indigenous languages lack terminology	2	20	1	10	1	10	1	10
		We would need to translate all books in content subjects into the mother tongue	2	20	1	10	1	10	2	20
		Some teachers cannot speak their learners' languages	-	-	-	-	4	40	3	30
		Learners would have problems in tackling examinations written in English	2	20	3	30	-	-	1	10

-lobbied for the recognition of local languages in the schools. One of the EOs actually commented that nobody in his or her normal sense would really want his or her child to be taught through the mother tongue policy when industry still demands for English. EOs are supposed to be custodians of Education Policy so their sentiments expressed here are indicative that the very people who are supposed to enforce compliance do not even believe the policy is worthwhile. These same views were evident also during interviews with heads of schools. As local managers in their institutions they were actually enforcing school policies where learners were expected to be speaking, or trying to speak in English once they entered school gates serve for indigenous language lessons only. These researchers noted that all the four schools visited try to enforce an English language policy at their schools although with very limited effect in some cases because some teachers tended to switch to indigenous languages to explain where learners seemed to struggle. Results in Tables 2 and 3 do confirm the same results already discussed above.

Table 2 shows that the use of English as a medium of instruction cuts across all the four schools. 100% at VJ, 70% at DK, 80% at CT and also 80% at RT confirmed that they used the English medium. The remainder for both urban and rural schools stated that they used Shona. This shows that the colonial mentality of using English Language remains influential in Zimbabwean schools. These results also show that the Shangaan language is not usually preferred at Shangaan schools. It can be noted here that Shangaan was not taught even as a subject in the Shangaan schools until very recently. Instead, Shona had been offered as a subject in these schools.

Table 3 shows results of teachers' views on the 2006 mother tongue education policy. As already noted above in this discussion, Table 3 question 6 show the problems that teachers perceived as hindrances to mother tongue education in Zimbabwe. The problems range from lack of relevant materials, demands of examinations (set in the English medium), job

requirements (English Language is a requirement) and lack of sophistication in indigenous languages to cater for science and technology (See results for question 8 in Table 3).

Question 7 in Table 3, shows that in spite of the fact that a high percentage of learners are not doing very well in their English Language, they still prefer to be taught through that medium. These researchers note that teachers and learners' choices are influenced by their attitudes to languages. The history of colonization in Zimbabwe clearly explains how most people; teachers, learners and parents alike, developed positive attitudes towards the English Language whilst on the other hand developing negative attitudes towards mother tongue education which they perceive as lowering their chances of being employed in other countries in the world.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed at evaluating the implementation of the 2006 mother tongue education policy, in particular the use of Shona at VJ and DK Primary Schools in Masvingo District and Shangaan at CT and RT Primary Schools in Mwenzi District all in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The research results have indicated that Shona is used to a lesser extent at VJ and DK Primary Schools. Results also show that while Shangaan is used to a lesser extent (in the form of code-switching / code-mixing) at Chitanga, it is not used at all at Rutenga Primary School. Most respondents in this research preferred to use English as the medium of instruction since it is the language the students would use in the examination. Attitudes of stakeholders were also identified as part of the major challenges to the implementation of the 2006 mother tongue education policy. Some of the teachers at CT and RT cannot even speak Shangaan. As a result, the implementation of a Shangaan medium of instruction was not preferred. The school culture at schools like VJ (former group A) was also seen to be a hindering factor to the mother tongue education policy implementation as they see it as lowering of standards. The research results also consistently revealed that since English opens employment opportunities in Zimbabwe, users are left with no choice but to employ

it as a medium of instruction at the expense of the 2006 mother tongue education policy.

These results led to the conclusion that where a language is not highly valued by the user community, it is unlikely to be preferred as medium of instruction. One can also note that where a language is negatively viewed, there is need to incentivize it for users to prefer it as medium of instruction. Local languages would need to be empowered in that regard. They should guarantee that whoever learns through them would be absorbed in the job market.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and results in this research, the researchers recommend that the Zimbabwean government takes serious audit of factors discussed as hindering policy implementation with a view to addressing them. Of significance is that a language chosen for language of instruction should guarantee those who learn through it that they have access to jobs and higher education. In short, such language should be economically empowered. There must be reason enough for the users to prefer that language. Also, there should be harmony between the language used as medium of instruction and the language of examinations. Relevant materials consistent with the proposed language policy should be put in place before implementation. Similarly, teachers would also need either to be retrained or in-serviced to realign them with the new policy. There is need for a holistic approach for language innovation to succeed rather than piece-meal solutions. These researchers believe that only when the user-community perceives benefits from using a language will it prefer the proposed medium.

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