

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS

People of different linguistic and age backgrounds were interviewed and recorded. Where respondents feared to be recorded the response was noted on a piece of paper.

To avoid unnecessary duplication the views selected are representative of views of other interviewees.

Transcriptions:

Interviewee 1 from Gauteng

A Dr who is a former employee of the department of Education Gauteng. Initially he refused to be recorded. After convincing him that any research needs credibility he accepted but was then nervous.

I am aware of the new language policy. This policy, to me, represents the political aspirations of the government. African languages are not economically viable just as the languages of Asia. This scenario was meant to impress voters. (Speaking emphatically) As long as a language group owns nothing their language cannot be an official language. For a language to be official the speaker must own something. If you own nothing then you must forget, your language is nowhere. Take, for example, a person who owns an hotel, If that person is Tshivenda speaking we tend to greet the owner and the workers in Tshivenda. The owner of a business is greeted in his language. The English own something, their language is a legitimate official language. Afrikaans, *yena lo* (that one) is still the language, the official language. They own all these businesses. Afrikaners speak English just to show tolerance, otherwise Afrikaans is still the language. When our people go to look for work they go in English. Once employed they speak Afrikaans because it is the Afrikaner who owns the business. Observe people at your work place, you will find out that it is the black who even greet the white in Afrikaans. Something interesting: Phone a company and invite them to repair the pipe or electricity cable. The company sends a

person faster if you use Afrikaans.

So, my friend, my brother, the language policy is only meant to impress voters, otherwise it is null and void.

Interviewee Number 2 from Atteridgeville.

Yes we know of this language policy. The way forward is to acknowledge that English is the official language. I see on TV Afrikaners complaining about their language. Where will Afrikaans take them to. Just as far as Jan Smuts (Johannesburg International Airport). We have to be realistic and accept change.

Interviewee number 3, a Senior lecturer at UNISA:

The new policy is good of course but it is there to destroy African languages. It is a death knell for African languages. You see Afrikaans will, for some time, continue to enjoy status because of the colonial legacy. That promotion it gained during the apartheid era contributes in a way difficult to quantify. More so our people's perception is terrible. They see English and Afrikaans as the only official languages.

Interviewee 4, a student at UNISA

I am aware of the language policy of South Africa. What I see is only English and Afrikaans as official languages. All the question papers are in English and Afrikaans. All is English, English, *he vathu* but *kanti abantu bayenza kanjani?* (hey people but what are they doing?) We should study in our languages, primary and secondary school. Students will understand easily. It is something that we are born with, something that originated from home, a language that exists in their environment. If I had written my examinations in my language, surely, I could have passed all my papers with distinctions. My children should be taught in African languages. It is painful to see French taught in our schools when African languages are not there. Do they teach African languages in France?

Interviewee 5, a parent in Gauteng

I know the language policy but we should stay without changing many things. Let us not use our languages for teaching. If we were to teach everything in African languages starting today then we will completely destroy the country. If people do that they want us to 'kill' the country. Look at small countries like Malawi, they use English why should we change? We want English in schools.

Interviewee 6. a student at the Technikon

I know the language policy yes, but all we can do is for us to speak our languages. In education, I want English because it is a universal language. We cannot do it in my language, Sotho. If they were to change the education system now and teach Information Technology in Sotho it would be difficult, very difficult. We do speak Sotho at home but there are words difficult to translate. Like my mother did Julius Caesar in Sotho but you cannot do the same with other subjects. Sotho can be used in other places like at the police station and hospitals, but in schools it should be English. If not you won't go to America. What I say is that students should be taught in English and the other languages should be taught too. But I want English. Look at it, they say we should invite tourists. For eight tourists that come to South Africa, a job is created. You won't speak to a tourist in Sotho. If all of us could understand and speak a little bit of it that could be good.

Interviewee 7 a municipal employee

Yes we have promoted the languages but we cannot use them in education. Teaching any other subjects in African languages will not be possible. How will we do that? No matter how you develop the language it will not be possible. It will take us thirty five years. We cannot allow our children to be taught in African languages. We will create problems for our children. Look at Afrikaners. They find it difficult to survive. How are our children going to survive if we teach them in Sotho. Afrikaners cannot communicate with others. They have to start from scratch to learn English. Afrikaners ruled the country, promoted Afrikaans but now it is gone. There is lack of communication. So teaching in Sotho poses the same problem. It is a waste of time. We should teach in English. To improve standards we have to use English. You cannot teach maths in Tswana. Borrowing my brother, will not mean anything. It will take us another hundred years or another century, not now. after all who

wants it (mother tongue education)?

African languages are official, yes but you cannot translate maths into Tswana, biology into Tswana. Let us speak the languages that's all. It ends up there. Look at the G7 what language are they going to use? English. My brother, we cannot use our languages like in China or Asia. We are late. We are late. Very late. My brother we are late. It will take a century. Our languages are official languages as they are. You say our language, should play the role that English plays? That will take us another two hundred years. Even if you start it now people will come and die, come and die, come and die before we achieve it. That's another two hundred years.

Lets have four official languages to start with: IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Setswana and Sepedi.

TV: We need eleven channels so as to cater for all the languages. To accommodate all the languages. Cater for all. Make a good research and / or survey and say, is it possible to group Setswana with Sepedi and IsiXhosa. It should come from the people. May be we can group all the languages in the Northern province together, including Kelobedi and all those that are not recognised as official.

Language death:

My brother, no language is going to die and no language is going to swallow another. Let's be honest, it will never happen. The eleven languages will remain.

Interviewee 8 a mother of two from Mamelodi

You can talk of official languages, that is not my worry. What I want is to see my children taught in English. This is because when my child goes to look for work he will not say, *Ngifuna musebenzo* (I need work). He says I am looking for work in English, not my Zulu language. English should stay as it is, being our medium of instruction.

Interviewee 9 a middle aged man in the northern province

What I want to see is English being used in school. This is the way to go. I am not interested in the idea of teaching my children in Sepedi. No. You can teach them Afrikaans too. Please do not forget Afrikaans in the curriculum. (Asked why?). To get a job, my

brother. Where will they work if they do not know Afrikaans?

Interviewee 10 a senior employee of Old Mutual in The Northern Province

I like your research, may be something can come out of it. You know my Venda cousins who had applied for posts at the Electoral Commission to man polling stations could not get the job because of this language issue. They said to me, they could have got the job if questions were set in Tshivenda. Unfortunately the examination was in English and Afrikaans. 'The whites passed because those languages are their mother tongue. So where are we?' This was the experience of the young men. Something has to be done to address a problem of this nature.

Interviewee 11 a lady teacher at Mandela college in North West

I am well versed in this new language policy. However, in our area at Lehurutshe college some lecturers teach in Tswana and English. We like that. However notes are written in English. If people are serious about mother tongue education from primary to tertiary level then, my brother, give me a Tswana textbook so that we can start.

Harmonizing, Setswana, Sepedi and others would not be in the best interest of the people here. You know we are struggling to harmonize the eleven dialects of Setswana. How will we manage when we add another problem on top of another. Imagine in Northern Sotho (Sepedi) there are dialects which I think are still not harmonized. So how will we achieve this? It needs another hundred years.

Interviewee 12 a Unisa employee

We cannot talk of harmonizing languages. As far as I am concerned, that is out of question. How can we create a language? Let languages follow a natural metamorphosis.

Interviewee 13. a woman in Atteridgeville

The only language that my children will be taught in is English. No language is not going to subdue English. My children should not be restricted to South Africa. They should be able to venture and go to America. No subject like science will be taught in African languages

in South Africa. It will never happen whether we like it or not.

Interviewee 14. a middle aged woman in Gauteng

Mother tongue education for subjects other than African languages is wrong. Now we are free. They cannot take us back to the days of apartheid when they wanted us to learn maths in Sesotho and IsiZulu. They won't know English. They will only know Isizulu, Sesotho and Shangaan. They won't get jobs. When they go to America there is no such. They have to communicate in English. Look at the whites I am working with here, they are Afrikaners and Portuguese but we are communicating in English. They speak English in Zimbabwe. They speak English in Malawi. Suppose I marry a foreigner how will I communicate with him? Suppose this company chooses to relocate to England or to another country how will we communicate? So let us prepare our children for a brighter future by putting emphasis on English. In this way, life goes on smoothly.

Interviewee 15. a middle aged man

I prefer English for everything. You cannot use African languages all over, especially when you leave your village. We have to choose a language that is understood by everyone, a language that is easy to understand. And that language is English. It is a language that I can speak from one country to another. It will take me anywhere, through thick and thin. If you want to survive anywhere learn English. There no communication barrier if you know English. With English wherever you go you are a winner.

Interviewee 16 a lady in Gauteng

The language policy is a good one. I salute the people who propounded the language policy. The reason why I proclaim this is that members of minority groups were not free to express themselves freely in Gauteng. They existed in our streets but no one could tell for they were hiding behind the majority language of the area. Now they have discovered that they have a place in South Africa.

Interviewee 17 a young woman (Xhosa)

I am aware of the language policy. In education I do not see African languages play a major

role except teaching African languages because most of the academic books are in English and the lecturers are English speaking. How can we change to mother tongue? How and when? It is going to cost a lot of money and it is going to take a long time. Personally I think we should change but it will take whatever. Who is going to translate all those textbooks? Yes, I want my child to go for mother education without dismissing English because the reality is in order to survive in the world you have to know English or French unless she is going to be stuck in South Africa forever. Again if she decides to go and study outside the country, in the UK she has to know English. Even people in Asia need English and they learn it. We work with a man from China who told me this. English should always be taught for people to survive.

On TV there is too much English. Everyone speaks English there, even the black presenters. For example, we have those on SABC TV 1 who are blacks. I do not see what stops them from speaking African languages.

With regard to languages they should not divide channels into specific languages. That will take us back to the dark ages. They should mix the languages. For example, this program can be in IsiZulu, the next one in Sepedi, the next IsiXhosa and so on. If we have a group of languages beamed on one channel and the next group on the other, chances are that I will not watch the other channels. If all channels present in all languages e.g. SABC 1 chances are that I can learn some of those minority languages, e.g. Tshivenda. People who do not understand some of the languages will have to learn them. Dividing channels will take us back to the days of apartheid. In the past we used to have TV 1 Zulu and Xhosa an TV 2 was Sotho and TV 3 English and Afrikaans. This put people into blocks. Those days I watched one channel only, TV 1. I did not know what was going on on TV 2.

At present Tshivenda and Xitsonga are not on TV because our government is soft on some people. The government is not enforcing the policy. The government should enforce the language policy.

To enforce the language policy the government should approach universities and make

sure students of different language backgrounds are catered for. Look at some universities like Pretoria and Stellenbosch which are teaching in Afrikaans only. Why is the government not doing anything about it? They have the powers to do something but they are not. They seem to be too nice to white people and try to be considerate, whatever. Even the mere fact that universities are teaching African languages in English that should tell you a lot. They teach you IsiZulu but the lecturer is white and teaches you in English. That tells you a lot. When they teach English they do it in English and when teach Afrikaans they do it in Afrikaans. Teach IsiZulu in IsiZulu. Some students would not want to be taught African languages because they are brainwashed. They are made to feel ashamed of speaking our languages. The apartheid government made us to feel that anything non-Afrikaans and non-English is inferior. In the meantime they were promoting their language.

Now we should change the mind set so that people look at their languages differently. Then they will start using their languages. I am not saying we do not need English. All I am saying is that we do not need the Victorian type of English. We need to know English for survival as I said earlier.

Students who go to multiracial schools change when they go to work. They learn the language. At school what is more important is passing the language and not the tone.

Even at work people want us to translate jokes. I always tell them to learn the language because it is difficult to translate jokes. The joke loses its meaning.

Now our languages are not official in the practical sense of the word. They are also official but the reality is that they are not official. An official language is a language that is supposed to be used everywhere. Take for example, toothpaste, you find instructions in English and Afrikaans in a country with so many blacks. They say the languages are official but they are not catered for anywhere.

(On harmonization), No. It is like losing my culture now. Each language has to stand on its own because all the languages have their little differences although there are similarities.

People want to use their languages but unfortunately they do not have power to do so. So, they end up using English and Afrikaans in order to survive at work. If the law were to back you up then you address in your language but if you communicate in IsiZulu people look at you as if you are crazy or mad and no one backs you up. If the law was to back you up then you would win.

If ever we are to achieve equal status eventually people should start using them. That is why I say TV presenters are not using their languages and yet there is nothing that stops them from doing that. Look at soccer players. They are interviewed in English and you find the players struggling to answer questions. They think if they answer questions in African languages they look stupid. When they interview rugby players they always do that in Afrikaans and the players respond in Afrikaans even if some of the questions are in English. The player speaks confidently in his language. He knows he does not know English and there is no pressure for him to use English. Noone says he is stupid. With our people it is a different story. People think you should speak English with a special accent and sound like you are white. People expect you to use English so as to sound as if you are intelligent. They expect me to speak English even if it is not necessary. The point of the interview on TV is to benefit the viewers not the presenter. Consider the consumer. You see a soccer player after the game, he looks excited as gets to a mike. He feels as if something is wrong if he says it in Sesotho or IsiZulu. He should feel there is nothing wrong when he uses his language. The community is the one that pressurizes him to the point that he feels ashamed when he uses his language. Unfortunately they succumb to that pressure. After all who watches soccer? Black people, anyway and the majority of them do not even understand English. It's like a law that when one appears on TV one has to speak in English. Here in Gauteng you find people who speak the same language, e.g. IsiZulu, chatting in English. I do not know what this is supposed to mean. Is it fashionable?

Interviewee 18 from Northern Province staying in Pretoria.

All I say is that each language should have a slot on TV. We can have a channel in the Northern Province and give Tsonga a chance Sepedi then English. We need a channel for regions and then a national one that broadcasts in English because our official language is English. The rest of the languages is said to be official so that people feel accommodated and that they belong.

Interviewee 19 from Pietermaritzburg.

IsiZulu is our language and I want our children to learn in IsiZulu. We all speak IsiZulu in this country. The only unfortunate thing is that English has been used long before our languages. For them to catch up it is going to take long.

Harmonizing language is not a problem to me because IsiZulu is there to stay. The small languages will disappear. As far as I know many people speak IsiZulu which means it will not be affected in any way. What I say is that if the majority go for harmonization I do not have a problem. As long as it is the people's choice I do not have a problem.

Interviewee 20 from Madadeni

Now is the time to teach in IsiZulu. I want my children to be taught maths and all subjects in IsiZulu. May be computers because these come in English.

Interviewee 21 from South Coast

Use of all the official languages is not very versatile at the moment because the commercial language is English. The world is using this language for trade.

In Education using our languages in all the subjects is not possible now. Our country's languages are not that developed at the moment so I do not see it feasible. We need to work for sometime so that these language can have role in education. We must promote these languages. Development of the languages should be shouldered by educators and academics. The department of education should also play a role.

For TV we do not need 11 channels. People use all these languages e.g you find one person who switches from IsiZulu to IsiXhosa to English and even Afrikaans. All languages

should share a channel.

In this country we understand that there are minority languages and it is the minority groups that should popularise their languages. No one can do it for them. I see short programmes in Ndebele. This is because they are few. However, let's say as long as there are people who are speaking the language they should be catered for.

Interviewee 22 from South Coast

Harmonization of Nguni languages is something feasible because these are closely related languages. If we could combine them it could be a good idea. We happen to speak these languages but we do not know what happened.

We can introduce other languages like Tshivenda here in KwaZulu Natal only and only if it benefits the learner, that is if there is a need. If today we say we want French for commercial purpose we see there is a reason to introduce it. If the language benefits the students economically then why not. If it commercially enriches the children place it on the time table.

Our policy may be a result of political aspirations but we need them. Our culture is important. We need our roots. Our languages may not have much to do with economy but they are a rich heritage. We need our past and our present.

Children who go to Model C schools are not people cut off from their culture because they go to school in the morning and come back home after school. Most of the time they are with us. As we, parents, hold up to our culture, African languages will not die. As long as we continue to value our languages, even if you are a millionaire.

(As media of instruction) It will take years for our languages to be used as media of instruction in schools because we are far behind comparatively speaking to English even Afrikaans and Chinese. China uses its language because of the state of the economy and resources. Here we are depended on other countries. They are first world countries who

continue to play a role in our affairs so their language English remains on top. The value of their money determines our economy. So their language is powerful. We cannot go to those people to ask for aid in IsiZulu. We have to talk in their language because they are superior. We cannot run away from this. There is nothing we can do. We can be upbeat and we can be as political as we can but that will not take us anywhere. It will take sometime for our languages to achieve this economic role.

Interviewee 23 from South Coast

We are touching a very sensitive issue, the language issue, because it is a fact we are moving towards globalisation but it does not mean that we should disregard our African languages. My input is that the government must do a lot to improve these languages. The policy is OK but it looks like it is just lip service. Nothing practical is coming like we wish publishers to produce more. Equip the young with our languages and then move to the commercial language which is English. English is well developed. Steps should be taken to improve our languages.

It is possible to teach in these languages but my worry is what they are going to gain from there because that child will not be able to compete in the international arena. It means reeducating the child in the language of bussiness which is English so as to equip him to deal with his broad environment.

With regard to TV, we should move away from making TV a public broadcaster. I feel we should semi-privatize or make it a parastatal because the government has to issue some laws with regard to improvement of our indigenous languages. We privatize because developing languages means money. We semi-privatize so that we can attract funds but putting it catergorically that they reserve a certain percentage of time for broadcasting our indigenous langauges.

I have a feeling that the government has enough funds to broadcast languages. I suggest semi-privatisation so that funds won't be a serious problem.

Teaching another language like Tshivenda in this school it is tough in this time of globalisation. Tshivenda won't play a major role in my life. Even now when they advertise jobs they say, IsiZulu and English because English is a business language. To teach in our languages children will be frustrated. Afrikaans is better because one can get a job. Even countries like Japan and Saudi Arabia are now importing English teachers. Those are wealthy countries but they want their children to explore other countries.

Model C schools should be taken as a challenge and find ways of preserving our languages. Now we have the African renaissance. Even in that renaissance there is more spade work that must be done. The government must issue a law that multiracial schools must teach indigenous languages and leave black children to speak in their languages. They should employ black teachers to teach these languages.

If I become the Chief Executive of the town I should know English so as to sell the town to tourists and investors, and the local language so that I communicate effectively with the people. Parents want children to speak English because it markets them.

Interviewee 24 from Margate

I want my children to be taught in English and Zulu. I would also be happy if my children are taught other languages in the country, say IsiXhosa and Sesotho.

Interview 25 from Margate

I suggest we have cassettes readily available so that we learn one another's language. There is that desire but cassettes are not readily available. Learning one another's language is necessary in the business world. Communication in business is very important. Learning each other's language facilitates communication because that closes the gap between speakers of different languages. We end up doing business faster.

Interviewee 26 from Giyani

To say the Tsonga are a small group is out of question. Why do they broadcast in Indian languages. Or why don't they market programmes to neighbouring countries where

Xitsonga is spoken.

Most of our languages, looking at the global set up, do not play a major role. English has become the means of communication across the spectrum. You talk of market and business in English. Consider also soccer coaches in South Africa. I mean those who came without being able to utter a single word in English. They had to learn English.

What I find strange is that African languages are taught in English at some universities. It means our languages are not effective enough.

Language issue is sensitive and can bring down a government. Consider what happened with Afrikaans. Teaching in our languages would restrict us. If you learn in Xitsonga alone you are building a wall around yourself. I do not have a problem teaching Xitsonga in Xitsonga. The other subjects I do not support that. I believe that education should empower people to go anywhere and work and live in that environment. Language should not be a barrier. In any case people should be allowed to speak their languages. One should not feel inferior when he/she speaks his/her language. In Gauteng if you speak Tshivenda and Xitsonga people have that complex that people look at them and say they are inferior. I do not see where that mentality comes from. We should do away with the complex. People should not feel that if they speak IsiXhosa or IsiZulu they are more important than other language groups. People should be proud of their languages and realise that their languages go beyond the borders of South Africa.

Interviewee 27 from the Northern Province

By accepting all the languages we are expanding culture. English unites Africans politically for votes. The choice of eleven languages was not political. It was meant to accommodate the illiterate. Illiteracy rate is very high in this country. English remains the key language because there is hardly an interview conducted in African languages. All employment there is not a single place where they will say here is employment in African languages. I have not witnessed an interview in any of the African languages.

In the economic sector, Afrikaans is still powerful. They can interview you in English but at

the workplace you use Afrikaans, everywhere. They do not force you. They have a tactic that makes you speak it. This is an issue of money. Again the language spoken in Gauteng is the language of the day.

Interviewee 28, a young man from Gauteng

Resorting to African languages in education is like moving a step backwards because it means translating material that is already available in English. Instead of researching and marching forward we focus attention on the starting point. It means starting all over again from the bottom and move up which takes a long time. In addition there are so many languages. We are going to spend millions paying authors and translators who convert material into all those languages.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion was held with teachers at Bankuna High School in Tzaneen.

A

The language policy is crystal clear. All the languages should be promoted and treated equally. Unfortunately, we have been marginalised for the simple reason that we are Shangaans and Vendas, people who are in the minority. However, intellectually we are high. We are marginalised especially on TV where we have a slot for thirty minutes a week on channel 2. We need more time. We need news, sports and so on like the other languages.

Xitsonga should be in schools. Xitsonga should be used by the local government. We have to push our languages so that they are used in schools from primary school level to secondary level. When you look at Afrikaans, you see Afrikaans in schools and libraries. (Asked who should develop the language?) University lecturers and Professors should work on those languages. We have professors at UNISA, we have professors at the University of the North. They should be given the role to develop languages.

B

(What do you regard as an official language?) To my understanding an official language is one that plays a major role in the area where that language dominates, for example, Xitsonga dominates in Gazankulu and Giyani. Xitsonga would be regarded as the official language in those places. In Bloemfontein Afrikaans dominates and so it is the official language in the Free State. Xitsonga is our official language in Gazankulu and Giyani. A language is official where it is dominant, otherwise in other areas it is not official. English is a foreign language.

C

TV. Channels should cater for all languages. We should not have a language on its own channel. In that way we are separating the languages. We should have them on one channel and divide the time, say, for example, 11am to 12 pm we have Xitsonga and from 12 pm to 2pm we have English and so on.

(Asked whether it would be appreciated if IsiZulu were to be taught in their area so that they can follow programmes in isiZulu and those in Durban also learn Xitsonga so that they can follow Xitsonga drama on TV). That would be a good policy so that we can all follow programmes in other languages. We are forced to watch IsiXhosa news, mind you. We watch programmes in IsiZulu. The same applies to Sesotho. We are forced to watch programmes in that language too. If we have all these languages on TV as we said that would promote multilingualism in South Africa. You know, I watch Xhosa drama but I do not hear anything. I do not follow the story except watch pictures.

(I watch a Tshivenda play, Muvango, by the Venda people, a play which we all enjoy watching. Why can't you do likewise in Xitsonga?)

There are a lot of stories. There are books that could be dramatized.

(Why they don't stage them then?) The people up there are not working towards that.

(Who?) The Language Board are the people who were working towards that with some individuals. (Is it not that the audience is small.) I do not think they have a basis on that one.

They never showed any of the Shangaan plays. The size of the audience should not be the case of argument because we are many.

B

In practice this cannot be achieved over night but people should know that the literacy rate in our country is very low. Imagine the position with my grandmother and my grandfather when all those programmes are beamed in English and Afrikaans. This is a problem. They will only watch the pictures on the screen. They are not able to follow the story. At any rate we cannot run away from the fact that our people are illiterate. They need to be catered for.

C

Before you go, are you aware that in the year 2023 there will not be African languages because our children are now sent to multiracial schools where no Xitsonga and Tshivenda are neither used nor taught. They communicate in English only. Our children are brainwashed. They worry about the accent but surely there are no marks for it. We need a solution to change the mind set.

A

We should use our languages at all times.