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**GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING OF AFRIKAANS  
AS AN AFRICAN LANGUAGE IN COLLEGES OF  
EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE**

*by*

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## ABSTRACT

This study concerns the teaching and learning of Afrikaans as a foreign language in colleges of education in the Northern Province. An empirical survey was conducted at Makhado and Shingwedzi Colleges of Education where teachers are trained for the Primary Teachers' Diploma. This study seeks to identify issues which perpetrate negative attitudes to the subject of Afrikaans, as is manifested by low student enrolment, or its absence. Apart from the fact that South Africa is proclaimed by the Constitution of the country to be both multilingual and multicultural, non-Afrikaans student teachers seem to ignore the advantages of including Afrikaans as one of the units of their linguistic flexibility. The study thus identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes which teachers and student teachers should acquire in this foreign language during their training in order to be successful practitioners in the field. The study endeavours to inform its learners that the language should be regarded as a tool of communication, not one of politics. This knowledge is necessary as African learners tend to associate the subject Afrikaans with the *apartheid* era of government.

Chapter two deals with theoretical considerations which underpin the teaching of the subject of Afrikaans. The role of language policy and its planning was identified as the basis of negative attitudes towards the language.

Chapter three deals with instructional issues pertaining to the teaching of the subject of Afrikaans as a foreign language. These issues include the How? and Why? of factors to be considered in the teaching of the subject with the aim of enhancing the teachers' understanding of the subject. Research is conducted on problematical areas.

Chapter four concentrates on the empirical research. The research endeavours to identify issues in the teaching of the subject.

The thesis concludes that there is a need to revisit the aims of learning the Afrikaans language and a need to concentrate on cultivating a culture of learning in the subject of Afrikaans. This can be accomplished by enriching the language through acquiring various teaching skills and addressing various needs of learners.

## UITTREKSEL

Hierdie studie handel oor die onderrig en leer van Afrikaans as vreemde taal in onderwyskolleges in die Noordelike Provinsie. 'n Empiriese studie is gedoen by die Makhado Onderwyskollege en die Shingwedzi Onderwyskollege waar onderwysers vir die Primêre Onderwysdiploma opgelei word. In hierdie navorsing word getrag om die faktore wat aanleiding gee tot die lae inskrywingsyfer vir Afrikaans as vak te identifiseer. Afgesien van die feit dat die Grondwet van Suid-Afrika voorsiening maak vir veeltaligheid en multikulturaliteit, ignoreer nie-Afrikaanssprekende studente die voordele wat daaraan verbonde is om Afrikaans as vak by hulle studiepakket in te sluit. Die kennis, vaardighede en houdings wat onderwysers en onderwysstudente moet verwerf om Afrikaans as vreemde taal suksesvol te kan onderrig, word hier geïdentifiseer. Poging word aangewend om aan te toon dat Afrikaans as werktuig vir kommunikasie aangewend moet word en nie as 'n politieke werktuig nie. Hierdie kennis is noodsaaklik, aangesien leerders die taal en dus ook die vak Afrikaans, meestal assosieer met die voormalige apartheidsregering.

Hoofstuk twee handel oor die teoretiese aspekte wat die grondslag van die onderrig van die vak Afrikaans vorm. Die rol wat die taalbeleid tans speel en ook in die verlede gespeel het, word geïdentifiseer as basis vir die negatiewe ingesteldhede teenoor die taal.

Hoofstuk drie handel oor onderrigaangeleenthede betreffende die vak Afrikaans as 'n vreemde taal. Hierdie sake sluit in die Hoe? en Waarom? van faktore wat in ag geneem word by die onderrig van die vak wanneer beoog word om die onderwyser se insig betreffende die vak te verbeter. Navorsing is gedoen oor areas wat problematies blyk te gewees het.

In hoofstuk vier word die empiriese navorsing weergegee. Hierdie navorsing trag

om sekere aangeleenthede betreffende die onderrig van die vak oop te dek.

Die tesis volstaan daarmee dat daar 'n nood is om die doelstellings met die onderrig van Afrikaans weer eens te beskou en dat dit ook nodig is om daarop te konsentreer om die onderrig van Afrikaans op alle vlakke te bevorder. Dit kan bereik word deur die verryking van die taal deur middel van die aanleer van verskillende onderrigvaardighede en deur die behoeftes van die leerders aan te spreek.

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# CHAPTER ONE

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The 1994 democratic elections in the Republic of South Africa produced a government of national unity charged with the task of addressing the inequalities created by the past *apartheid* policies. Thus equality forms the core of the present government goals. According to the present government policy, all languages in South Africa are regarded as being equal in status. In terms of section 30 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:10) '... everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice'.

The majority of Africans were deprived of this 'choice', for the past five decades. Different anti-*apartheid* organisations and movements were against the *apartheid* government, the issue being : whose language is superior and for what reasons? This question forms the basis of this study. Given the above explanation about the status of different languages, it appears that the teaching of each of these languages should be regarded as being equally important to the teaching of any other, and the education system should embark on redressing historical imbalances in the language education sphere. According to the National Policy Investigation report on language (1992:17), the process of the historical imbalances between languages is addressed as follows:

'...Redressing historical imbalances has two broad implications for language policy. On the one hand, it means African languages, which in the past have not had equal status with English and Afrikaans should be actively promoted... on the other hand, English needs to be extended because people perceive that without it, their prospects in many fields are limited...'

Having said that, it is clear that all South African languages are going to be equal, with the exception of English which is regarded as the 'language of greater communication',

(see section 2.2.3) below. This is also evident when one watches television programmes, where the unequal allocation of time to different languages is apparent. Some languages, though South African, are regarded as only regional, whereas others are said to be languages of the majority of speakers, and are given more air time. Steyn (1996 :27) has the following to say in this regard

'In Suid-Afrika is daar goeie rede tot kommer. Engels kry sedert Februarie vanjaar meer as 50% van die uitsaaityd, Afrikaans, Zoeloe, en Xhosa elk iets meer as 5% en ander tale nog minder; meer as 20% van die programme is sogenaamd "veeltalig", in werklikheid egter oorwegend Engels. Vir berekening, is sport nie in aanmerking geneem nie - die is ook hoofsaaklik Engels...'

Nevertheless, the South African Constitution (1996) section 6 (1) maintains that the equality of all languages should prevail in the country.

Having observed the past status of the so-called official languages, this researcher is concerned about the actual implementation of equity. As far as English is concerned, its position is secure. The position of Afrikaans, which is consequently not the same as that of English, needs to be investigated. The position which is to be occupied by Afrikaans can only be understood in its historical context. A brief consideration of the development of Afrikaans as a language, subject and medium of instruction, will cast light on the future handling of the language as a school subject in African schools.

### **1.1.1 A brief history of the development of Afrikaans as a language, school subject and a medium of instruction**

The Afrikaners are the descendants of the Dutch settlers who came to the most southern part of Africa in 1652. Their main aim was to build a halfway station between Holland and the East. When these Dutch settlers arrived in South Africa, they came into contact with Malay, Khoisan, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho and later on English speakers (Van Rensburg *et al.* 1997:49). The daily contact of Dutch with other South African languages caused a new language to evolve. This new language which originated in South Africa came to be known as the Afrikaans language (Orlek 1993).

Van Rensburg *et al.* (1997: 49) describe the situation of conflict which existed during the process of developing the Afrikaans language into an official language as follows:

'... voordat Afrikaans in 1925 die amptelike taal kon word, is 'n bitter stryd gevoer.... As die voorstanders van een taal genoeg politieke mag het en genoeg stemme trek, kan die parlement besluit om so 'n taal 'n ampstaal te maak...'

A criterion which had to be met before a language like Afrikaans could be given the status of an 'official' language of the country, was that it should have an orthography which was well developed and usable for official purposes. Van Rensburg *et al.* (1997: 49) describe the situation as follows :

'... 'n nuwe amptelike taal moet in die eerste plek geskryf en gespel word. Die taal se woordeskat moet ook verryk word en so bruikbaar moontlik gemaak word - in die onderwys, die hof, waar ambagte beoefen word, waar daar gestudeer word, waar gelees, geluister, en ontspan word'.

Apart from stating some conditions which a language should fulfil before becoming an official language, Van Rensburg *et al.* (1997: 49) also supplied strategies which should be utilised in developing a language further. They state that '...die taal word uitgebrei deur koerante, die radio en televisie, woordeboeke, vakterme, 'n Bybelvertaling, onderwysmoontlikhede, ensovoorts'.

Having satisfied the necessary criteria for becoming an official language, Afrikaans was recognised as an official language in 1925. It was then utilised in schools and churches soon after that recognition. After 1925, the Afrikaners strove to develop their language so that it could also be used as an official language of courts and parliament.

In 1944, General Smuts encountered animosity from the Afrikaners when he tried to enforce a dual medium of instruction in schools, that is English and Afrikaans. The Afrikaans teachers threatened to strike as they were against the introduction of English as medium of instruction (Orlek 1993:18). The situation of the Afrikaans teachers was alleviated by the Nationalist Party which came into power in 1948. Its policy was that of strengthening the mother tongue as a medium of instruction and by so doing, it also strengthened the position of Afrikaans in the white schools. The party also strove to

change the position of Afrikaans in the Black/African schools as Orlek (1993:18) remarks: '... over the years, they tried to extend mother tongue education to Std 6 in black schools and to replace English with Afrikaans in higher primary and secondary schools...'.

The Nationalist Party succeeded in having the Bantu Education Act of 1953 passed in Parliament, which made Afrikaans a compulsory subject in both Black and White schools. At this stage a dual medium of instruction (English and Afrikaans) was introduced in Black secondary schools (Hartshorne 1993, Orlek 1993). On the other hand members of the other population groups were to choose either English or Afrikaans to be their medium of instruction. At this stage the teaching of Afrikaans was politicised by both government officials and the African radicals. The opposition to this step was at first covertly communicated and was ignored by the government of the time. In 1976, students in Soweto revolted openly against Afrikaans and Bantu Education. The students' uprising started in Soweto and ultimately affected the whole country (Hartshorne 1993, Orlek 1993 and Rapport 1998 ).

After the 1976 student uprising, delegations, protests and presentations were directed to the government in order to change the dual medium of instruction in the African schools. The government responded by establishing different regional commissions which recommended limiting the use of mother tongue instruction to the lower primary school level, and allowing the parents/community to decide on the medium of instruction for other levels of schooling. Consequently most African communities chose English as a medium of instruction for both primary and secondary schools (Hartshorne 1993: 204). This was particularly the case in the then Northern Transvaal, which is now known as the Northern Province, where all the African schools (senior primary and secondary) adopted English as their medium of instruction.

After the decision to use a single medium of instruction was implemented in the African schools in general, and in the Northern Province in particular, attitudes towards the teaching and learning of Afrikaans were affected by the departmental directive R2407 (Department of Education 1994). This directive repealed the previous requirement of

the University Act, Act No. 61 of 1955 that African learners should study and pass two official languages plus a mother tongue in order to pass standard ten examinations. This gave the standard ten pupils the option of studying either English or Afrikaans at senior secondary level, a choice which further privileged the English language as a subject at the expense of Afrikaans.

It seems to be appropriate at this stage to sketch how the status of Afrikaans changed from being an official language to that of an African language. The following are the stages which the language went through in the hands of various departments of African Education from 1953 to the present.

1. In 1953 under the Department of Bantu Education, Afrikaans was a first language, a second language, a medium of instruction and one of the official languages in South Africa (Hartshorne 1993).
2. In 1976 after the Soweto students' uprisings, it stopped being the medium of instruction in most of the African schools, but remained as a school subject which was a strong requirement for passing standard ten, and an official language (Hartshorne 1993).
3. In 1994 under the Department of Education and Training, standard ten learners were required to pass two languages, one which had to be a mother tongue and the second one either English or Afrikaans. Both English and Afrikaans remained South African official languages (Department of Education 1994).
4. The 1995 departmental directive requires a learner at standard ten /grade 12 level to pass an official language which serves as the medium of instruction (Department of Education 1995:8). This further serves to strengthen the position of English which is the major language of instruction in most if not all of the African schools. Afrikaans will thus be studied by fewer pupils as an optional subject.

5. In 1996 the newly adopted South African constitution stated that '... 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...'. (Section 29 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996:14). Thus Afrikaans may and will remain an optional subject as far as many Africans are concerned.

For Afrikaans to survive as a language, and as a subject in African schools, it is clear that its curriculum and its teaching should be revisited in order to change attitudes towards its learning. The issue of revisiting the teaching of Afrikaans will be discussed further in chapter five.

Having summarised the teaching of Afrikaans through various stages, it is necessary to illustrate how the researcher came to be interested in the teaching of Afrikaans as a subject. The researcher became aware of the poor performance of standard ten candidates in the subjects Tshivenda and Afrikaans. Whilst teaching both languages at senior secondary level for a period of more than eight years, it became clear to the researcher that pupils were struggling with basic communicative skills in both these languages. The researcher did a Master's research project on the teaching of Tshivenda, but realised she needed not only to investigate the learners' inabilities as reflected in their performance, but also to direct attention to the teachers' skills. This prompted the idea of an attempt to identify factors which negatively affect the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language in the colleges of education in the Northern Province.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.2.1 Background to the problem**

The researcher cites the following reasons for teaching and learning Afrikaans as a subject in the Northern Province, in particular by African student teachers and lecturers in colleges of education:

1. Despite the direct association of Afrikaans with the *apartheid* era, it remains a South African language with abundant resources which can benefit all South Africans, irrespective of colour or creed.
2. Failure to teach Afrikaans to African learners will result in excluding them from various knowledge resources which are found in its literature.
3. Ignorance of the language will also lead Africans to their automatic exclusion from Afrikaans medium institutions, industries in which the language is dominant, apprenticeship in Afrikaans institutions, to name but a few.
4. The exclusion of African learners without Afrikaans linguistic skills from accessing knowledge expressed in the language will also be felt strongly in any field of research where some if not most research is done through the medium of Afrikaans. In May 1999 an *Afrikaans Forum* was established at Unisa. One of the rationales behind this forum is the promotion of the value of Afrikaans as a scientific language. Already 450 people of all races are members of this body, to show that the language still has an important role to play in the learning and teaching field (*Rapport* 23.05.99).
5. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:4-5) recognizes the fact that our country should usher in multilingualism and multiculturalism as part of our heritage, which is a reality. According to section 5 (a and b) of the South African Constitution, the era of multilingualism and multiculturalism should be ushered in through the introduction of a Pan South African Languages Board which should promote all official languages plus other languages in the country.

Having looked at the researcher's reasons for the teaching and learning of Afrikaans in the African schools and colleges of education in the Northern Province, one must however also look at the current status of a knowledge of Afrikaans. It seems that after 1976 the knowledge of Afrikaans deteriorated dramatically as Wybenga and Baten (1994: 272), for example, rightly pointed out:

'... our students' knowledge of Afrikaans has deteriorated dramatically over the last couple of years. The three main causes for this are the political disruptions over the last decade which made schooling less effective ... and the changes that came in the language medium of schools since 1979...'

It is clear from Wybenga and Baten's statement that historical and political factors influenced the learning of Afrikaans as a language by the Africans. This type of political/historical interference in the learning of a second language is further confirmed by Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:4) when they cite social factors as having a bearing on the knowledge of the second or 'foreign' language. They are of the opinion that:

'... the social implication of knowing the second language can in a very real way hinder the learning of that language. Another language reflects another view of life which may differ to a greater or lesser extent from that of a mother tongue. If this world is in conflict with that of mother tongue, or was in conflict many years ago, a knowledge of that language might amount to betrayal....'

It is clear, from what Kilfoil and Van der Walt believe, that the learning and teaching of the second language is not only influenced by what happens in the classroom, it can also be affected by external factors. These socio-political reasons can also serve as deterrents in the learning of that language - this deterrent will at times form the basis of attitudes to and motivation in the learning and teaching of a particular second language.

Despite the socio-political reasons related to the learning and teaching of the second language in general, and that of Afrikaans in particular, there are other factors which are also worth mentioning. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:5) investigated the demotivating factors in learning a second language, and explain thus: '... the very fact that learning of a second language is compulsory, demotivates students. Some may have a social antipathy towards the group of native speakers whose language they are supposed to learn. These factors will influence the teachers' methodology profoundly'.

It is clear from the above that the teaching of a foreign language such as Afrikaans in

African schools has been affected by:

1. socio-political factors which negatively affect the basis for the learning and teaching of the language;
2. the demotivation of pupils who for other non-educational reasons were not eager to learn the language, as they regarded it as a betrayal of their language and their respective population groups.

After having considered the factors which may influence the teaching of a second language in general, and that of teaching Afrikaans in particular, it is necessary to comment briefly on the training and ability of teachers, which may also affect the teaching of any subject in general, and that of Afrikaans in particular.

Some teachers were probably disempowered by the type of *training* they received in the colleges of education. This might have been due to the lecturers who were so static in their knowledge that they never read about their subject or conducted research about it. Conrad (1993:56) illustrates this fact clearly when he states that: '... saddest of all is the possibility that some teacher trainers too, may have failed to keep abreast of recent developments, and may have sent into the world inadequately trained, and ill-informed teachers...'

Whereas the above phenomena of rigid and uninformed lecturers are to be found in most of the school subjects, they are clearly apparent in the teaching of the Afrikaans language by non-native and native speakers in the African schools. In this regard Blackquière (1989:55) considers the insufficient training of Black teachers, as follows: '...Die meerderheid van die onderwyserskorps in swart skole is egter onvoldoende opgelei om anders as op die tradisionele wyse klas te gee. Daarbenewens is die klasse meestal te groot en die fasiliteite (ruimte, meubels, materiaal, boeke) ontoereikend ...'

Most of the teachers in Black schools are not sufficiently trained, hence they can only use *traditional strategies* such as the lecture and the textbook methods in their

teaching.

From the above two paragraphs it seems as if teacher training institutions need to be transformed by retraining their staff so that they can update their knowledge about training student teachers. Teachers should not only know the target language of teaching if they are not native speakers, but they should in fact have an excellent command of that language. This is emphasized by Lado (1964:18) when he says: ‘... The language teacher must know the target language enough to be imitated by his students...’

The issue of the teacher knowing the target language and serving as a model in speaking it will be described further in section 5.5. If the teacher has problems with the knowledge of the target language being taught, he may find himself approaching his daily duties without the necessary confidence expected of a teacher. Walker as quoted by Conrad (1993:56), while talking about the teaching of reading, is of the opinion that

‘... the aim of developing “critical and efficient readers” will not be accomplished unless there is a change of attitude among the teachers and teacher trainers, ... teachers.... should be so well equipped to teach reading that they will approach the task with confidence and contagious enjoyment...’

Upon investigating the *status quo* in the teaching and learning of Afrikaans as a ‘foreign’ language to African pupils, the researcher came across the following thorny issues:

1. African pupils at times regard Afrikaans negatively because of its close association with the *apartheid* era;
2. the knowledge of Afrikaans amongst African learners has deteriorated considerably after the students' uprisings of 1976;
3. teacher-training institutions should be transformed with the aim of upgrading their teaching staff's knowledge through retraining and updating them on the recent developments in the teaching of their learning areas;

4. language curriculum development in the teacher training courses should take cognisance of the new constitution which endorses multilingualism and multiculturalism;
5. a means should be devised to improve both the teaching strategies and the knowledge of the target language of non-native teachers of Afrikaans.

The above factors, found in the teaching of Afrikaans as a second and foreign language, give rise to the problem as formulated in section 1.2.2.

### 1.2.2 Formulation of the problem

This study endeavours to address the problem of the teaching and learning of Afrikaans in the colleges of education in the Northern Province with the aim of enabling student teachers to access both their language competency (in reading, writing, listening, speaking) and the culture of the target language. Thus the study is an endeavour to redress the *status quo* in the teaching of Afrikaans. The study will attempt to address the following:

1. how the deterioration of the Africans' knowledge of the Afrikaans language came about in the education system;
2. the question of identifying factors in the teaching and learning of the language which tend to promote poor acquisition of and negative attitudes towards Afrikaans as a foreign language and a subject;
3. the question of exposing student teachers taking an Afrikaans foreign language teachers' course to a variety of language learning and teaching skills, in order to enable them to transfer their knowledge to their future learners.

An analysis of the main problem reveals the following sub-problems which have been dealt with in this research project:

1. the question of adapting and transforming the Afrikaans teacher training programme, in order to produce efficient teachers (facilitators) of the subject Afrikaans as a foreign language who can utilise the school's learning programme;
2. the question of addressing student teachers' knowledge of the target language, with the aim of improving their linguistic competence and confidence when dealing with learners in class;
3. the question of addressing the language teaching skills which should be acquired by student teachers of the subject of Afrikaans as a foreign language, in order to enhance its teaching and learning;
4. the question of Afrikaans which is being relegated to the periphery in the African schools, from the position of being a medium of instruction and compulsory subject to that of being an optional subject;
5. the question of student teachers not always knowing the aims of acquiring the Afrikaans linguistic skills in their schemes of languages;
6. the question of developing guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans, as one of the African languages.

This study is thus an attempt to promote the effective teaching of Afrikaans and to try and rectify some of the harm which has been done in the teaching of Afrikaans as a language over the past two decades. This study is situated in the context of teacher training at Makhado and Shingwedzi colleges of education in the Northern Province.

### **1.3. THE AIM OF THIS STUDY**

The aim of this study is to identify problems which are responsible for the negative

attitudes of African learners towards the language of Afrikaans as a language, subject and medium of instruction in their schools. In order to attain the above-mentioned aim the project will address the following objectives in this study:

1. to identify some of the factors which influenced the teaching and learning of Afrikaans as a foreign language in the African schools;
2. to discuss relevant aspects involved in the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages in tertiary institutions;
3. to review and discuss the current status of the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language and subject in colleges of education in the Northern Province;
4. to prepare guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language.

The proposed guidelines will be aimed at addressing some of the problems which have been identified and by so doing will provide a relevant framework for those who wish to train the corps of Afrikaans foreign language teachers effectively. The proposed guidelines will be submitted to the relevant authorities as recommendations for implementation in the Afrikaans foreign language curriculum for the Primary Teachers' Diploma course.

## **1.4 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.4.1 Second language**

The term second language (in the field of teaching) refers to the stage in a learner's life when he or she was exposed to a particular language. Languages are ranked as first, second or third, which ranking has consequences for language teaching. Various definitions, and sometimes conflicting ones, are put forward by different authors regarding the concept of second language. Ramkinsson (1991:13) for example defines a second language as '... 'n taal of tale anders as die moedertaal met 'n onderskeidende kenmerk dat die gebruiker/leerder daarvan ook buite die formele/informele onderrig-/leersituasie blootstelling daarvan sal geniet'.

The National Education Policy Investigation report on language (1992: xi) also defines a second language as follows:

'... a language which is acquired or learned after gaining some competence in a first language. Usually it is not used in the learner's home, but it is used in the wider society in which the learner lives. However there are vast discrepancies in the extent to which different learners are exposed to a "second language"....'

Apart from the two definitions by Ramkinsson and the National Education Policy Investigation report on language, Kroes *et al.* (1992:3) give a more contextualised definition, based on the White education system of the time:

'...In ons skoolsisteem word daar gewoonlik na die moedertaal as die eerste taal verwys. Tweedetaal is gewoonlik onderrig in Engels of Afrikaans as 'n tweede taal. In baie gevalle impliseer dit dat daar, behalwe in die klaskamer, ook natuurlik 'n blootstelling aan hierdie taal is...'

All the researchers mentioned above are quick to point out that there is a problem in the use of the concept 'second language', as it is sometimes confused with "foreign language". Referring to this aspect, Du Plessis as quoted by Ramkinsson (1991:10), is of the opinion that '... een van die grootste probleme met die onderrig van Afrikaans aan die andertaliges is dat die onderrig van Afrikaans as vreemde taal dikwels verwar word met die onderrig van Afrikaans as tweede taal'.

The above irregularity is also echoed by the National Education Policy Investigation report on Language (1992: xi) where it says that: '... In some cases, what is termed a "second language" may in fact be a "foreign language", because the learner has no exposure to the language outside the classroom'.

Kroes *et al.* (1992:2) also note the extent of confusion which prevails in our country when it comes to this definition. They state that: '...Dit is egter verwarrend. Op die internasionale vlak word met die tweedetaalonderrig bedoel: onderrig in 'n taal waaraan die leerling ook buitekant die klaskamer blootgestel word...'

This confusion is to be noted as it influences the teaching of Afrikaans in colleges of education, as will be discussed further in section 3.2.1.

Having pointed out the confusion in the teaching of second language, it is necessary to define the concept 'foreign language'.

#### **1.4.2 Foreign language**

This is a language to which the learner has minimum or no exposure outside the classroom. Du Plessis, as quoted by Ramkinsson (1991:10), defines a foreign language as follows:

'...n Vreemde taal is 'n taal wat nie die studente se moedertaal is nie en waarmee hy selde indien ooit in aanraking kom buite die klaskamer. Omdat daar min of geen geleentheid bestaan om sosiaal met lede van die teikengroep te verkeer nie, word die leerling selde aan die daaglikse gebruik van die teikentaal blootgestel..'

Jacobs (1991:33) is quick to point out an important situation which pertains to the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language when she alleges that '... Leerlinge uit hierdie nie-Afrikaanse volksgroepe word selde indien ooit buite die klaskamer aan Afrikaans blootgestel...'

One can thus conclude that the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language, if Jacobs and Ramkinsson (quoted above) are to be taken seriously, pertains to most, if not all, African schools in the Northern Province. For the sake of this study it should be noted that wherever student teachers taking Afrikaans are regarded as second language learners, they are in actual fact foreign language learners. It is important to note this fact as it has serious didactical implications for the teaching and learning of Afrikaans as a subject.

#### **1.4.3 College of Education**

This is a tertiary institution where primary or secondary school teachers are trained in

order to be awarded teachers diplomas for teaching in such schools.

#### **1.4.4 Colleges of Education in the Northern Province**

These are colleges of education in the Northern Province which, during the *apartheid* era, fell under the (then) Department of Education and Training. As the department dealt with Africans only, it was thus responsible for producing African teachers. The main characteristic of these colleges was that their curricula were developed and evaluated by the department itself.

At present these colleges receive their curricula from the provincial government, with the 'Provincial Examination Board of Colleges' being responsible for assessment at the end of the students' final year. In some cases colleges opted for assessment of their final-year candidates to be accredited by universities of their choice.

#### **1.4.5 African language**

According to *Readers Digest Universal Dictionary* (1988: 36) the word African means '...of or pertaining to Africa or any of its peoples, languages...' Thus an African language is a language which is spoken only in Africa by African people. In this study this term will mainly refer to the indigenous languages, which will also include Afrikaans, spoken in South Africa. African languages in this context would include all the South African languages with the exception of English, which is regarded as a *lingua franca* in the country. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:4) they are the official languages and they include the following: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu.

#### **1.4.6 Language policy**

Praitor as cited in Phaswana (1994:4) says that language policy '... involves decisions concerning the teaching and use of language and their careful formulation by an

authority which has power to do so, for the governance of others'.

In this case, the South African government in the *apartheid* era chose English and Afrikaans to be the official languages of the country, with other languages serving as home languages only. However the situation has changed with the present government of the African National Congress, where English is elevated above the level of all other languages in the country. Among the eleven official languages in South Africa, Afrikaans is now on a par with the other African languages (see section 1.4.5). All the languages in the country are to be respected and developed; '....everyone uses his language and culture' in accordance with the stipulations in the 1996 Constitution of South Africa (see section 1.1).

## **1.5. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

Various methods and techniques are used to collect data for this particular study. The reason why the researcher has opted for more than one method is to facilitate the collection of a wide variety of data, in order to answer the different research questions comprehensively. These methods complement and supplement each other in the process of gathering data. The first method to be discussed, is a literature survey.

### **1.5.1 Literature survey**

According to Tuckman (1978:39) literature is reviewed with the aim of '... uncovering ideas about variables that have proven important and unimportant in a given field of study ...' However McMillan and Schumacher (1993:113) go further, to identify three other major functions of literature review as those of

1. defining and limiting the problem
2. placing the study in a historical and associational perspective and
3. avoiding unintentional and unnecessary replication.

In this particular study literature will be surveyed with the above mentioned aims in

mind as postulated by Tuckman, and MacMillan and Schumacher. This technique will also be utilised to determine most of the situations under which the language of Afrikaans can be learned and taught successfully as a foreign language.

The researcher will make use of journals, discussion documents from various departments and political parties, the Constitution of South Africa, newspapers and other types of media which may have a bearing on the teaching and learning of Afrikaans as a 'second or foreign language'. Having discussed how literature will be utilised in this study project, the method of observation is briefly contextualised below.

### **1.5.2 Observation**

Various authors such as McMillan and Schumacher (1993), and Borg and Gall (1983) refer to this method as 'the primary way of collecting data'. When using this method, the researcher may in fact choose to be either a participant or a non-participant observer in a particular study project. Bailey (1982:247) states that '... although observation most commonly involves sight or visual data collection it could also include data via the other senses such as hearing, touch or smell...'

In this study the researcher will act as a non-participant observer with the aim of acquiring more information on the observed phenomenon. In this method the researcher will in particular strive to establish the student teachers' language patterns outside the classroom.

### **1.5.3 Interviews**

According to Cohen and Manion (1989:307), a research interview can be defined as '...a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information'. For the sake of simplifying the above statement it can be said that a research interview takes place when a discussion is held between an interviewer (researcher) and respondents or interviewees, who could be any of the following: student teachers, lecturers, heads of departments, and

rectors/senior heads of departments as stipulated in this research project. As the interview represents one of the major sources of collecting data in this study, it is necessary to discuss its two major components as follows:

### **1. Unstructured interviews**

These are interviews which are guided by the topic or question which has been provided by the researcher. The researcher allows the interviewee to discuss the issue in question whilst she is recording or taking notes. In between discussions the researcher asks follow-up probing questions for more information or clarification. From the bulk of information which she gathers through this process, she should be able to extract what she needs for her study and discard the rest.

### **2. Structured interviews**

These interviews are also conducted between the researcher and the respondent with questions prepared in writing beforehand. The researcher reads out the questions and fills in the responses as given by the interviewee. In this process the researcher is able to repeat the question if the respondent so requires. At times the respondent may claim his lack of understanding of a question, where the researcher is then obliged to rephrase the question concerned.

There are two types of questions which are commonly used, that is, closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions are characterised by set responses which the interviewee chooses from, whilst answering the question from the interview schedule. In this study in particular, closed questions will be followed by open-ended ones, in order to allow the respondent to provide more information, which might not have been furnished in the list of set answers provided on the interview schedule. The open-ended item at the end of a given question (which has set answers) has the advantage of providing the researcher with additional information which he could not easily acquire without the assistance of the respondent. In this study the open-ended question usually requires the respondent to give reasons and explanations for his answers in the closed category of the same question. Thus it is clear that the main disadvantage of closed questions is that of leaving out items unknown to the

researcher. This disadvantage is countered by the provision of the open-ended items at the end of the question.

Open-ended questions do, however, have their disadvantages, such as that: it is difficult to code and compare different answers as provided by different respondents.

Interviews will be used as a major source of collecting data in this study. Both structured and unstructured interviews will be utilised in the research.

## **1.6 FIELD OF STUDY**

The research will be conducted in two colleges of education which are found in the Northern Province. The method of choosing these colleges relies on purposive sampling. The researcher uses her own research skill and prior knowledge to choose respondents. According to the researcher, the following colleges will best meet the purpose of this research project: Makhado and Shingwedzi.

### **1.6.1 Makhado College of Education**

This college of education is situated in the Northern Province. It offers three types of diplomas, that is: Junior Primary, Senior Primary, and Secondary Teachers' Diplomas. At present it seems that there is no way in which it can be rationalised further as it has already survived two instances of rationalisation.

### **1.6.2 Shingwedzi College of Education**

The college is also situated in the Northern Province in the former Gazankulu area. It also offers the three diplomas. It has survived the first round of rationalisation which was effected by the province in 1996. The provisional second round of rationalisation will possibly affect it negatively.

## 1.7 FURTHER PROGRAMME

A review of literature in chapter 2 will be given in order to place a number of factors, found in the teaching of Afrikaans to non-Afrikaans speakers, in their proper perspective. Factors which will be surveyed are:

1. the Afrikaans language scenario in the Northern Province;
2. the South African Language Policy and language planning;
3. the effects of language policy on the teaching of Afrikaans in the Black schools;
4. the teaching and learning of Afrikaans during the *apartheid* era;
5. the need to learn Afrikaans as a third language.

Chapter 3 deals with the teaching of second and foreign languages at tertiary institutions. The following are important factors dealt with in this chapter:

1. the *teaching* of second and foreign languages;
2. the *training* of second and foreign language teachers;
3. language teaching *methods* and *approaches*;
4. language *acquisition*;
5. *content-based* language instruction;
6. *learner-centred* teaching strategies and techniques.

In chapter 4 the empirical research on the teaching and learning of Afrikaans in colleges of education in the Northern Province, is discussed.

A comparison between the literature and the empirical data of the observation and the interviews, culminates in the design of proposed guidelines (chapter 5) for the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language in colleges of education in the Northern Province.

The final chapter (chapter six) contains deductions, conclusions and recommendations which emerge from the study.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a brief history of the development of Afrikaans as a language, school subject and medium of instruction is provided. In the statement of the problem, the background to the problem is furnished before the problem is actually formulated. The aims and objectives of this study are also outlined. Concepts utilised in this study are clarified and methods of investigation are discussed. Finally, the further programme for this study is outlined.

In the ensuing chapter the researcher investigates factors influencing the teaching and learning of Afrikaans as a foreign language.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF AFRIKAANS AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country which, like many other countries on the continent, is multilingual as well as multicultural. Amongst languages spoken in the country, some are spoken by the majority of people, whereas others are used by minority groups. Those languages that are designated as major languages are also characterised by the fact that they are spoken, written, and studied and developed in various institutions and used in formal communication. The other group of languages is usually used on an *ad hoc* basis, for example informally in homes, churches and other such places.

Historically, South African languages could be divided into two major groups, that is official and 'Bantu' languages. Official languages during the *apartheid* era were English and Afrikaans, which were well-developed and served as first and second languages, school subjects, media of instruction and official languages. These official languages were utilised for the purpose of accessing economic as well as political resources. African languages, though spoken by the majority of citizens, were characterised by underdevelopment and were mainly utilised for communication purposes - later on they served as school subjects.

After the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, as already explained briefly in section 1.1, eleven languages were recognised by the Constitution as official languages at various levels of administration. These official languages are further categorised as languages of greater communication (English) and regional languages (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa and isiZulu) (National Education Policy Investigation Report on Language 1992: Krog 1994:

18). English is the only language which can seemingly be regarded as the main official language, to be used and learned by all citizens. This will be explained in section 2.2.3. Afrikaans, on the other hand, has been relegated from the status of an official to that of a regional language. By being relegated to the status of regional language it is now on a par with the other nine African languages (see section 2.1.2).

In brief, the above explanation endeavours to illustrate the South African language scenario as it existed in the *apartheid* era, as well as its current state under the African National Congress government.

Having considered the language scenario as it stands in South Africa in general, it is now appropriate for this study to examine the *language scenario* as it exists in the Northern Province in particular.

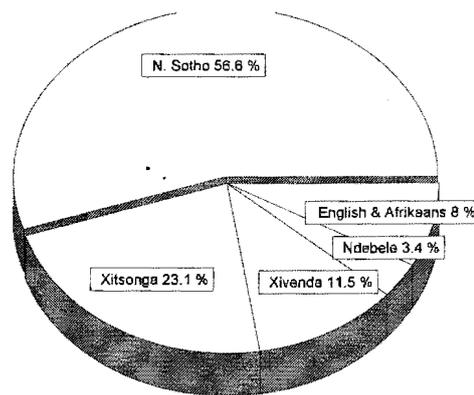
### 2.1.1 Spread of different languages in the Northern Province

The Northern Province is the fifth largest of South Africa's nine provinces, as it comprises ten percent of the area and has 12.9 percent of the total population (Department of Education 1997). According to this document, the population groups and the languages in general are analysed as follows:

'...The Northern Province has a population of 5.2 million people which represents 12, 9% of the total South African population. 97 % is African. The following languages are the home languages of the inhabitants: North Sotho (56, 6%), Xitsonga (23,1%), Xivenda (11, 5%) and Ndebele (3, 4%) and English and Afrikaans (8 %)'.

## Languages' distribution in the Northern Province

Diagram 1.



Despite the availability of the above-mentioned figures, the languages' distribution scenario in the Northern Province does not necessarily show how languages are utilised in the province in their official capacity. In practice the Northern Province language scenario is characterised by the usage of English as the common or official language. The student teachers' interview was compiled with the aim of determining the following factors surrounding the teaching of Afrikaans.

### 2.1.2 The Afrikaans language scenario in the Northern Province

Afrikaans used to be and still is an important language in the Northern Province. It is mostly utilised on the farms by the owners and their employees, as most of the farmers are Afrikaans speaking. The same pattern pertains to most of the businessmen and their employees in the various towns. This situation was the usual one during the *apartheid* era, where Africans who found themselves working for Afrikaans speakers were famous for their proficiency in Afrikaans. It is only recently, after the 1976 Soweto riots, which were soon followed by the repeal of the 'Group Areas Act', that this language scenario has changed its complexion. According to the above-mentioned Act, some citizens were not allowed to buy and own land, nor to stay wherever they liked. This has been changed in the new political dispensation under the democratic government of The African National Congress where the 'Group Areas Act' has been repealed. This has been done according to Section 21 of the Constitution of South

Africa (1996 :10) where it is stated that ‘...every citizen has the right to enter, to remain and reside anywhere in the Republic...’

For schooling purposes, the above information is crucial, as it highlights places where Afrikaans was used for *communication purposes*. For those African learners who stayed on farms and in towns, Afrikaans was one of the languages which was used for communication purposes. These areas, especially the urban and semi-urban, enjoyed the privileges of possessing radios, television sets and newspapers where people were exposed to Afrikaans as they could listen to broadcast programmes or read articles in Afrikaans. The fact that the Afrikaans language was readily available to them, simplified their learning of the language as a school subject.

Before discussing rural areas and their language patterns in the Northern Province, it is important to highlight the fact that very few countries are unilingual in nature. In fact Pauw (1996 :99) claims that the only country which is in fact unilingual is Iceland. He says the following in this regard: ‘...Daar is baie minder eentalige lande as wat ‘n mens sou verwag. Trouens Ysland word as die enigste werklike eentalige land in die wêreld beskou...’

Despite the above assumption, there are many regions in the Northern Province which are single language areas where the mother tongue is by far the only means of communication. Because of the rural nature of these areas, it is very rare that facilities such as radios, television sets and reading materials are readily available to their inhabitants - let alone in Afrikaans. The only opportunities for Afrikaans foreign language learners to hear Afrikaans will be through their teachers at school, who are themselves not Afrikaans first language speakers. The above language scenario tends to disadvantage learners of Afrikaans, according to Van Els *et al.* (1986:121) who discovered through research that there is a correlation between positive attitude and language proficiency in the learning of the second language, where the language is spoken in the immediate environment. This seems to be the case when learners are given adequate time to speak the language in question. This is further explained by Jacobs (1991:33) as follows: ‘... dat daar ‘n aansienlike sterker korrelasie tussen

positiewe houdinge en taalvlotheid in tweetalige omgewings is waar leerlinge talle geleenthede het om met teikentaalsprekers te kommunikeer, as in eentalige omgewings.'

Thus, learners who live in a one language environment where only their mother tongue is mostly spoken, may find it difficult to learn foreign languages such as Afrikaans. A further problem which seems to aggravate the situation is the fact that learners are taught by second language speakers, who at times are not well trained in the subject. Blackquière (1989:53-54), when discussing the usefulness of the communicative language teaching approach, was worried about the situation regarding the teaching and learning of Afrikaans in the African schools. He described the above situation as follows:

'...in die geval van die swart skole is die meeste van die onderwysers van Afrikaans self tweedetaalsprekers... Die meerderheid van die onderwyskorps in swart skole is egter onvoldoende opgelei om anders as op die *tradisionele* wyse klas te gee'.

The situation covering the Afrikaans teaching and learning scenario in the Northern Province can be summarised as follows:

1. in the African schools in the Northern Province, Afrikaans as a school subject can be regarded only as a second language in both urban and farm schools;
2. in the 'one language rural areas' of the Northern Province, where learners learning Afrikaans barely enjoy any exposure to the language, it is to be regarded as a 'foreign language' for all intents and purposes of schooling.

It is now necessary to look at government language policies and the way in which the policies affected Afrikaans as both a language and a school subject in African schools.

## 2.2 LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

When it comes to language policy, it is essential to explain that in South Africa, language policy is prescribed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and all Provinces have to subscribe to its stipulation. Before examining how language policy and language planning were effected by the Constitution in the Northern Province, it is necessary to explain what the above-mentioned concepts, that is *language policy* and the *planning* thereof denote for this particular study.

The concepts of '*language policy and its planning*' seem to have gained impetus as a field of study after the 1960's when most of the countries in Africa gained independence from their former colonial powers. Since most of these countries had more than one language in the country, the question arose as to which languages were to be utilised as governmental means of communication to the citizens. Consequently, governments at the time embarked on the task of planning so that relevant language(s) could be identified which could serve at various public institutions. It is, important to consider the definitions which were advanced by various authorities in attempting to define language policy and its planning.

### 2.2.1 Definitions of 'language policy and planning'

According to Reagan (1990) language planning refers to public policy decisions aimed at solving problems relating to language use, status and development in a sociopolitical context. Beukes (1991) goes further to conceptualize explain the concept of language planning in a South African context as follows:

**'...language** planning is of utmost importance in any complex multilingual society. Language planning for the complex South African situation is of course complicated by the fact that, being a developing country, South Africa faces immense issues in the field of education'.

Though stating it differently, Alexander (1989:63) seems to agree with Reagan and Beukes when he says that language planning means: '... a deliberate and systematic attempt to change a language itself or to change the function of language in a particular

society...'

The above definition is also echoed by Wardhaugh (1987:123) when he says that '...a deliberate official intervention in the direction of language change can be referred to as language planning...'

In the case of South Africa the shift of emphasis in the language policy has been carried out in a different manner since 1994. For instance Pauw (1996:96) is of the opinion that: 'Die mees opvallende kenmerk van die taalbepalings in 1996-grondwet is dat dit...elf amptelike tale bepaal (art 6 (1). Al elf tale moet gelyke aansien geniet (enjoy parity of esteem) en moet billik behandel word ...'

This stipulation in the Constitution causes concern to him as it is not clear whether Afrikaans is regarded as an indigenous language in Section 6(2) or not. Though it may be taken for granted that it is included, Pauw (1996) expresses some reservations on the issue. He further explains that languages are not placed in the constitution according to their alphabetical order, and the order in which they are placed changes from one edition to the next. An example of the change of order in which languages are placed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa can be illustrated by the 1993 and the 1996 versions of the constitution, where the language Zulu is written last in the list in the earlier version and again placed last when it is spelled as 'Isizulu '

Thus in South Africa language planning and its policy was exercised to place English and Afrikaans in a preferential position during the *apartheid* era. Though the languages were unequally used before that era, the *apartheid* government intervened during its time to equalise the utilisation of Afrikaans with that of English. This was done through the process of language planning and policy making which took the form of promulgated acts at various stages of their governing. It is thus necessary to investigate how the nature of language planning differs in different countries.

## 2.2.2 The nature of language planning

There are different views on the nature of language planning. The most common view seems to be the fact that 'intervention' as described by Wardhaugh (1987) in section (2.2.1) above, is regarded as being of a political nature. Reagan (1990:178) is of the opinion that

'...language planning is a profoundly **political** activity; it is not, and could not be politically neutral or scientifically 'objective' anymore than could any of the social sciences... Language planning involves... decisions which have overwhelming significance socially, economically, educationally and politically for both the society and individual'.

From what Reagan says it is clear that language planning also has to do with the *promotion of political power*. Certain actors in power will promote one language at the expense of others, so that all those who are competent in the particular language will be able to access the economic, political as well as educational resources available in the particular language. There are some linguists who agree with Reagan on the nature of language planning, but add a power perspective, for instance, Du Plessis (1987:58) is also of the opinion that

'language planning cannot be ideologically neutral... for that matter no form of planning could be ... the planning which has the most influence on the code of a country is undertaken by groups in power, be they governmental or elite...'

It is thus clear that the concept of language policy and its planning has much to do with power. Despite the fact that language as such is used as a means of communication, it is thus at times utilised as a means of determining power in a given society. Tollefson (1991:9), for instance, describes this power function of the language:

'Language is one criterion of determining which people will complete different levels of education. In this way, language is a means for rationing access to jobs with high salaries. Whenever people must learn a new language to have access to education or to understand classroom instruction, language is a factor in creating and sustaining social and economic divisions'.

If the above quotation is to be taken seriously, as it should be, then the present language policy as it is enshrined in the South African Constitution does have a negative impact on Afrikaans as a language. Whereas Afrikaans like English, was a means of sustaining social and economic divisions, it has now been relegated to the status of a regional language like all the other nine African languages. The effect of the present language policy on Afrikaans will definitely also arouse reactions in the form of attitudes from different population groups in the country. If the teaching of Afrikaans at various institutions is to be understood in its proper context, then the attitude of the language learners themselves should be known by those who intend to develop acceptable curricula. Since this study intends to develop guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans in colleges of education in the Northern Province in chapter five, it is necessary to investigate how South African citizens view Afrikaans as a language.

Since Afrikaans is a South African language, only spoken in this country and its former colonies on the African continent, Afrikaans can rightly be regarded as an African language. The argument goes that if it was developed in South Africa (a part of Africa), though regarded as the 'youngest' language, it claims its position in the country like any other African language. For the sake of this study, the effect of language policy on the learning of African languages in general, and that of Afrikaans in particular will now be dealt with.

### **2.2.3 The effect of language policy on the teaching of Afrikaans in African schools during the *apartheid* era**

When the *apartheid* government was at its strongest, it also gave English and Afrikaans equal opportunities of being utilised as media of instruction and learning in the Black schools. Whereas English flourished under the circumstances, Afrikaans soon found itself in trouble as it was rejected by the African pupils (see sections 1.1.1. and 2.2.4.). The issue of the medium of instruction and learning, needs to be summarised again at this stage. The scenario is vividly described in *A policy framework for education and training* of the African National Congress (1995:65) as follows '...in the process, the official language or languages have been elevated and other South

African languages have either been suppressed or marginalised...'

*A policy framework for education and training* of the African National Congress (1995:65), goes further to list the repercussions of the language policy which elevated some other languages above others as follows: '...language oppression has in turn provoked popular struggles for the defence of language rights, civic freedoms and political liberation...'

Such language struggles in the history of South Africa do not pertain to Afrikaans only, but they have been experienced in other quarters as well. One example of such a struggle is when the Afrikaners fought against English Imperialism [see section 1.1.1 and the African National Congress document (1995:65)]. According to this document of the African National Congress, it is assumed that the imposition of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in the African schools led to a fall in its popularity amongst those Africans who were not speakers of the Afrikaans language. The researcher in the African National Congress document expressed himself on the issue and went on to claim that the issue of the struggle against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the African schools, led to the destruction of the government itself. He expressed himself in the African National Congress document (1995:65) with regard to the fall of the *apartheid* government as follows:

'...The imposition of Afrikaans as a compulsory language medium of instruction in black schools was the trigger which detonated the most sustained struggle against the whole system of *apartheid* Education, beginning with the mass protest of the Soweto students on 16 June 1976, which ultimately shook the very foundation of the *apartheid* state...'

After the mass protest against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction by the Soweto students in particular, and also by most of the black non-Afrikaans speaking students in other areas in general, the attitudes towards the language changed radically to the negative. Afrikaans was gradually relieved of its duties as a language of learning (see section 2.2.4.1.).

## **2.2.4 The effect of language policy on the teaching and learning of African languages**

The teaching of African languages in South Africa in general, and in the Northern Province in particular, was influenced by government policies as determined from time to time. Whereas African learners *per se* were expected to study three languages in their school career, that is English, Afrikaans and one of their first languages, Whites were expected to learn their first and second languages only. For them, learning a foreign language if they were English or Afrikaans speaking was optional, and not compulsory as it was in the case of Africans. The benefit of this situation is explained further in section 2.2.4.1. It is necessary to investigate the teaching and learning of Afrikaans, which is the subject of this particular study, with the aim of establishing how they were affected by different policies. It is also necessary to focus on the attitudes of its speakers and that of other African language speakers towards Afrikaans as a language. To obtain an overview of the situation of teaching and learning Afrikaans, it is essential to trace its development through various stages and the way it was affected negatively and positively by various state language policies (see sections 1.1.1 and 2.2.3). At this stage, priority should be given to attitudes and equal status with other African languages. The view of Africans towards the learning of Afrikaans needs to be examined closely if one is to understand their attitudes and their motivation to learn the Afrikaans language.

### **2.2.4.1 The attitudes of Africans towards the learning and teaching of Afrikaans and other African languages**

Whereas Afrikaans was regarded as an official language during the apartheid era, it should be noted that it was also the mother tongue of a sizeable part of the population, Africans included. The African Afrikaans speakers had no problem prior to the 1976 language boycotts, when Afrikaans was rejected as a language and a medium of instruction. In this regard Cluver (1994:7) observed that urban blacks tend to reject their language in favour of English. He expresses the idea of negative attitudes towards mother tongue as follows: '... Baie swart Suid-Afrikaners het 'n baie negatiewe beeld

van hul taal en veral stadsbewoners toon tekens van verskuiwing na Engels’.

Whereas the above attitudes of Black Afrikaans speakers towards their mother tongue may be ascribed to the new policies of the present African National Congress government, one is struck by the fact that the government has not gone public on the rejection of Afrikaans as its policy. Sachs (1993:111) has the following to say about the place of Afrikaans in the future democratic South Africa: ‘...Afrikaans for us in the ANC is one of our languages. It is not ‘their’ language, it is *one of our languages*’ (my own emphasis).

Thus it seems that Black Afrikaans speakers are deciding on their own to shift from Afrikaans to English as their first language. Having looked at their attitudes, it is now fitting to examine the attitudes of the other African language speakers whose mother tongue is not Afrikaans.

On the question of Africans shying away from their own languages towards English, Mawasha (1992:12) summarises the situation as follows: ‘... indeed many parents would not mind their children attending schools where vernacular is not offered at all ...’

He goes on to tease out the implications of the above statement as follows: ‘... firstly it implies that only those who are native speakers of English or are proficient to a level approximating that of first language facility are capable of sound or creative thinking; secondly it implies that the African will always come up second best ...’

On the question of Africans moving away from their languages and striving to be English first language speakers, Tollefson (1991:4) agrees with Mawasha but adds that: ‘... Blacks have increasingly sought to learn English which in the recent years has come to be seen as the language of liberation’.

Having viewed the attitudes researched by Mawasha and Tollefson, it is appropriate to investigate some factors which form the basis of attitudes towards the learning of a particular language. Luthuli (1987:13), for example, argues that despite the fact that

language is a cornerstone of every educational endeavour, it is influenced by the attitudes of the members of the home speakers. This idea is further expressed by Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:4):

‘... the social implication of knowing the second language can in every real way hinder the learning of that language. Another world language reflects another view of life which may differ to a greater or lesser extent from that of the mother tongue. If this world is in conflict with that of the mother tongue, or was in conflict many years ago, a knowledge of that language might amount to the betrayal of the interest of the mother tongue group ...’

If the factors which led to the 1976 Soweto riots are linked with the remarks by Luthuli and Kilfoil and Van der Walt, one will be correct in saying that the attitudes of African language speakers towards the teaching and learning of Afrikaans were negatively affected:

1. the African pupils revolted against the use of Afrikaans in 1976;
2. African/Black Afrikaans teachers were possibly seen as betrayers of the African languages courses; and
3. the common purpose of all Africans was a striving to know English, as it was seen as a language of liberation.

The above-mentioned reasons, which affect the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language negatively, pertain to some or most of the African language speakers. The present language policy in South Africa has given English a status of power. The evolution of the power of the English language was naturally accomplished at the expense of disempowering the other languages by depriving them of the status of being an official language - this included Afrikaans. Speakers of other languages in South Africa regard the English language as a tool for attaining economic and educational, as well as political, resources in the country. Language planning has thus also succeeded in changing other languages to an official language status. This has an effect of making Afrikaans equal in status to the other nine languages. This situation is aggravated by the view of other African language speakers, which was held before and after the 1976 riots, that Afrikaans was the ‘language of the oppressor’;

consequently most Africans did not want to associate themselves with Afrikaners and their language as already explained.

Having examined some of the African attitudes towards their own language, Afrikaans and incidentally also towards English, it is time to examine the effects of the present language policy on the Afrikaans fraternity.

#### **2.2.4.2 The views of Afrikaners concerning the teaching and learning of Afrikaans and other African languages in the post-apartheid era**

Afrikaans is now one of the 'unofficial' languages in the country. Whereas most language speakers seem to be complacent with this arrangement, Afrikaners seem to have a problem with it, as it relegates their language to the periphery. They are concerned that their language is going to join the lower status of being equated to other African languages which were not official languages before. Various reactions were voiced against the present language policy by a number of linguists and educationists. Alexander (1990:38), for instance, articulates the concern as follows:

'... Dan... is dit heel duidelik dat alle tale 'n gelyke status in 'n vry Suid-Afrika gaan hê. En dit is waar die vrese van baie Afrikaners ... begin: by die feit dat Afrikaans nie meer 'n bevoorregte status gaan hê nie, maar 'n gelyke status, gelyk aan alle ander tale in ons land'.

Most Afrikaners are also concerned about the question of the equality of their previously privileged language with that of other African languages. On this issue Krog (1994:19) agrees with Alexander but goes on to state some of the positive implications which will affect Afrikaans as a language after this equalisation of language status:

'... Die feit dat nege ander tale as gelykes te staan kom saam met Afrikaans, het verskeie implikasies. Afrikaans kan nou deel vorm van 'n netwerk, saam met die inheemse tale, en deelneem aan 'n demokratiese kultuur waarin alle tale gebruik, erken en gerespekteer word ...'

The question of equality of languages as already discussed in the above paragraph and

also as stated in the South African Constitution, evoked certain reactions from different Afrikaner sectors as will be discussed in section 2.2.4.3. The question of equality of languages brings with it the equation of multilingualism and multiculturalism which seems to be addressed adequately by the Constitution, as all languages of South Africa are in theory to be regarded as equal and important. For the first time in the history of South Africa, the value of each language and its culture can be respected in its own right. It appears that knowing as many languages as possible should enhance a person's skills of linguistic flexibility and communicative proficiency within the interwoven fabric of South African linguistic diversity.

#### **2.2.4.3 Reaction of Afrikaners to multilingualism and multiculturalism as manifested in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**

In his dialogue with Krog (1994:20), Degenaar seems to be of the opinion that cultures and languages should be protected by law if they are to survive in the South African language scenario. In this regard he expresses himself as follows: '...As jy verskillende kulture en tale binne 'n demokratiese plurale kultuur beskerm, dan het niemand iets te vrees nie. Dan moet jy 'n posisie hê van h demokratiese kultuur wat h toleransie het van taal en pluraliteit...'

If the above conceptualisation of multiculturalism and multilingualism is to be taken as a basis for the South African mode of operation when it comes to the learning of the ten regional languages, it will be acceptable. Speakers of African languages would have nothing to fear, indeed, if these languages were valued equally by their speakers. However, there are apparently some language groups which cause concern to members of other language quarters. Differences manifest themselves in the manner in which various language groups view and respect their own languages, as opposed to those of other language groups.

Whereas other African language groups are on the whole satisfied with the provisions in the state language policy, the Afrikaners are wary of the new concept of their language forming part of eleven languages, because according to them the concept

seems to be superfluous. Krog (1994:18) expresses the existence of this language conflict as follows: '... Baie mense het vir die eerste keer besef: daar is elf tale. 'n *Mind bogging* getal... Die onmoontlikheid om elf tale gelyk te behandel word 'n verskoning vir liever net een taal...'

It is clear from the above quotation that Afrikaners are also afraid that other languages may disappear or be sacrificed in order to promote English, which is the *lingua franca*. Apart from the fear of seeing their language disappear, they also seem to be concerned about the attitude of complacency which is demonstrated by members of other African language groups.

Various linguists, educationists and patriots within the speakers of the other nine languages seem to be comfortable with their languages being regarded as regional languages. Because of this complacency, apparently no lobbying for language rights is being exercised in any form (see section 2.2.4.2). Du Plessis in the discussion with Krog (1994:23) has the following to say in this regard: '... die elftaalding het in feite Afrikaans ontmagtig. Ons moet ons nou soos die ander tale gedra. Die ander tale is lyk my doodtevrede om op streeksvlak as kommunikatiewe taal gepraat te word. Om op alle vlakke amptelik te funksioneer is skynbaar nie 'n *issue* nie'.

If the Afrikaners regard the concept of regional languages as a means of disempowering their language, it is clear that the concept is unacceptable to them. Its unacceptability stems from the fact that it reduces the status of Afrikaans to that of being just one of the ten regional languages. The concern of Afrikaans language speakers is further aggravated by the fact that an official language is very important, as stated by Krog (1994:24):

'... the official language policy provides civil society with a unique opportunity of ensuring access and equity to power via education, economy and state structures... until now the effective lobby group in the country has been in the domain of Afrikaans language interest groups and within this lobby, language, culture and ethnicity have been a co-extensive phenomenon'.

Having examined the fears of the Afrikaners as expressed in various situations, it seems important to determine how African languages were taught in the past. Maybe this exercise will explain the complacency which is found to be a phenomenon common to all the African languages.

### 2.3 THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES DURING THE APARTHEID ERA

The attitudes of the teachers and learners of African languages also contributed towards the way in which these languages were taught and learned. Now that Afrikaans is to be found in the league of African languages, it will not be surprising if it proves to be a good subscriber to the 'existing rules of the game'. In the study of African languages in general and that of Tshivenda in particular, various educationists have complained of the *culture of not teaching* which prevailed for decades (Kgwane 1968, Matseke 1974, Ntsandeni 1993). The gist of the problem which is found in the teaching and learning of African languages is well summarised by Mawasha (1992:12) when he says that:

'... when subject allocations are made in many schools, vernacular is treated with something bordering on contempt. It is either given to those of us who cannot offer 'anything important' on the curriculum or those of us who for whatever reason, are least motivated to teach'.

In analysing the above statement, it is appalling to realise that directly or indirectly, the existing language policy has contributed towards the casual manner in which the teaching of African languages is treated. Though Afrikaans will be different because of the factors mentioned below, it may soon be eroded by the newly introduced language policy. Factors that differentiate Afrikaans from other African languages are that:

1. it possesses a great deal of literature on the language itself, and on the social, commercial and natural sciences;
2. its orthography can now be said to be well established;
3. it is a medium of instruction in various educational institutions, for example: it

- is utilised from pre-school right through to tertiary institutions;
4. its speakers are not ready to give it up in favour of English as most of the African speakers would do (Mawasha 1992:12; Krog 1994:24);
  5. a large proportion of business will still be conducted in Afrikaans if their owners or most of the shareholders belong to that language group.

When considering the above factors, it is interesting to look at the nature of education, which is said to be future-directed. It is tempting to be realistic and to ask million-dollar questions such as: Is it worth throwing away Afrikaans as a language in South Africa? Will other language speakers not benefit from knowing Afrikaans? Does our language policy in education not favour those who are taking Afrikaans as a second language? Is it not fair to conclude that all those who by virtue of their language environment are second language speakers and learners will know more Afrikaans than foreign language learners?

Having considered the above questions, it becomes clear that the teaching of Afrikaans, which is an African language, should also receive priority if Africans are to participate meaningfully in the practical world of commerce and education. Even Ryan (1996: 16), though giving an English perspective on the issue, feels that Afrikaans has an important role to play in future when he states that

'...the future of Afrikaans lies in the superstructural contribution it continues to make in South Africa, and, within this broad range of institutional participation ... in law, culture and economic community - it is within cultural production that Afrikaans may find a strong future voice...'

Thus if Africans do not know Afrikaans as a language, they may find themselves excluded from participating in the 'broad range of institutional structures' as Ryan alleges. A discussion on Afrikaans as a school subject for third language speakers is found in the next section.

### **2.3.1 The need to learn Afrikaans as a foreign language**

It is crucial at this stage, to differentiate between a 'compulsory' medium of instruction

through an Act of Parliament, as elaborated by Hartshorne (1993); and a 'voluntary' medium of instruction which is opted for by an individual or institution, for the sake of acquiring working skills in that language. It is also the aim of this study to look at ways and means of helping African learners to increase their knowledge of Afrikaans so that they can participate effectively in future, if and when the language is used in this country. One is tempted to agree with the Constitution when it classifies English as a language of education and greater communication, as this will satisfy both local and international needs. On the contrary it can also be argued that the need to know Afrikaans, as far as Africans are concerned, will still have to be considered if the questions posed in section 2.3 are to be considered closely. Learning Afrikaans up to standard seven (grade nine), as is currently being done by most African learners, can rightly be regarded as a form of language discrimination against them as their peers in the white schools are learning the language as a true second language. The fact that African learners are learning Afrikaans for a shorter time, that is up to standard seven (grade nine), will not enhance their skills in the linguistic flexibility of that particular language. Consequently when those skills are required, *e.g.* in the workplace, they will only have themselves and the system to blame when the situation arises.

The present language policy in education as practised in South Africa will now be investigated with the aim of determining who is going to benefit more from it - one can visualise a stage where those who are doing Afrikaans as a second language up to and beyond grade twelve will acquire more skills in the language than those who are doing it up to grade nine. Educationally speaking, English first language speakers will know more Afrikaans than Africans in general because they study it as a second language throughout their schooling. The same line of reasoning implies that Afrikaans speakers also know more English than their African counterparts. The above analysis is more serious if apolitical arguments are to be considered for the future which will deprive most members of the African elite of their knowledge of Afrikaans as such. The above line of thought is expressed by Cluver (1994:7) when he analyses the present education language policy and how its effect on the Afrikaans speaking pupils. He states: 'kinders sal in hul moedertaal onderrig ontvang vir die eerste drie tot vier skooljare ... alle kinders sal, naas Engels, ook minstens een Afrikataal as vak tot matriek moet neem'.

When Afrikaans and English speakers are taking both languages at higher grade up to grade twelve level, then it is clear that their working knowledge of the languages will be far superior to that of learners who stopped learning Afrikaans at junior secondary level. Cluver (1994:7) goes on to spell out the advantages of knowing the Afrikaans language as follows:

‘... ‘n Taal bly voortbestaan omdat dit instrumentele waarde vir die sprekers het. Mense sal Afrikaans aanhou praat so lank hulle daarin werk kan kry of inligting kan kry. Die bestaan van fabriekke en besighede wat in Afrikaans bestuur word en tegniese handboeke wat net in Afrikaans beskikbaar is, is belangrike faktore wat die instrumentele waarde van die taal hoog hou...’

A language will continue to exist if it has an instrumental value for its speakers. People will continue to speak Afrikaans if they can obtain work or information through it. The existence of factories and businesses which are managed mainly in Afrikaans, and of technical textbooks which are available in Afrikaans only, are important factors which have instrumental value to the language ( free translation).

Apart from Cluver who pointed out some advantages of possessing Afrikaans linguistic skills, other researchers like Masilela (*Rapport* 18.10.1998) also speaks of the importance of knowing Afrikaans as there are many Africans who do speak the language. He is of the opinion that Black Afrikaans speakers are found everywhere - from prison to university.

Bundu is also quoted by Masilela (*Rapport* 18.10.1998) concerning the skills of knowing Afrikaans as being important for survival in various prison situations. Masilela goes on to justify reasons for the survival of prisoners because of their knowledge of Afrikaans by stating that it is the common language of communication which is used by both warders and prisoners. He also indicated that as long as this is still the case, the Afrikaans language will remain important in that environment.

Indeed, if Cluver (1994:7), Masilela and Bundu's (*Rapport* 18.10.1998) argument is

taken seriously as it should be, most of the people who do not possess working and communicative skills in Afrikaans will be debarred from excluded from taking positions in the exclusive Afrikaans world. It is this kind of arguments, that this study is eager to address, through its improvement of teaching and learning as well as the improvement of the Afrikaans foreign language curriculum. Prior to analysing the existing college curriculum, though it is essential to view various language teaching models, as will be done in the next chapter.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the Afrikaans language scenario was sketched with the aim of determining the language environment of African learners in the Northern Province. The concepts of *language planning and policy* as exercised by the government in power were discussed in order to discover reasons why Afrikaans was being marginalised in the post *apartheid* era. This marginalisation manifests itself in the form of Africans' negative attitudes towards their own languages and the Afrikaans language, despite the fact that they stand to lose much through their inability to use the Afrikaans language. This exercise was necessary as it justifies why Africans should learn the Afrikaans language as a subject or a medium of instruction wherever possible.

This exercise also provides the correct perspective to those who wish to teach the subject of Afrikaans, that they should know their entry point in teaching both learners and student teachers. This is the reason why it is important to treat all the *matters* pertaining to the teaching of the second and the foreign languages as are discussed in chapter 3.

## CHAPTER THREE

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### THE TEACHING OF SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings are different from other species on earth, because they can communicate with each other by means of different languages. As Abdool (1992:5) puts it: '...from time immemorial human beings have been distinguished from other living forms because of their ability to learn and acquire a language in order to communicate'.

Because language is important for communication purposes, various researchers such as sociolinguists, educationists, linguists and other people from numerous disciplines make it their business to study it from their different perspectives. Researchers in different disciplines study the finer details of how best a language, be it first, second or foreign, can be learnt, utilising different perspectives. This is done with the aim of understanding the concept of 'language learning' from a given perspective. Knowing that mother tongue knowledge is not enough, people go on to learn other languages, with which to communicate in native and foreign countries, for various reasons; hence the idea of learning and teaching languages is very important today. In trying to explain or describe what language is, one will be confronted with various definitions as this is one of the complex human behaviours which need a complex definition. However, a simple definition like that of Sachs (1993:109 - 110), suffices for the purpose of this study. He regards language as '... what you use to express your deepest thoughts. You learn to see and understand the world in terms of the language that links you up with other people'.

Because the use of language is a universal issue which is essential for communication

purposes, it is now relevant to examine this issue of communication in its local context.

The issue of language policy and its planning has already been discussed ( sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 ), but one needs to emphasize once more that South Africa is not composed of people who speak only one language, it is both multilingual and multicultural in nature. It is because of these factors that Du Plessis (1994:7) is of the opinion that '...Veeltaligheid of meertaligheid is 'n Suid-Afrikaanse gegewe. Die meeste Suid-Afrikaners ken en gebruik daagliks ten minste meer as een taal, maar meestal meer as twee tale, veral stedelike Suid-Afrikaners...'

It is for the above reasons of multilingualism that a country with eleven languages finds itself with the problem of official and non-official languages. The official language policy provides the '... society with a unique opportunity of ensuring access and equity to power via education, economy and state structures' (Bua editorial in Krog 1994:24). It is this issue of official language in a multilingual country which brings along conflict in a society such as that of South Africa. Krog (1994:20) goes on to talk of this conflict when she says that '... Taal is inderdaad 'n terrein van stryd. Die vraag is of ons die taal gaan gebruik om te domineer of die charisma van taal gaan gebruik om te demokratiseer...'

Krog was talking about the issue of Afrikaans which had an unhealthy marriage with the ruling power. The issue has already been discussed in chapters 1 and 2. One should explain that the new South African language policy has resolved the conflict over the Afrikaans language and state domination by stating in the South African Constitution (1996:15), section 30 that '... everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice... but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.'

Because of the above stipulations of the Constitution, Afrikaans has been relieved of the official status which it had during the *apartheid* era. It has also to be divorced from its unhealthy marriage with the state, as already mentioned in chapter 2, and it is now one of the eleven languages which needs to be developed. Unlike English which is now

a *lingua franca*, people now learn it from choice, not coercion as before. No wonder Krog (1994:24) is of the opinion that under the changed circumstances Afrikaans language learning, and the success of its existence, will be like that of the other indigenous languages. She explicitly explains the issue of the Afrikaans language as follows: '... Afrikaans se voortbestaan hang egter ten nouste saam met die voortbestaan van die ander tale, want hulle word nou net so bedreig...'

When the English language is regarded as a language of greater communication, its teaching and learning will obviously be promoted in every corner of the country. The other ten languages will have to work hard on their own teaching and learning if they are to remain in existence and be developed in future.

It is this context of language teaching and learning in the post-*apartheid* years on which this study focuses. The project assumes that studying Afrikaans in this era will be very different from studying Afrikaans in the *apartheid* era, hence the idea of trying to explore ways and means of improving this task for those who feel that it is their democratic right to learn, teach and use it in future.

Before doing so, it is fitting to discuss language teaching in general, and the teaching of second and foreign languages in particular.

## **3.2 THE TEACHING OF SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

In the literature there is a consensus about what first language or mother tongue or vernacular is - it is the very *first language* to which a child is exposed in his life (Kilfoil and van der Walt 1993; Tollefson 1991; Rivers 1993). The situation is more complex when it comes to distinguishing between the second and third languages, however.

### **3.2.1 The distinction between second and foreign languages**

One can assume that at first a simple distinction would be that a second language is learnt after the first language and that a third or foreign language would thus be that

which is learnt after the second one. Whereas the above distinction would suffice if the situation were as simplistic as all that, it seems that apart from the order of learning languages, other factors also need to be considered. It is because of these factors that it is no longer easy to determine whether one should call a language a second or foreign language. Various linguistic groups however seem to feel that the distinction between second and foreign languages is important for teaching purposes. Hammerley (1994:256) describes the confusion in the language teaching situation as follows: ‘...in language teaching there is an important distinction between a “remote” setting, where the second or target language is not spoken in the community, and a local setting where the language being taught is dominant in the society...’

After making such a neat distinction between a second and a foreign language, Hammerley (1994:256) goes on to confirm the confusion which seems to exist in this dichotomy of two concepts: ‘... in traditional terminology the local and remote settings are often referred to as “ESL/FL”, as if they were two similar aspects of the same thing. This is found in journal articles, conference papers and even book titles ... this is a little strange...’

Whereas Hammerley admits that a clear distinction is not made between remote and local settings, which represent the contexts of foreign and second languages, he seems to blame his colleagues for failing to make this distinction. On the other hand, Grape (1992: vii) comes up with a different explanation for the confusion which seems to exist between second and foreign language concepts in language teaching:

‘... In many countries around the world, it is no longer clear to what extent given languages in a school curriculum are second or foreign languages, or to what extent the goal is to create some functional bilingualism ... no longer can applied linguistics divide the field of language learning into neat categories such as EFL, ESL, foreign language (FL).... In the evolving field of second language learning and teaching, these categories have given way to many more specific issues...’

Since it is evidently almost impossible to make a clear distinction between a second and a foreign language, it is necessary to examine this issue in a South African context. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:5) are of the opinion that ‘the classification of

the language as second or foreign depends on the social status of the language, firstly, and on the purpose for which that language is learnt, secondly...'

The two researchers further differentiate between a language which is taught at school as a subject and the one which is utilised as a medium of instruction. It appears, according to them, that as soon as a language is used as a medium of instruction, it automatically assumes the status of a second language, whereas the one which is just a school subject becomes a foreign language. From the above distinction it is therefore clear that the status of being second or third language is a social construct, which can be reversed as well, if need be. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:5) illustrate how difficult it is to make a distinction between a second and foreign language in the South African context:

'...Practical examples from the South African situation will clearly show the difficulties with this distinction. For many Afrikaans speaking children English is a second language, although it is not a medium of instruction. For Northern Sotho speakers English may have been learnt after Afrikaans (In other words it is their third language) but they are taught through the medium of English...'

Having established the difficulties which pertain to the distinction between second and third language concepts, one should determine the importance of knowing why a language teacher should establish whether a learner is a second or third language learner. Basson (1989:50), answers this concern explicitly when he explains that it is important to know each child's preknowledge of the target language in a classroom. He does not deny the confusion which might result from the fact that a teacher may find both second and third language speakers in the same classroom. On the issue of preknowledge, he says the following:

'...Die leerling se voorkennis van die tweede taal is nie noodwendig dieselfde nie, want die ervaringswêreld verskil van kind tot kind. Dit kan wissel van 'n omgewing waar die tweede taal amper vreemde taal kan wees tot waar 'n leering blootgestel word aan die funksionele gebruik van beide die tale'.

After recognising the confusion which may exist because of the learners' unequal

preknowledge of the language which they may bring to class, he advises language teachers as follows: '... Dit is belangrik dat die onderwyser die leerling se agtergrondkennis van die tweede taal in ag moet neem wanneer daar beplan en voorberei word vir die aanbieding daarvan...'

Basson is clearly very concerned about the type of knowledge in the target language which the learners bring to the classroom, as this will influence the teacher's planning and teaching of the language in the second language classroom.

For the sake of this study, *the teaching of Afrikaans in colleges of education in the Northern Province will be regarded as that which excludes first language teaching and its learning, but focuses on the second and foreign language as its target.*

While there are people who hold the view that there is always a strong dividing line between a second and foreign language, that does not totally diminish the possibility of one entangled in the different definitions. It is for this reason that the researcher *will only regard the teaching of Afrikaans in the context of this study as that of third or foreign language, irrespective of what certain definitions may say to the contrary.* With various attempts to differentiate between the concept of second and foreign languages in mind, it is necessary at this stage to stipulate what is expected of its teachers as far as their *training, their knowledge base and tasks* in those classrooms are concerned.

### **3.3 THE TRAINING OF SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

An important issue to be discussed in this section is: Who is the foreign language teacher and why is it important to differentiate this teacher from his/her first language colleague? The first language teacher has an advantage over the second and foreign language teacher in the sense that he/she and his/her learners are already fluent in the language they are teaching and learning respectively. This situation simplifies their duties in the classroom as the learners' culture is similar to that of their teachers. What remains for the teacher is to refine and enrich the language and cultural experiences of the learners. A further advantage is that the learner acquires the language at home,

in society and in the school environment, and more often than not the learners' daily needs are addressed through their mother tongue.

Despite all the disadvantages which second and foreign language learners are faced with in their daily lives, it is important to realize the importance of learning foreign languages in our world today. Guntermann (1992) emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of foreign languages as follows:

'...Foreign languages should no longer be seen as alien, but as a key force in the new order, and a deeper understanding of world cultures and dynamics of intercultural communication must take their place in the language teacher's education...'

From the above statement it is clear that the teaching of foreign languages in general, and that of Afrikaans in particular, should be taken seriously as it involves different learners' cultures and languages, which are diversified in nature. In training second and foreign language teachers, it is important to have a close look at their *knowledge and usage* of the foreign and second languages.

### **3.3.1 The foreign language teacher's knowledge base**

It is important to point out that teachers in second and foreign language classrooms are faced with the fundamental task of upgrading their learners' language skills in the new language, which by nature is not their mother tongue. In cases where the language is also a foreign or second language to the teacher, the teacher is also expected to perfect his skills before transferring them to the learner.

#### **3.3.1.1 The teacher's knowledge of the foreign language**

The ability of foreign language teachers to use that foreign language proficiently is important if learners are also to become proficient in their use of the target language. Basson (1989:152) emphasizes this fact when he states that

'...Die onderwyser se vermoë om die tweede taal te gebruik speel 'n groot rol in die onderrig en aanleer van hierdie taal ... Baie onderwysers het al erken dat deur die tweede taal korrek aan te bied, hul eie gebruiksvermoë verbeter het ...'

It is clear from what Basson says that where a teacher of the target language is not a first language speaker, it is important that he or she should make an extra effort to improve his or her linguistic skills in the language in question. Lado (1964:8), stresses the importance of the teacher's knowledge of the target language by indicating that '...the language teacher must know the target language well enough to be imitated by the students...'

On the above issue of the teacher's ability to speak the foreign language in such a way that learners in the classroom can imitate him or her, Gasparro and Faletta (1994) indicate the duties of the second language teacher as follows: '... modelling pronunciation, facilitating comprehension of vocabulary, idiom, cultural aspects and plot; stimulating interest and conversation and interacting with students; establishing an acting workshops atmosphere; creating a student participatory language learning experience ...'

From the above quotation it is clear that the teacher's knowledge of the foreign language is not enough for its teaching if it is not accompanied by acquired teaching skills which will enable him/her to perform certain activities in the second language classroom. There appears to be a difference between language courses and other content courses. The difference lies in the fact that other courses can be learnt without necessarily paying attention to culture, whereas in learning language courses one also effectively needs to understand accompanying cultures. It is therefore appropriate to look closely at the relationship which exists between language and culture as well as between language and attitude.

### **3.3.1.2 The second language teacher's knowledge of the culture of the target language**

As mere knowledge of the second language is not enough, it is important to know its

culture as well as having a positive attitude towards the language, if its teaching is to be effective and comprehensive. On the issue of the second language, its attitude and culture, Spolsky (1989:149) is emphatic in his statement that ‘...language courses are different from other curriculum courses. They require that the individual incorporates elements from another culture. As a consequence, reactions to the other culture become important considerations...’

Spolsky (1989:149) also discusses the learning of the second language and stipulates that ‘... an individual’s motivation to learn a second language is controlled by his attitude towards the other group in particular... of all school subjects, language learning is the one where attitude is especially relevant...’

In the light of what Spolsky (1989) says about language, culture and attitudes, it is essential to probe the relationship among the above-mentioned three concepts. In trying to understand these relationships it is important to start by mentioning Lado’s (1964:9) statement that

‘... The language teacher must understand the intimate relationship between a language and its culture. The student cannot go far into the target language without facing differences in cultural meanings, because the meanings expressed in a language are largely culturally determined...’

Not only is it important for the second language teacher to understand this intimate relationship between the target language and its culture, but he should also play a definite role in getting his foreign language learners to understand the relationship. Annas (1995:47) believes that the teacher does more than just teach the language, and he regards foreign language teaching as follows: ‘...Foreign language teaching would thus be teaching hetero-cultural behaviour thereby enabling foreign language learners to become cultural mediators between their own and foreign culture...’

It is clear from what Annas says that the learning of the target language should, if done properly, empower both the teacher and the learners with the knowledge of the other culture. This should happen in order that they may understand the differences between their own culture and the foreign culture. Knowing the differences between the

two cultures will not be enough if not accompanied by a positive attitude towards the unknown culture. This is clearly stipulated by Hanvey in Annas (1995:48): '... In the process of teaching and learning the foreign language, attitude toward both the culture and the language play an important role ... There must be a readiness to respect and accept, and a capacity to participate...'

It is important for the teacher to encourage tolerance of the culture if the knowledge of that language is to come to its proper fruition. This can for instance be done by informing learners about the reasons for learning a particular language. Basson (1989:152) agrees with this idea: 'n positiewe houding teenoor die tweede taal en die besondere kultuur moet openbaar word, sodat die kind weet dat daar voordeel is in die aanleer daarvan ...'

If the second language learner is made aware of the benefits of knowing the second language, he may be motivated to strive to achieve the goals which have been stipulated set for him. Annas (1995:48) rightly points out that learning a foreign language encourages the learner to be tolerant and accommodating it as well as to develop and understand it, thereby cultivating an appreciation of the foreigner and his culture. With this relationship of the language and its culture in mind, we may conclude this issue by mentioning the *task* of the teacher in the foreign language teaching field. When dealing with the teaching of German as a foreign language, Menck (1994:128), in describing the task of the foreign language teacher, is of the opinion that

'... this teacher has to be a facilitator in terms of intercultural communication: He or she is supposed to lead the learners to a heightened awareness of their own lifestyle, language and culture through comparison with German life, language and culture. Therefore, a teacher whose mother tongue is German would apart from continuing interest in the German speaking countries, have to know something of the language and culture of his pupils in order to facilitate intercultural communication...'

Next, some of the factors which should be addressed in the training of second and foreign language teachers will be dealt with.

It is important to realize that the lecturer in a foreign language such as Afrikaans should know the language of the target speakers (see section 5.2.3.1) as this will help him in his teaching. This is important as student teachers, in learning the language, should also simultaneously assimilate the culture of the target language in question. In practical terms it means that whilst student teachers are learning Afrikaans as a foreign language, they will also be called upon to *display skills in understanding appropriate behaviours to be applied to various social situations* (Buttjes 1990:4). The failure of student teachers to grasp the principles and behaviours expected of them in the learning, and later utilisation, of the Afrikaans foreign language may result in the direct translation and transplantation of their own language and cultural practices into that of the target language. When this transplantation of *their own language expressions and cultural practices into the target language* is carried out by students of foreign languages in general, and of Afrikaans in particular, Byram (1990 :18) describes the consequences as follows: ‘...learners assume that foreign language is an epiphenomenon of their own language, and that it refers to and embodies their existing understandings and interpretation of their own foreign cultures...’

While the knowledge of the target language and its culture is important for the Afrikaans foreign language lecturer at the college of education, it is also *imperative* for him to know the various cultures of his student teachers. Hamachek (1979:373) realizes the seriousness of this particular aspect when he speaks of multicultural classes. He expresses himself on the issue of the teacher’s knowledge about the cultures of different learners as follows:

‘...In multicultural classes, teachers have to be specifically aware of:

- how pupils of different cultures perceive reality
- how they express their perceptions
- how they differ from teachers’ own perception...’

The value of knowledge about the cultural groups in the individual teacher’s classroom is further emphasized by Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:49) when they say that ‘Good teachers know their pupils; this refers to knowledge of their pupils in general, but also of cultural groups and specific individuals they have in their classes, with a view to individualizing

their teaching...'

From the above two quotations in this paragraph, it is clear that if foreign language teachers in general, and Afrikaans foreign language teachers in particular, do not understand the culture of the target language speakers they may experience difficulties in their teaching.

Difficulties in the teaching of the foreign language will manifest themselves in the interpretation of concepts which will be dictated by the different cultures in the classroom. The vacuum in the understanding of concepts created in the learning of the target language, as seen against those present in the learners' first language may result in a 'fuzz'. It becomes a 'fuzz' when foreign language learners and teachers transplant concepts and social activities from their languages straight into the target language and *vice versa*. This process can only lead to the fact that foreign language learners may end up regarding the target language and its culture as a codified version of their own languages, that is, by carrying out the direct translation of the first language and interpretation of its ideas into that of Afrikaans as the target language. An example of the above discussion can be illustrated by the concept of 'Bantoe-Afrikaans' as found in Van Bruggen (1933:25), where we find expressions like: '*het grootvader opgestaan*', meaning '*hoe gaan dit met oom?*'; '*Die sprinkaan vlieg op volle maag*' meaning '*eet voordat jy begin werk*'. Such examples if allowed in the teaching and learning situations of the target language, can only hamper the development of the learner's foreign language in question.

On the other hand, it would be disastrous to impose the culture of the target language upon learners without understanding the cultural implications of such behaviour. An example is at hand in Askes (1981:298) where a teacher or another learner is supposed to hold the head of a learner who is reading as a remedy for *moving his head whilst reading*. The misunderstanding is brought about by the fact that in most African cultures, the practice of touching another's head is not allowed. The practice presupposes that by holding somebody's head the holder can, through some magic, bring a bad fortune to the victim. The example given here shows that an acceptable

practice in one culture can be offensive in another one.

From the discussions in the above paragraph, it is clear that the teacher's knowledge of the target language and culture, as well as the language and cultures of his learners, is an absolute necessity in the process of his teaching if misunderstandings are to be avoided.

Having looked at the requirements for successful foreign language teaching by the lecturer, some of the skills which should be addressed in the training of second and foreign language teachers will be dealt with.

### **3.3.2 Equipping of second and foreign language teachers with skills essential for the performance of daily tasks in the profession**

The task of tertiary institutions in equipping student teachers with knowledge during their training period would have been simpler if certain adaptations had not been inevitable during and after their training, due to the continual expansion of information. This issue is summarised by Guntermann (1992:1), when he describes the shifting of the teacher's knowledge base as follows: '... the language teacher's knowledge base can be expected to shift continually, as information expands in disciplines as varied as language acquisition theory and research, learning styles and strategies, intercultural communication, and research on instruction'.

It is clear from Guntermann that a very wide field of knowledge should be covered in the field of foreign language teaching in teacher training, so as to produce good teachers. Maybe this predicament, of preparing teachers for the future information explosion can be catered for by considering the aims of training teachers in general and that of foreign language teachers in particular. De Beer and Higgs in Bodenstern (1996:54), describe the aim of teacher training

'... as the equipment of students who thoroughly understand their own potential, for the teaching profession'...The credo of teacher trainer is to implement teaching strategies in order to create a climate for the

actualisation of positive forming. This enables the student to realise intentional direction towards meaningful learning...'

What is important here is that the student should realise his(or her) intentional direction and follow it throughout his professional life. If one is following a direction it may continue *ad infinitum*; this understanding will however help one to continue searching for more knowledge. It will also help one to realise one's present and future potentials. The crux of the matter in second or foreign language teaching is that it aims at the proficiency of learners to communicate effectively in the target language. Willems (1994:14), is very clear on this issue when he states that '... the emphasis in foreign language teaching and teacher education ... needs to shift slowly towards the development of communication proficiency in the foreign language'.

Menck (1994:128) agrees with Willems but doubts whether the standard of equipping our teacher candidates at training institutions is adequate. He expresses himself on the issue of adequate training of foreign language teachers in our country as follows: '... teacher training in this country has a long way to go before it can be said to be preparing teachers adequately for the task of communicative foreign language teaching...'

This warning should be taken seriously by the teacher training fraternity. This issue is taken further by Conrad (1993:56), as already discussed in section 1.2.1, who apparently doubts the ability of the trainers of teachers to do their task adequately. Though he does not commit himself fully on the issue, he has a sense that all is not well in the teacher training fraternity, especially in foreign language teaching. There are no doubt some deficiencies in the training of second and foreign language teachers, and one is appalled by the fact that problems seem to start right at the training institutions. This presents serious challenges as classroom teaching can only improve to the extent that teachers themselves can act as specialists (Meyer 1995:246). If poor teachers are produced by the teacher training institutions, then it can be expected that good teaching in general, and that of a foreign language in particular, will only be practised by the few teacher candidates who happen to be members of the profession by birth and not by training. It is perhaps necessary to take a close look at what

Willems says about the two types of language teachers, that is those who are teachers by training and those who are naturally born with the ability to be good teachers, even if a process of training has not intervened. Willems (1994:217) states: '*... only teachers who, by intuition or by training, are autonomous learners themselves and know about factors leading to success or failure in language learning can help their students to be successful language learners ...*' (own emphasis)

It can be deduced from Willems' view that amongst teachers of languages there are two groups, with one group being able to teach successfully and the second group comprising unsuccessful teachers. The above statement, which implies that not all the practitioners of the teaching profession are successful, also brings with it the challenge faced by the teacher training institutions, to strive to produce improved graduates who will be empowered to succeed in the classroom endeavours. The situation is worsened by the fact that some of those teachers who are already in the field are not trained at all. Report (1995: EDO-FL-96-02) states. in this regard that '*... Many of these teachers, however, have had little or no training in second language development and need guidelines to help them understand the process young children undergo as they learn a second language...*'

Bearing in mind the above factors which are to be considered when teacher training is embarked upon, it is now important to pay attention to the various ways in which foreign languages have been taught from time immemorial up to the present moment.

### **3.4 A BRIEF HISTORY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS AND APPROACHES**

Whilst tracing the history of the development of methods and approaches in second language teaching, which is necessary if ways of improvement are to be identified and practised, it is also necessary to consider what other South African colleagues in the language teaching fraternity think of these innovations. Blackquière (1993:178), is concerned about the fact that most of the research in foreign language teaching is of non-South African origin, which is naturally unsuitable, because of the difference in

localities. On the issue of innovations, which South Africans are at times prone to accept without criticism, she warns as follows:

'... None of the major teaching innovations are indigenous of course. They have all been conceived and tried out in countries such as the United States, Britain, the Continent, India, or Australia. .... While theories frequently have universal appeal, the practical application of the approaches and the methods they engender primarily serve local ends'.

The above statement serves the purpose of informing us that principles of second and foreign language teaching have their roots in other countries and when they are practised in South Africa, they have to be adapted to serve our *own* needs. The South African second and foreign language teaching fraternity therefore has to adapt existing theories to our local needs. Local research will have to be conducted with the aim of refining and developing local teaching products in this industry.

At this stage the origin of the first method of language teaching will be traced in order to contextualise the way in which foreign languages are currently being taught at different teacher training institutions.

#### **3.4.1 The grammar translation method**

According to various sources, the grammar translation method is regarded as the earliest foreign language teaching method. It came into being in the nineteenth century and survived until 1920 (Rivers 1993:28; Brown 1987:74; Kilfoil and van der Walt 1993:8). This method was mainly used for the teaching of Greek and Latin. At first it was known as the 'classical' method, a name which was later changed to the present 'grammar-translation' method. Rivers (1993:28) described its mode of operation as being that of the reading and translation of texts; writing was also considered as being important. It is crucial to emphasize that this method was used in the teaching of an ancient language *e.g.* Latin, which was no longer in existence. It developed reading and writing skills almost to the exclusion of the listening and speaking skills (Kilfoil and Van der Walt 1993:8). In this method the teachers served as the main sources of information and a model for pronunciation, as Latin was already a dead language. It

is important to note that Latin was taught through the medium of other languages, a practice that seems to have persisted up to the present moment in the teaching of Latin. Typically, learners memorised whatever type of information they received from the teacher and then regurgitated it later in the tests or examinations for evaluation purposes. Rivers states that this method was later opposed in various quarters, and was followed by the direct or the immersion method.

### 3.4.2 The direct or the immersion method

This method came into being as a reaction to the grammar translation method. Instead of ignoring the communication function of the language as the grammar translation method did, the direct method concentrated on using teaching aids and the target language, to the exclusion of any other mother tongue. Rivers (1993:32) aptly describes the direct method as follows:

‘... the various “natural” and oral methods which developed can be grouped together as forms of the direct methods, in that they advocated learning a new language through direct association of words and phrases with objects and actions without the use of the native language by the teacher or student. Speech preceded reading ...’

Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:10) agree with Rivers on the issue of this medium of instruction when they say that ‘... the direct method was the first language teaching method to acknowledge the outside world by teaching learners to communicate in the target language...’

In developing this method, pioneers met with criticism as their courses were at first structured in an uncoordinated fashion - a situation which was rectified by further developments. The corrections which were later implemented did not prevent negative reactions to this method. As a reaction to the direct method, an audio-lingual method came into being.

### 3.4.3 The audio-lingual method

The audio-lingual method, like its predecessors, came into being as a reaction to the previous popularly practised method of teaching second languages. When the language teaching fraternity realised its dissatisfaction with the results obtained from the direct method they strove to seek a method which would produce foreign language speakers who would speak the target language like its native speakers (Brown 1987:96). This necessity of speaking the target language as, or almost as, its native speakers was first recognised by the Americans during the early years of World War II (Brown 1987:96; Rivers 1993:39). During this period the Americans experienced a shortage of both interpreters and translators whilst dealing with both enemies and allies. In order to communicate in foreign languages, it was essential to be able to communicate effectively by being able to perform the following activities in the target language stipulated by Rivers (1993:39) as 'understanding a native speaker and speaking with near native accent were first priorities'.

They achieved these aims of language learning and teaching by utilising small classes and they spent a lot of time on explaining structures. These were later drilled until the candidates reached a stage of near or perfect pronunciation. When this method was prevalent in the 1960's, its proponents for instance used language laboratories where language structures were drilled with the aim of achieving a high level of perfection in pronunciation.

In summarising, it is necessary to mention that the audio-linguists were the first people to believe in following the stipulated order of learning in order to teach and learn foreign languages effectively. They believed that language teaching and learning occurred according to the following order: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Rivers 1993: 56). They also seemed to believe that any deviation from that order would interfere with the grasping of foreign language skills. Rivers (1993:56) emphasized the importance of sticking to the order of skills to be mastered when learning and teaching a foreign language;

'... in the early stages all language learning and practice were to be in the aural mode, the students being introduced to the graphic symbols (the written forms of the language) only after they had demonstrated mastery of a certain body of material. Then they would learn to write what they learned orally...'

Apart from Rivers, Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:10) identified the good intentions and weaknesses of the above-mentioned methods as follows:

'... the audio-lingual method also set out to stress the communicative skills in the target language but gradually became entangled in pattern practice, sentences, model dialogues, substitution tables which were stilted and unnatural ... the boredom and monotony of pattern drill and substitution tables continued to bore the students...'

When the boredom and monotony of the language teaching patterns followed by the audio-linguists set in, it became essential for the foreign language teaching fraternity to change its teaching emphasis. This change placed emphasis, not only on one method but on choosing the best from every method ever invented. An eclectic approach was thus followed.

### **3.5 THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH**

The audio-lingual method which emphasized the importance of speaking the target language akin to the usage of a native speaker, gave way to the communicative approach which embodied more than one method, with the objective of equipping its learners with communicative skills. It should be placed on record that this approach to foreign language teaching has replaced former methods of language teaching. Menck (1994:124) holds that it has '...superseded the old grammar-translation method, its successor and antithesis, the direct method, and subsequent audio-lingual and audiovisual methods'. It cuts across all the methods and also includes some or all of the aspects which are deemed appropriate in that particular teaching situation by the practitioner.

As this approach has replaced other methods and incorporates some of their aspects, it is important to investigate its nature in order to utilise it effectively.

### 3.5.1 The nature of the communicative approach

It is useful to compare the concepts of methods and approaches. A 'method' involves the following of particular principles and ways of performing a certain activity which cannot be deviated from. An 'approach', on the other hand, does not have to follow prescribed strategies in teaching a particular language concept (Kilfoil and Van der Walt 1993:10-11). Kroes *et al.* (1992:3) provides a clearer distinction between the two concepts of method and approach when he describes an approach as follows:

'...Die term *benadering* word gebruik vir die teoretiese uitgangspunte ten opsigte van die *aard* van die taalverwerwing en taalaanleer'.

As an approach deals with the theoretical point of departure with regard to the structure of language acquisition and language learning, it differs from a method of teaching as such. An approach can consist of different aspects of various methods which can be utilised simultaneously, whereas the same cannot be said of a method. Kroes *et al.* in fact explicitly stipulate that a method is based on *an approach*. The complex relationship between a *method* and an *approach* is clarified further by Kroes *et al.* as follows:

'... Uit die breë perspektief waarop benadering gebaseer is, kan verskillende metodes gebore word. Die metode het te doen met die *sistematiese aanbieding van taalmateriaal*. Dit raak die sillabus, die soorte take en aanbiedingsaktiwiteite in breë trekke, die rol van die leerder en van die onderwyseres, en die funksie van die onderrigmateriaal'.

Having said this, it is logical to discern factors which are important in exercising the communicative approach. Some of the characteristics which describe the communicative approach will be dealt with in section 3.5.1.1.

#### 3.5.1.1 The communicative approach is eclectic in nature

The communicative approach to language teaching is always eclectic in nature, in that

it utilises as many methods as possible in trying to achieve its stated goal - which is communicative competence. In affirming this point, Rivers (1993:55) verbalises the function of the eclecticists as follows: ‘... eclecticists, try then to absorb the best techniques of all the well known teaching methods into their classroom procedures using them for the purpose for which they are most appropriate. True eclecticists ... seek to balance the development of all four skills at all stages ...’

Whilst discussing how eclecticists go about selecting the best techniques, though agreeing with what Rivers states as the gist of the eclectic nature of the communicative approach, certain questions are to be asked on what should be regarded as the *best technique*. Askes (1992:66) also confirms Rivers, understanding of the concept *eclectic method* when he says ‘... Die woord *eklekties* beteken letterlik om die beste uit te kies. Hierdie benadering is ‘n gekombineerde metode waar al die beste elemente uit die onderskeie benaderings gekies word...’

Since, according to Rivers and Askes, an eclectic method has to do with the selection of the best techniques from various methods, it is therefore essential to analyse what constitutes the criteria which justify the ‘best’ method. Blackquière (1993:178) also probed the above assumption by saying: ‘*die beste elemente*’ in Askes’ definition should be meaning ‘the *most suitable ones*’ (own emphasis).

The above clarification by Blackquière has to be investigated further to supply answers which will tell the practitioners of second and foreign language teaching for whom the method will be suitable, and also under what circumstances it would be appropriate. These will have to be clarified further if this method is to be used correctly. Apart from the eclectic nature of the communicative language teaching approach, it is also important to focus on a further feature which involves communicative competence in a contextualised situation.

### 3.5.1.2 **The contextualised nature of the communicative approach**

Eclecticists believe in the teaching of the foreign language in a contextualised form. Abdool (1997:7), for example, is a strong supporter of this approach. He is of the

opinion that

'... communication of a language should be contextualised: The culmination of language learning must not be simply the mastery of rules and structures of language (i.e. grammar). The mastery of vocabulary and structures would result in nothing if the learner cannot use these forms for the purpose of transmitting and receiving thoughts, ideas and feelings between himself and the learner, or the writer and the reader'.

Having explained that the language should be learnt in order to accomplish a communication competence purpose, Abdool emphasizes this fact by specifying a *simple aim* of learning a second language at the elementary level: that learners should have '...knowledge of aspects of language such as rules of conversation, polite forms of address for individuals of different status; language appropriate for peers and adults - in short the rules governing the use of language in context...'

According to Brown (1987:213) communicative language teaching is aimed at the following:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all forms of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
2. Form is not the framework for organising and sequencing lessons. Function is the framework through which forms are taught.
3. Accuracy is secondary to conveying a message. The ultimate criterion for communicative success is the actual transmission and receiving of intended meaning.
4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language productively and receptively, in unrehearsed context'.

The nature of the communicative approach, the aims of its teaching and the history of all the methods of language teaching, help to answer the 'how' question about learning the second language in general and that of Afrikaans foreign language in particular. Stonier (1992:3) is of the opinion that second and foreign language teaching should be based on information about how the brain functions when a language is acquired. It

is important to compare how language is acquired in the first, second and subsequent languages. A brief look at the concept of language acquisition will suffice at this stage.

### 3.6 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

For the purpose of this study a distinction is made between the *acquisition* and *learning* of languages in one's life. *Acquisition* is usually associated with the learning of the first language or mother tongue, where the process seems to take place naturally or subconsciously without prescribed syllabi to be covered in order to determine the progress of the child. On the other hand, the *learning* of a language, be it second or third, may imply a teacher, and a curriculum with its aims and objectives which are to be attained at the end of the learning programmes.

Although these two processes differ, with one being natural and the other being artificial, the principles involved in acquiring or learning the language are similar, at times so interwoven that it is difficult to differentiate between the two. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:2) describe the interwovenness of these processes as follows

‘...unfortunately the distinction between *acquisition* and *learning* has not stood up to scientific investigation. It has been found that, even if *learning* and *acquisition* are different processes, they are interwoven: that means for example that people ‘pick up’ the language while they receive formal instruction. Ultimately one can only conclude that pupils learn what they are taught, and if communication activities are encouraged in the classrooms pupils should learn to communicate’. (own emphasis)

The factors which influence the learning and acquisition of languages are discussed in the next section.

#### 3.6.1 Important factors which influence language acquisition and learning

The important question to be answered here is whether people learn second or foreign

languages in the same manner in which they acquire the first language. In attempting to answer this question Stonier (1994:4) is of the opinion that second or foreign language learners definitely cannot learn the language exactly like young children, but adds that factors which seem to help children can be examined and adapted to the target language teaching classroom.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to identify those factors that seem to help children to acquire language, and as such the following principles have been singled out by the foreign language teaching fraternity to be of much value in language teaching-learning situations.

#### **3.6.1.1. Language flourishes best in a language- rich environment**

As is the case with learning a first language, where the child is surrounded by family and neighbours who provide him/her with a language-rich environment to enable him/her to pick up the language, the same principle should apply in the learning of subsequent languages (Stonier 1994, Report EDO-FL-96-02, 1995). In learning second and third languages the learner will not be afforded the same stimuli as he/she received during the learning of the mother tongue, but the teacher should as far as possible try to create communication situations in and outside the classrooms. In creating situations where pupils will discuss, talk, argue *et cetera*, the teacher will by so doing facilitate the learning of the second language. When the second or third language learning environment is language bankrupt, this will lead to poor language learning or delay the language acquisition process. An impoverished language environment may simply cause the child to fail to communicate in the desired target language. It is thus clear that foreign language learners need to be exposed to meaningful literacy activities if they are to establish communicative competence in the target language. It is necessary to mention that as well as the language-rich environment which is essential for the learning of the second language, other factors such as motivation also need to be present for the language learning process to succeed.

### 3.6.1.2 **Motivation**

Motivation is an important factor in the learning of second and foreign languages. If a learner has a definite goal in learning a second or third language, he or she will strive to attain it irrespective of the obstacles which may stand in his/her way (Dornyei 1994, Stonier 1992). A learner may wish to learn the language in order to be integrated into the community. If that is the case, he or she may also be eager to assimilate and adopt the culture of the second language speakers (Stonier 1992:6). This type of motivation is intrinsic, as it comes from within the learner. Where motivation is extrinsic or instrumental in nature, the learner might wish to know the language in order to use it as a medium of instruction at school or in future job situations - but not primarily to be part of the language speaking community. Despite the differences between the two types of motivation, it seems important to mention that both types of motivation are essential in the learning of the second and third languages.

### 3.6.2 **The need to communicate**

Stonier stresses the fact that learners need to be understood by their immediate family if their needs are to be understood and be satisfied. Similarly in second and third language teaching teachers should create situations, where language learners will need to communicate in the target language. If real language situations in the second language are regularly presented to the learners in the classroom, this exercise will lead to the improvement of their communicative competence. It is therefore clear that this competence in the target language is the desired goal for both teaching and learning of a second language.

Having examined the role of language acquisition and learning of the first and second language, it is logical to proceed a step further with the 'how' of the second and foreign language learning and its teaching. It is important to investigate content-based language instruction and relevant language teaching models.

### 3.7 CONTENT-BASED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

This is an approach in language teaching which encourages those who wish to learn a second or foreign language to do it in a contextualised form, where a language is utilised as a vehicle for learning the content of some form or subject. In the language teaching fraternity, the approach is appreciated by some practitioners yet criticised by others as Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1993:15) point out: that '... not all supporters of the communicative approach agree that the target language should be exclusive means of communication in the second language classroom'.

Irrespective of different opinions in the language teaching fraternity, content-based language instruction remains fruitful in the language teaching area, as certain practitioners of the communicative approach are still utilising it successfully in some quarters.

Despite the fact that some second language teachers disagree that the target language should be made the medium of instruction, there are those who agree with this idea. They affirm the idea that language is best learned in context. Brinton *et al.* (1989:1) express themselves as follows:

'... the claim that the language is most effectively learned in context is hardly a new or revolutionary one. Regardless of the methodology used, language teachers have generally found it desirable to present new items through meaningful content, in fact, "contextualizing" lesson presentation has become a widely accepted rule of good language teaching'.

If the above definition by Brinton *et al.* is to be accepted as one of the norms of second and foreign language teaching, it is worthwhile to view the rationale for accepting the idea of integrated language instruction, as it is sometimes known.

#### 3.7.1 Rationale for content-based language teaching

This type of language teaching is popular in countries such as the United States of America, Germany, Canada and many others. Perhaps it should be mentioned that

this practice is not generally used at all in South Africa in the teaching of Afrikaans as a second and a foreign language. It appears that where any attempt has been made in Afrikaans, it was so politically motivated that its recipients rejected it. The only instance where content-based language teaching is successful is: in the case of English, which is regarded as a *lingua franca* for the country. However, it is important to establish the reasons why other countries appear to regard the integrated approach as the most suitable for second and foreign language teaching.

### 3.7.1.1 **Content-based teaching is based on the theory of language acquisition**

Crandall supported this approach when she mentioned that support for the content-centred approach evolves from the second language acquisition theory and its practice. Examples of this idea have been taken from Krashen's theory of language acquisition. Krashen (1982:6) is of the opinion that it is important to create conditions which are similar to that of learning the first language, if the second language is to be learned successfully. He observes that

'language acquisition, first or second, occurs only when comprehension of real message occurs, and when the acquirer is not on the defensive ...the best methods are those that supply comprehensible "input" in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students want to hear'.

Crandall agrees with Krashen on the importance of understanding of the meanings of messages in language acquisition when he states

'When the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form: when the language input is at or just above, the proficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language in a relatively anxiety free environment'.

Some of Krashen and Crandall's ideas on second language acquisition are confirmed by Brinton *et al.* (1989:1) as follows: 'the strongest argument for content-based courses comes from research in second language acquisition. Much recent research suggests that a necessary condition for successful language acquisition is that the "input" in the target language must be understood by the learner...'

It is clear from the evidence on research into language acquisition that some of the conditions found in the acquisition of the first language should be emulated in the foreign language classroom. This emulation should achieve the communicative competence which is the desired goal of second language teaching at all levels of education. The use of a second language in general and of Afrikaans foreign language in particular, should be examined carefully in order to justify the teaching of the second language.

### **3.7.1.2 The use of the second and foreign languages should be considered in content-based language instruction**

It is important to realise that the curriculum of any second language should consider the *future usage* of its learner in the construction of its curricula. Any attempt to avoid consideration of the needs of the future users of the language will result in the demotivation of the learners and ultimately not empower the learners to use the language. Therefore Brinton *et al.* advocate that the curriculum of the target language should as far as possible be learner-centred. This learner-centredness of the target language curriculum will also encourage learners to think in the target language.

### **3.7.1.3 The question of language and thought as it manifests itself in the integrated language approach**

It is the opinion of some second language practitioners such as Met (1991:183) that by practising content-based language instruction, learners are afforded the opportunity to express and clarify ideas, criticise given opinions and synthesize facts while learning. The above exercise, if done during a language content period, should help the learner to develop higher order thinking skills in the target language.

### **3.7.1.4 The use of language in a context situation**

In content-based language instruction emphasis is placed on providing learners with

the context within which the target language is learnt. Brinton *et al.* (1989:1) correctly point out that the second language should be taught and learned 'through a focus on contextualized use rather than on fragmented examples of correct sentence-level usage.'

Having considered the various reasons why content-based language instruction should be practised in language teaching, it is fitting at this stage to examine various language teaching models which have been implemented in practising the content-based language teaching instruction.

### **3.7.2 Language teaching models**

Integrated language instruction and content instruction are usually undertaken by both the language and the content subject teachers, who work hand in hand with the aim of developing second language proficiency as well as of mastering the particular subject content. The nature of a content-based curriculum requires both the language and subject content teacher to co-operate and to consult with each other before their daily teaching experiences, if the aims and objectives of their teaching curricula are to be realised. There are, however, various programme models which are utilised for integrated language and content instruction at all learning levels. These models are practised in primary, and secondary as well in tertiary institutions.

#### **3.7.2.1 The skills model**

This model can be regarded as a bridging course in the tertiary institution where students with a weak foreign language proficiency enrol with the course for the purpose of gaining some knowledge. Knowledge gained in the target language serves as a preliminary prerequisite for the credit bearing college or university course. Blanton (1992:285), is of the opinion that second language teachers have traditionally relied on the skills model in post secondary education in English second or foreign language intensive programmes. These courses do not consider the purposes for which students will utilise their acquired knowledge in compiling their respective language

curricula. In the South African context the skills model might be equated with those Afrikaans or English first year courses found at tertiary institutions which do not lead to a second year course. A pass in that particular course should lead to a first year course at first year level which would then be known as, for instance, Afrikaans 100, which leads to a second year.

According to Blanton, the curriculum of this model consists of reading, writing, listening, and speaking with each skill being considered as a separate course. In the case of the skills model it implies that one could master one skill yet fail under this model. Blanton (1992:285), clarifies the confusion found in evaluating courses in this model as follows: '... in large administratively agile programmes, students after being tested in their level - may be cross placed: a student might take, for example, beginning level reading and writing classes and intermediate listening and speaking and vice versa'.

Because of the above assessment situation, which seems to be the norm of this model, Blanton goes on to say that workbooks are mostly unsuitable as they usually have unrelated material. Having analysed this model, it is evident that it is a language teaching model which does not utilise content to enhance language instruction. Language, as already explained, is taught for its own sake, an idea which is rejected by Blanton (1992:285), because '... most second language learners do not learn a language for its own sake, they learn it in order to learn the subject matter through the medium of the second language...'

The main *disadvantage* of this model seems to be the fact that, as language is taught for its own sake, learners are not encouraged to think in the target language. An assumption that rote learning is encouraged through the usage of uncoordinated workbooks cannot be far off. Having investigated the usage, teaching and evaluation of the skills model, it is relevant at this stage to examine other models which are used for language teaching at other educational levels.

### 3.7.2.2 The shelter model

In this model sheltered courses are usually taught through the medium of the second language by a subject specialist whose mother tongue is that particular target language. According to Brinton *et al.* (1989:15) this model is usually applied to second language speakers who speak the same vernacular. Although agreeing with Brinton *et al.*'s description of the shelter model of language instruction, Blanton (1992:286) has a different emphasis in his definition of the same model. He believes that this model provides a systematic and incremental programme for main streaming English second language speakers.

'... Within the sheltered English model, students are initially main streamed in the subjects that are the least English - intensive, such as art and education; at the same time they are sheltered in their English courses, meaning that only the ESL students are in class with them and they do not compete academically with native speakers and the core subjects are taught in the students' first language'.

Whereas Brinton *et al.* and Blanton concentrate on the main features of the model, such as students of the same mother tongue being in the same class and teachers of the native language being utilised, Crandall (1992:115), whilst agreeing with the above description, introduces another factor to the equation. He describes the curriculum utilised in the shelter model as follows: '... a content curriculum is adapted to accommodate the students' limited proficiency in the language of instruction...'

The above descriptions give one an idea of what a shelter model is all about, and it is important at this stage to examine its strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths are situated in the fact that pupils in the sheltered classes enjoy an anxiety free situation as they use the same mother tongue as a communication tool, and they tend to accommodate the fact that they are learning a foreign language. The situation is further simplified by the fact that first language speakers do not come into their class, a situation which might inhibit their endeavours. Another advantage of this model is that learners will be prompted to enter the mainstream according to the progress they will be making in the target language. However, certain disadvantages of this model are

apparent.

One of these disadvantages is that this model seems to have been designed for schools with large numbers of immigrants or second language speakers who use the same mother tongue. If the learners' mother tongues are different, it appears that the idea of support and a low anxiety language learning situation may be affected adversely. Another weakness of this model is that not all content-subject teachers are language conscious. If that is the case, then the desired consultation and co-operation of the language and content subject teachers may not be effected successfully. Despite the fact that some researchers are against this model due to the fact that the subject-matter is watered down (Crandall 1992:116), it is widely used for learning the second and third languages.

### 3.7.2.3 **The adjunct model**

Brinton *et al.* (1989) describe this model appropriately as a method which links a second language learning course with one content subject. This model allows both the mother tongue and the target language speakers to be enrolled in language and content courses concurrently. The aim is to gain knowledge from the content subject as well as from the particular target language course. Crandall (1994:11) goes further and describes this model as follows: '... The courses share a content base, but the focus of instruction differs; the language teacher emphasised language skills such as academic reading or writing while the content teacher focuses on traditional academic concepts'.

Crandall (1992:116) goes further, to point out extra efforts which should be made by both the content and the language teacher as follows: '... the model requires substantial co-ordination between the two teachers and extra effort on the part of the ESL instructor who should familiarise himself with the content of the subject, often attending the content class for some time before and during the adjunct program'.

Whereas the descriptions of the adjunct model by Brinton *et al.* and Crandall are clear

enough to explain what the model comprises, Blanton (1992:286) also supplies examples which may be used in the content subject, as well as suggesting the level of language teaching education for which it may be regarded as being suitable. According to him, the model

'..links every advanced ESL courses with content courses. Staff teaching ESL co-ordinate their curriculum with that of a mother content subject, Biology for instance. Within this content the language teacher uses Biology content to teach language and, the Biology teacher uses the given content to reinforce the language lesson'.

It is also necessary to examine what practitioners of this model (Blanton 1992 and Crandall 1992) regard as constituting difficulties in its implementation. They maintain that one of its weaknesses is that it requires proper coordination of the two different curricula involved in order to be effected successfully. Any failure in consultation between the teachers of both courses may lead to a failure to meet the objectives of the interlocking subjects. A further complication is that the material used for traditional second language teaching differs considerably from that of content courses and as such considerable modification of the subject matter may need to be effected if both courses are to complement each other.

Next to the challenge of acquainting themselves with each other's curricula, the teachers need to see to it that the project is *suitable* and *limited* to students with advanced second language skills only.

#### **3.7.2.4 The tutoring model**

Blanton (1992:285) regards the aim of the tutoring model as that of helping students, after completion of the basic foreign language course, to enrol for the credit courses. In this course students are allocated tutors in the teaching of the content subjects such as Biology and History. The tutors appointed will help the students with both the content and the foreign language concerned. The disadvantages of this model are mainly budgetary as the tutors are hired on a part-time basis.

### 3.7.2.5 The holistic model

Crandall (1992:117) is of the opinion that the holistic model has been developed as a reaction to the adjunct model which requires students of the second language to be equipped with sufficient language skills to participate in the learning process. Mohan, in Blanton (1992:286), believes that a second language is only a means to an end in the ESL classes. He contends that the objective of studying English as a second language is to study other material through its medium. It is important therefore to learn and teach a second language with the aim of developing it to such an extent that it can serve the purpose of becoming a medium of instruction. Seemingly this purpose of teaching and learning second language, if achieved, will necessitate the integration of language and content in order to make it an interwoven process.

The holistic/whole language model of language teaching is eclectic in nature in that it involves processes used in other models and combines them for content learning. It regards the course content as primary, and as such the second language course designed should be compatible with the subject matter being offered. Blanton (1992:288), on the issue of the compatibility between the language and the content course, says that 'ESL course content should not differ in kind from the content of all the college courses, exhibiting the academic language and logic that students must contend with in the future courses... ESL courses should fit linguistically and content-wise into English for varied academic courses'.

Though Blanton describes the teaching of language and content in English as a second language in particular, the situation also applies to other second languages in general. Blanton (1992:288-290) briefly discusses the features of the holistic language model;

1. 'When using the model learners should learn utilising the complete text so that its meaning could be clear instead of using disjointed exercises. These complete texts which will be utilised, should help the learners to understand or make meaning out of it, which in turn would activate learners' thinking skills.

If learners acquire both the content and language in this process, they should also enhance high order thinking skills.

2. It is a fact that language is always used in a situation or context; this assumption should always be subscribed to in a second language teaching-learning situation. It is thus clear that situations are critical to the making of meaning.
3. This model survives on the assumption that pupils are always involved in a meaningful conversation with one another. It seems fair to assume that motivation is ever present in these learning situation conversations. Another aspect of these conversations is that problems which present themselves will be solved continuously as they are discussed. In solving problems which present themselves, second language learners will then be learning to think in the target language concerned. These thinking skills will range from low to high order level, depending on the type of exercises and the level of learning for students...'

Having discussed various models which are utilised in content-based language teaching, one is prompted to consider various teaching strategies which are used in order to achieve success. According to various researchers on learner-centred language instruction, four types of strategies have been identified as being very effective (Crandall 1992; Fathman and Kessler 1992). Each teaching strategy is discussed separately with the aim of indicating its learner-centred models.

### **3.8 LEARNER-CENTRED INSTRUCTION WITH SOME OF ITS LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES**

The learner-centred approach is equivalent to Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 which is presently being introduced in South Africa. The core idea in learner-centred instruction is that learners should be actively involved in their own learning. McCown *et al.* (1996:405) are of the opinion that learner-centred approaches, unlike other traditional approaches, focus on teaching behaviours that move the locus

of learning activity away from the teacher and direct it towards the student. McCown *et al.* ( 1996:40) proceed with the furnishing of terms which are utilised in the co-operative teaching approach as suggested by Cohen as follows:

'student-centred approaches define the teacher as a *facilitator*, and not an orator; a *co-worker*, not a boss; a *guide on the side*, rather than a sage on the stage...'

This discussion indicates that learner-centred approaches are based on ideas embodied in constructivist theories, which according to McCown *et al.* are characterised by the following aspects in their perspective on the learning process:

1. learning which is best done in real life environments, complete with their ill-defined problems;
2. social negotiations are essential to learning; and
3. ideas and concepts should be learned in diverse ways.

It is also important to add that learning should ideally take part in small discussion groups which allow students to participate actively in the discussions. A number of teaching strategies and techniques are utilised in the learner-centred approach, as will be discussed next.

### **3.8.1. Co-operative learning**

Various researchers have defined the concept of co-operative learning. McCown *et al.* (1996:409) define co-operative learning as an instruction technique that calls for students to be teamed together to attain certain outcomes in their process of study.

Cohen as quoted by Freiberg and Driscoll (1996:277 ) agrees with McCown *et al.* but provides a more elaborate definition. In a co-operative learning situation students will find themselves '...working together in a group small enough that everyone can participate on a collective task that has been clearly defined and without direct and immediate supervision of the teacher...'

A third definition by Fathman and Kessler (1992:127 ) expresses the role of learners' activities in the co-operative learning process as follows: '... it is a method which is designed to engage the learner actively in the learning process. Through enquiry and interaction with peers in small groups, learners work together towards a common goal...'

However, Wessels and Van den Berg (1998:23) specifically identify an essential component of learner-centred education which manifests itself in the form of co-operative learning. They describe the place of co-operative learning in the learner-centred classroom as follows: '...co-operative learning should be at the *core* of every learner-centred classroom. This means that learners will co-operate to: complete projects; master new concepts; test one another; and correct one another's work'.

In the above-mentioned four definitions of co-operative learning, as furnished by different researchers, it is clear that the following aspects should be part of the learning process :

1. learners should be involved in the learning process with the aim of achieving a common goal;
2. learners working together on a given task should do so in a small group which will enable everyone to participate in the process;
3. learning outcomes of the learning activity should be clear to all participants in the group;
4. enquiry and interaction should form the nucleus of the learning process;
5. the teacher should only intervene when learners have attempted to solve their problem in question on their own without success first - only then can he offer his much needed help.

### **3.8.1.1 Essential characteristics of the co-operative learning approach**

Having identified the above five aspects in section 3.8.1, it is logical to give the main characteristics of co-operative learning as furnished by Johnson and Johnson (1994);

McCown *et al.* (1996); Freiberg and Driscoll (1996); and Wessels and Van den Berg (1998). Johnson and Johnson (1994) and Freiberg and Driscoll (1996) regard these characteristics as *essential components*; whereas McCown *et al.* (1996) refer to them as *basic ingredients* to be included in the planning of co-operative learning activities. The characteristics referred to are;

1. *Positive interdependence*: this concept exists when learners in a group realise that their success and failure relate to the success and the failure of the whole group (McCown *et al.* 1996:409). It also means that they are responsible for their own learning as well as that of their peers in the group (Freiberg and Driscoll 1996:277 ).
2. *Face to face promotive interaction*: students face each other whilst discussing issues and thereby gain insights into concepts under discussion. According to Freiberg and Driscoll (1996:277), in this learning group members help each other by supporting, encouraging, critiquing, motivating, and praising each other's work. Johnson and Johnson (1994:23) also add the following dimension to the explanation of this concept: orally explaining how to solve problems, discussing the nature of concepts being learned, teaching one's knowledge to classmates, and connecting present with past learning. In other words the concept of *face to face promotive interaction* refers to all the activities in which learners in a group orally engage.
3. *Individual accountability*: Each learner in the group is supposed to be accountable for his own learning. Each learner should therefore do his own work and not be a passive recipient of information from other members of the group. After learning together, their performance should be improved as they should have gained different perspectives on the particular item which was studied. According to Johnson and Johnson (1994:23) the importance of individual accountability is that '...it ensures that group members know (a) who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in completing the assignment and (b) that they cannot hitchhike on the work of others '.

4. *Interpersonal and small group skills:* In co-operative learning, learners should acquire both academic and interpersonal skills. Learners should be taught skills for: communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, as well as the building of trust, acceptance and relationships.
  
- 5 *Group processing:* In this aspect members of a group discuss how well they are achieving their outcomes and maintaining their effective relationship. Groups should also identify helpful and destructive tendencies in their work relationship concerning a given task. This post-mortem exercise can only strengthen their healthy *modus operandi* in the group which will in turn make the learning exercise in the group more worthwhile. A close look at the types of groups utilised in co-operative learning is necessary for the sake of better understanding of the concept.

#### 3.8.1.2 **Types of co-operative learning groups**

The basic philosophy of learning groups is that learners should take responsibility for their learning; learning is not something that should be done for a learner (Fosnot in Johnson and Johnson 1994). A discussion of the types of learning groups which are commonly utilised merits attention at this stage.

1. **Formal co-operative learning groups:** These are structured and permanent in nature, as they may last for weeks or months in order to achieve shared learning outcomes as perceived at the beginning of the exercise. In this regard McCown *et al.* (1996:410) are of the opinion that

‘...members of formal learning groups have two major responsibilities ...they are responsible for maximising not only their own learning but also learning of all other members of the group... formal learning groups work to complete a specific task. Usually resulting in some performance or product generated by the group...’

The second type of learning group is, logically the informal learning group.

2. **Informal co-operative learning groups:** The informal co-operative learning groups are characterised by the fact that they are temporary and they are usually formed on an *ad hoc* basis. They may last for a few minutes or one full period. They are usually formed during a particular lesson if the need for their formation arises - so that pupils may address an issue at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the lesson. Learners are usually requested to interrogate an issue pertaining to a section of the content which is being taught at that particular moment.

Johnson and Johnson (1994:24) illustrate the challenges which face the learners in the informal co-operative group : '...during the direct teaching, the instructional challenge for the teacher is to ensure that students do the intellectual work of organising material, explaining it, summarising it and integrating it into existing conceptual structures...'

A third learning group is the co-operative group which is described by Johnson and Johnson.

3. **Co-operative based learning groups:** These are permanent, long term heterogeneous co-operative learning groups with stable memberships whose main purpose is to support, encourage and assist the members in academic matters. These groups are also capable of resulting in permanent working relationships which may transcend the schooling period and even reach the university stage of education, if it is still relevant. Members help each other with assignments, preparations for tests, and home-work. They work both jointly and independently in order to maximise their performance whilst developing cognitively and socially in healthy ways. This way of studying is usually useful for both teachers and learners in cases of large classes and tackling of difficult subjects where individual attention is not always possible. The following are some examples of co-operative learning groups in language teaching and learning.

- **The group investigative technique**

This technique assumes that collective effort is important in the learning of the target language. Groups or pairs study matters related to a given topic for a period of time. Each pair is responsible for planning and structuring a report which will be given to the whole class. The interdependence which exists between members of a study group will help them in the processes of investigation, putting reasons forward for or against the topic and writing the final report. In so doing learners sharpen their thinking and writing skills, which are important in the learning of the second language.

- **The learning together technique**

According to Johnson as quoted by Fathman and Kessler (1992) this technique is aimed at designing lessons which promote interdependence between learners in a particular group. The teacher's role in this approach is to monitor and help learners to collaborate whilst working on a given task.. The most important features of this technique are team building and discussion on how members in a group complement and supplement each other, in acquiring knowledge which will incorporate language skills directly or indirectly in the process of language learning.

- **The Jigsaw technique**

In this technique learners are given portions from a particular topic which is assigned to different groups. Fathman and Kessler (1992:129) describe it as '... a widely used method in which students are assigned to work on material that has been broken down into sections'. Teams work on different sections whilst gathering relevant data; those with similar sections first discuss their findings before joining the major group to fit different sections together in order to create the required whole sections. Slavin as quoted by Fathman and Kessler (1992) says that this technique is used in content subjects such as social studies.

The next teaching strategy is the task-based or experiential learning method.

### **3.8.2 Task-based or Experiential Learning Method**

This is one of the methods utilised in co-operative learning, as found in the content-language integrated approach, which emphasizes learning associated with tasks, experiences, assignments or projects. Crandall (1992:112) summarises the description of the task-based approach as follows: '... experiential learning activities provide appropriate contexts for the development of thinking and study skills as well as language and academic concepts for students of different levels of language proficiency'.

It seems clear from the above description that rote learning is not encouraged in this approach as learners are encouraged to be creative instead. Crandall quoted Fathman, Quin and Kessler (1992) who emphasize that learners should also learn to construct problems as one of the required skills of this learning method. Having accepted the way this method works, one can only praise its ability to enhance high order thinking skills among its learners, more especially when the emphasis is not on solving problems only, but also on creating and constructing them.

### **3.8.3 Whole language strategies**

Blanton in Crandall (1992:118) states that: '... a holistic approach is consistent with integrated language and content instruction since both emphasize meaningful engagement and authentic use and both link oral and written language development'.

This strategy as described by Crandall includes various techniques from other methods, which indicates that it is eclectic in nature. Strategies emphasise reading, writing, speaking and listening. Reading material, such as books, newspapers and journals is utilised in order to develop both language and thinking skills, at the same time providing enjoyment for the learner in question. After creating a discussion situation from the above activities, opportunities are offered for linking experiential learning with oral and written work in second and foreign language development.

Apart from the eclectic whole language strategies, it is relevant to discuss the graphic organisers briefly.

#### **3.8.4 Graphic organisers (media)**

Graphic organisers are teaching aids which are used before or during a teaching period in order to provide a means of systematically organising and presenting information from a subject topic which is being taught, so that it can be understood and remembered easily (McCown *et al.* 1996 and Crandall 1992). This recall of the lesson can be done long after the lesson has been presented to the class. Teaching aids will assume various forms in different subjects depending on the nature of the particular subject matter. It should be emphasized that these learning aids are in most instances indispensable for both language and content integration in teaching and learning situations at various institutions of learning.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

Some of the ideal situations of teaching second and foreign languages have been described in this chapter. Among others the following were discussed: the distinction between second and foreign or third languages, the training of second and foreign language teachers and the equipping of these teachers with skills with which to perform their duties efficiently. This exercise was carried out to empower both teacher trainers and student teachers with prior knowledge, which is essential before anyone can embark on the training of second and third language teachers.

The second group of factors dealt with the history of language teaching methods and approaches. The exercise was done with the aim of enlightening those who wish to train language teachers or become language teachers in understanding the present teaching strategies and approaches, through knowing how the earlier methods developed, and being awarded the reasons why they became unpopular.

The third group of factors discussed dealt with content-based language instruction by

learners. This exercise was embarked on with the aim of making teacher trainers and student teachers understand the basic principles involved in learning a language. The understanding of these principles of language acquisition by the teacher trainer or student teacher can only empower him in carrying out and planning his duties.

Different language teaching models were discussed with the aim of showing examples of how second and foreign languages are taught in various situations. This understanding is fundamental if one is to experiment with a new model for language teaching in order to avoid duplication, or to choose the best elements if an eclectic strategy is to be employed.

Lastly, learner-centred language teaching strategies and techniques were discussed as they conform to the latest Outcomes-Based Education system and Curriculum 2005 which is being introduced in the schools. What was discussed in this chapter will also serve as a basis for investigating the current situation in colleges of education in the teaching of Afrikaans. Issues pertaining to the teaching of Afrikaans, that is, attitudes, values and skills of student teachers and other relevant parties will be researched through interviews and observation in colleges of education in the Northern Province. The results of these investigations will be discussed in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### ISSUES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF AFRIKAANS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Before discussing research method in this study, it is important to explain how data pertaining to this research project was gathered. It has been explained that three methods of research were utilised (see section 1.5). The literature was surveyed in chapters two and three, while interviews and observations will be reported in this chapter. A number of interview schedules have been compiled for this study for use in the structured interviews.

##### 4.1.1 Compilation of different schedules

A number of interview schedules compiled for this study are discussed below

##### 4.1.1.1 Student teachers' interview schedule

The student teachers' interview has been compiled with the aim of determining the following with regard to the teaching of Afrikaans:

1. the entry point of the Afrikaans student teachers at colleges of education;
2. their home and college language environments;
3. the question of the medium of instruction and the rationale attached to its preferred choice by the respondent;
4. student teachers' habits of reading in Afrikaans and what is associated with it;
5. difficulties experienced by student teachers in the teaching of the Afrikaans language during their experiential training periods (teaching practice).

#### **4.1.1.2 Lecturers' interview schedule**

This interview schedule has been designed with the following objectives in mind:

1. to determine the lecturers' biographical details and qualifications;
2. to determine their language environment and linguistic flexibility skills in other languages which they possess;
3. to determine the techniques they use in enriching student teachers' knowledge of the target language;
4. to determine possible reading and teaching skills in the subject Afrikaans which they could transfer to their trainees;

#### **4.1.1.3 Interview schedule for the heads of Departments of Afrikaans as a subject**

The interview schedule was designed with the aim of determining the following aspects of the duties of the head of the Departments of Afrikaans:

1. the support system given to the department by the management of the college;
2. the utilisation of the subject policy in the department;
3. the constraints which the head of the Department of Afrikaans experiences in the running of the department;
4. explanation of the phenomenon of low enrolment in the subject of Afrikaans;
5. factors which raise concern about the teaching of the subject Afrikaans.

#### **4.1.1.4 Interview schedule for rectors/senior heads of departments**

The interview schedule has been compiled with the aim of determining the following facts surrounding the teaching of the subject Afrikaans foreign language:

1. the policy concerning the choice of teaching subjects by students of the Primary Teachers' Diploma at entry level;
2. the type of help provided to student teachers with their choice of teaching subjects;

3. the manner of catering for the interests of different departments during the registration period;
4. an explanation of the question of low enrolment in the department of Afrikaans;
5. factors which raise concern in the teaching of the subject.

#### **4.1.2 Type of data gathered in the structured interview**

It is important to mention that in the execution of this research project both quantitative and qualitative data have been used. A discussion of each type of data follows, to justify the need to utilise both of them.

##### **1. Quantitative data**

This type of information was gained through the utilisation of the closed section of the interview schedules for both student teachers and lecturers of the subject of Afrikaans as a foreign language in the Primary Teachers' Diploma section of the two colleges of education. It was important to utilise this technique in order to compare data as provided by each student.

##### **2. Qualitative data**

The open-ended section of the student teachers and the lecturers' interview schedules tended to provide the researcher with responses in the form of descriptions in question, and personal opinions were also provided by the respondents. Qualitative data was also collected during observations and in the last two interview schedules, that is, the interview schedules for heads of departments of Afrikaans and those for the rectors and senior heads of departments. The open-ended section of the interview schedules helped the researcher to approach this study with unbiased attitudes and perceptions which might otherwise have influenced her to predetermine some information. Data obtained through the qualitative research was very useful, as will be shown during the analysis stage of this research. It was useful in the sense that more information and insights became available to the researcher as a result of responses furnished by the

interviewees on various aspects. The insight gained in turn created new and unforeseen perceptions which contributed toward analysis and new recommendations at the end of this study.

#### **4.1.3 Validity**

The research instruments for this study were particularly designed for the purpose of collecting information relevant to the study. Because they were particularly designed with the aim of collecting data for this study, their suitability was greater than that of a standardised instrument which is meant to cater for many related study projects.

The items in the interview schedules were analysed, tried out and refined by an expert, who is a professor teaching research methodology. He tried them out with senior students in his class. These instruments were found to be eliciting the type of data which was required by the researcher for this study project.

In the qualitative section of this research, validity of information is also confirmed when respondents give similar information on a particular issue under discussion.

#### **4.1.4 Reliability**

According to Mahlangu (1987:84) reliability means that the questionnaire is consistent, and he observes that 'the test-retest' method is the only feasible approach to establish reliability. In this study the interview schedule of student teachers was administered twice within a month and results were found to be consistent.

#### **4.1.5 Sampling**

Stratified sampling has been implemented to include the following: rectors / senior heads of department, heads of the Afrikaans departments, lecturers in the subject of Afrikaans and student teachers in the department for each of the colleges. Samples utilised can be expressed in numbers as follows; one rector, one senior head of

department, nine (all) lecturers and eighteen student teachers. The number of student teachers has to accommodate the methodology to be utilised as *deep* interviewing was regarded as important for the study. Deep interviewing will of necessity include structured and unstructured interviews in order to understand fully the matter under discussion. The issue of a small sample is condoned by Borg and Gall (1983: 261) as follows: '...in many educational research projects, small samples are more appropriate than large samples...This is often true in studies in which *in depth* interviews, projective matters ...are employed'.

The rationale for selecting the samples was as follows:

1. rectors and senior heads of departments were chosen because of their involvement in the designing of policies for managing the institution;
2. heads of the department of Afrikaans were selected because they are involved in designing policies to be executed in the department. They are also expected to translate their knowledge of the subject into tangible skills and attitudes which can be acquired by the lecturers and students;
3. lecturers were chosen for the reason that they are directly involved in equipping student teachers with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in the teaching of the subject Afrikaans;
4. student teachers were selected because they are the people currently being trained to teach the future learners of the subject, and the manner in which they will acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in the teaching of the subject will definitely affect its future learning by the Africans in their schools.

#### **4.1.6 Method of analysis**

In this study both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis are employed. qualitative method of analysis is used in the observation and open-ended sections of the interview schedules. Answers given in these sections are always discussed with the aim of gaining insights into various factors and at times they are compared to the assumptions derived specifically from the literature survey conducted for this study.

In the close-ended section of the interview schedules, percentages are used whilst making inferences. In calculating these percentages non-responses are always subtracted from the given sample - consequently this exercise causes the samples to differ from question to question. This approach of excluding non-responses from the sample when calculating percentages is supported by Bailey (1982:393) as follows: '...it is not a meaningful substantive category of the variable being analysed, but is more or less a residual error category'. Bailey (1982:151) further supported this idea of the sample which varies from question to question as follows: '...remember that completed sample size vary from question to question...'

#### **4.1.7 Problems encountered during the course of this study**

It was not always possible to follow the researcher's prepared itinerary and programme, owing to interruptions which manifested themselves in the form of class boycotts on the student teachers' side and various religious services and unforeseen meetings on the part of the lecturers. Finance also became a problem when the researcher had to return to the college several times, owing to unkept appointments by the interviewees.

#### **4.1.8 Data obtained from the interview schedule for the heads of departments as per Appendix C**

The following information was accumulated through interviews with heads of departments:

##### *Question 1*

How does the management of the college support you in the admission of student teachers in your department?

**CA:**

- there is no support whatsoever from the management.

**CB:**

- admissions are done through prescribed packages from which student teachers

choose their teaching subjects

- every package of prescribed streams has a quota of student teachers to be admitted which cannot be overstepped without consultation with the admission committee and the management

#### *Question 2*

Do you participate when Afrikaans reading material is acquired in the library?

- heads of departments in both colleges indicated that they are not involved when books for the library are acquired

#### *Question 3*

What constraints do you experience in the running of your department?

**CA:**

- the budget allocated to the department of Afrikaans is too low to be functional in the acquisition of necessities of the department
- the library staff when requisitioning reading materials such as newspapers, do not cater for the Afrikaans language.

**CB:** none

#### *Question 4*

Are you satisfied with the enrolment in your department?

**CA:** - not satisfied

Reasons:- the department had not admitted a single student in the subjects of Afrikaans academic and special didactics in the last three years (1997- 1999)

**CB:** - not completely satisfied

Reasons: numbers of students admitted are becoming less by the day

#### *Question 5*

Do you have a policy by means of which you run your department?

**CA:** - no

**CB:** - yes

evidence of the policy's existence: The written policy exist as shown to the researcher and it is strictly adhered to by the members of the department

#### *Question 6*

How did the low enrolment in the department come about?

**CA:** - student teachers are discouraged from taking the subject of Afrikaans during the admission period by members of the admission committee

**CB:** - it seems that the colleges are going through a rough patch of low enrolment owing to the unemployment which the student teachers are experiencing after completing the course

#### *Question 7*

How do you support your members in the department?

**CA:** - support not necessary

**CB:** - in-service training of the teachers in the new developments in the subject is done by the head of department on her own initiative  
- guide on Curriculum 2005 has been translated from English to Afrikaans by the head of department to make the understanding of its contents easier for the members of the department

#### *Question 8*

Which factors of your subject concern you most?

**CA:** - negative attitudes of Africans towards the Afrikaans language tend to make the teaching of the subject difficult

**CB:** - the reduction of the class periods from thirteen in the 1990 structure to seven in the 1997 structure without the corresponding change in the load of work

#### **4.1.9 Data obtained through interviews with lecturers**

#### 4.1.9.1 Data gained through unstructured interviews

The following data was gathered through unstructured interviews with lecturers.

##### CA:

1. negative attitudes towards the subject of Afrikaans are apparent in the teaching and learning of the subject;
2. other languages spoken in the college diminish the chances of the Afrikaans language being utilised as a target language;
3. student teachers are eager to learn Afrikaans and its culture for communication purposes and not *to teach it as a subject in their careers*;
4. most people in the African community would prefer not to learn Afrikaans;
5. the issue of making Afrikaans methodology compulsory even to all the student teachers doing other language methodologies exacerbates the negative attitudes of the student community towards the language and subject;
6. lecturers in one institution belong to one department only, whereas in another college they are also attached to different departments within their fields of specialisation;
7. availability of reading materials in the form of newspapers is poor, as colleges are situated in the rural areas where the community is not eager to read in the target language in question.

##### CB:

1. the department of Afrikaans has the policy of making the language of Afrikaans functional throughout the college; consequently whoever wishes to communicate about any matter with them, should use or try to utilise the target language in question;
2. students wishing to do certain courses are compelled to do Afrikaans if it happens to be part of the stream prescribed by the college;
3. the teaching of Afrikaans special didactics as per the 1990 structure does not pose problems, as the two groups (Afrikaans and the other language groups) have been separated;

4. reading of Afrikaans materials is the norm as all lecturers are Afrikaans first language speakers.

#### 4.1.9.2 Data gained through structured interviews as per Annexure B

##### *Question 1*

Shingwedzi and Makhado

##### *Question 2*

Qualifications of lecturers:

Degree : 0%

Degree plus honours: 11.1%

Degree plus teaching diploma: 77.7%

Masters plus teaching diploma: 11.1%

##### *Question 3*

- at **CB** (100%) all lecturers have done Afrikaans as first language
- at **CA** all (100%) lecturers have done Afrikaans as foreign language

##### *Question 4*

Language knowledge of the Afrikaans speaking lecturers:

- English: 100%
- Afrikaans: 100%
- French: 20%

##### *Question 5*

Language knowledge of the Afrikaans foreign language speaking lecturers:

- English: 100%      Tshivenda: 100%
- Afrikaans :100%      Sepedi: 50%
- Xitsonga :75%

##### *Question 6*

- 100% of the lecturers from both colleges regard the student teachers' knowledge of Afrikaans as average

### Question 7

Strategies used by lecturers for enriching the student teachers' language environment

- 100% of lecturers claim to create communication situations during breaks
- 20% and 25% from **CB** and **CA** respectively also use magazines

### Questions 8

Policy of admitting student teachers':

**CB**: utilises the subject quota system and prescribed streams designed by the college

**CA** : utilises an admission committee

### Question 9

Reading habits of the Afrikaans literature:

- lecturers (100%) indicated that they like reading the Afrikaans literature

Types of literature utilised by the lecturers:

- daily newspapers: 100%
- magazines: 20% from **CB** and 25% from **CA** respectively
- novels: 20% and 25% from **CB** and **CA** respectively
- Drama: 0%
- poetry: 20% from **CB**

### Question 10

Responses:

- reasons for reading newspapers:
- they are informative
- 'because it is my habit'
- reasons for reading magazines:
- they are informative

### Question 11

not utilised by respondents

*Question 12*

Subject taught by members of the Afrikaans Department:

**CA:** Afrikaans academic: 80%                      **CB:** Afrikaans academic: 75%  
Afrikaans special didactics: 20%                      Afrikaans special didactics: 25%

Subjects taught in other departments by members of the Department of Afrikaans:

**CA:** Sepedi: 25%    **CB:** none  
Mathematics: 25%  
Physical Science: 25%

*Question 13*

Frustrations experienced in the teaching of the subject:

**CA:**

- when student teachers are discouraged from taking the subject by members of the admission committee

**CB:**

- when student teachers are not eager to work hard
- when the Provincial Department Education unilaterally decided to cut the number of periods from thirteen to seven in the 1997 structure but with the workload remaining the same
- when classes are interrupted by student teachers' class boycotts
- when classes are cancelled for social functions by the management

*Question 14*

Rewarding experiences:

**CA:**

- when a student teacher shows positive attitudes towards the subject

**CB:**

- when a weak student teacher improves in his /her performance

### *Question 15*

Lecturers (100%) in both colleges indicated that the subject Afrikaans should remain in the curriculum

Reasons for the responses:

- Afrikaans is important for work situations and study in the technical fields; verbatim response: ('...competent entrepreneurs now, are Afrikaans speaking and most of them did their courses in Afrikaans, and they hardly have any terminology in English to explain to them what they should be doing in their practical work')
- Afrikaans will be needed by student teachers in future; ('...most employees in Louis Trichardt are Afrikaners and not everybody will find employment in teaching')

#### **4.1.10 Data supplied by rectors or senior Heads of Departments as per Annexure D**

### *Question 1*

Yes, there is a policy for admission in different departments at both colleges.

**CA:**

- students are helped by the admission committee in their choice of departments in which to register .

**CB:**

- students follow the prescribed streams prescribed by the college in advance.

### *Question 2*

How student teachers are helped with their choice of subjects:

**CA:**

- student teachers are not given guidelines in the choice of subjects as such but they can be guided by the admission committee.

**CB:**

- student teachers are provided with guidelines to select their choice of teaching subjects.

### *Question 3*

Student teachers admissions:

**CA:**

- student teachers are admitted to the college if they are in possession of the matric or school leaving certificate
- the admission committee is in charge of admissions of new student teachers to the college
- student teachers are allowed to choose their own teaching subjects.

**CB:**

- matriculants and school leavers are admitted to the college on merit
- the college utilises admission committees and prescribed streams in the prospectus to determine student teachers' teaching subjects
- student teachers are not allowed to choose subjects outside the prescribed streams.

### *Question 4*

Catering for the interests of different departments:

**CA:**

- each department caters for its own interests
- no strategic plans are in place to help the departments

**CB:** - the interests of the departments are catered for in the different committees through the inclusion of departmental members in all the committees in the institution

### *Question 5*

How the rector/senior heads of department intend to encourage students to take Afrikaans as a subject:

**CA:**

- no strategic plan by the management is in place to help the department of

Afrikaans to recruit students to register for the subject

- student teachers at the college are supposed to choose their desired subjects without any restrictions whatsoever, provided there is no clash in the time-table
- at present there have been no admissions in the department for the last two years.

**CB:**

- streams for registration are prescribed by the college as packages and this balances the intake of each department
- the rectorate do not foresee a stage when there would be no admissions in the department of Afrikaans.

The above data is essential in teaching the subject of Afrikaans in the colleges of education. The student teacher interview schedule will be analysed in full in order to gain an understanding of the matters in question. Responses from other interview schedules will be used if the need exists to explain some of the events in question, otherwise they will be translated into deductions without any further analysis.

#### **4.2 ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON LITERATURE RESEARCH**

In this chapter the current status of the teaching and learning of the subject of Afrikaans foreign language in colleges of education in the Northern Province will be identified and analysed in the light of assumptions based on the literature survey carried out in chapters two and three of this study. It is thus important at this stage to remind ourselves of the assumptions which have been made in connection with the teaching of the subject as follows:

1. successful foreign language teaching and learning is enhanced if its learners are given opportunities to be exposed to the use of the target language in question;
2. knowledge of the target language and its culture by the teacher of second/foreign language is a prerequisite for the successful execution of his/her duties;

3. target language learners should have a reason, or a perceived future need for the linguistic skill which will serve as their motivation, for learning the language in question:
4. teachers of the target language should know and utilise various strategies for improving the language acquisition of their learners when teaching the subject;
5. attitudes of the target language learners should be positive towards the language in question if its learning is to be successful;
6. teachers of the target language should understand the role and effect of language planning and language policy on the attitudes of the learners toward the subject and language in question.

In this section of the study student teachers are regarded as both *learners* at the college and *teachers* because of their present position and their future position, which will be actualised by the end of 1999 when (if) they are appointed as teachers.

#### 4.3 COLLEGES, STUDENT TEACHERS', AND LECTURERS' CODES

It is necessary to use codes for this study for the sake of concealing the true identities of the institutions and respondents to this study. These codes will promote the validity of this study as respondents will feel free to discuss issues without fear of being identified and being victimised at some stage of their career. The researcher also assured them of this anonymity.

There are only two colleges, that is Shingwedzi and Makhado, that offer the Primary Teacher's Diploma courses which henceforth will be described as the PTD. The two colleges will be codenamed CA and CB, but it is the prerogative of the researcher to identify which is which. Student teachers will be codenamed CA1, CA2... or CB1 or CB2... as per the codenames of the college to which they are attached. Lecturers will also be codenamed CBL1, CBL2... or CAL1 or CAL2... also according to the colleges to which they are attached. Having established the codes which will be used in this study, let us now investigate how students taking Afrikaans as a subject are admitted to these two institutions.

#### 4.4 THE ENROLMENT AND ADMISSION OF STUDENT TEACHERS AND THEIR CHOICE OF SUBJECTS

The two colleges, despite the fact that they admit student teachers for the same diploma, differ considerably in the way they admit their students. The enrolment numbers in these colleges are different, as will be explained in 4.4.1. It should be mentioned that the Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD) course currently has two streams: there is a 1990 structure which is being phased out this year, and a 1997 structure which is being introduced, the particular student teachers of which are presently doing their third year of study. A brief discussion of the enrolment figures for different languages in the two colleges will deepen our understanding of factors involved in the attitudes of student teachers towards all languages in general and Afrikaans in particular.

##### 4.4.1 Language enrolment at CA

Table 1 below shows student enrolment at college CA over a period of four years, that is from 1996 to 1999.

**Table 1**  
**Language teachers' enrolment at CA college of education**

Years	English		Afrikaans		Xitsonga		Tshivenda		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1996	219	61.9	49	13.8	87	24.5	0	0	355	100
1997	131	37.4	46	13.1	173	49.4	0	0	350	100
1998	234	45.08	127	24.5	147	28.3	11	2.1	519	100
1999	78	52	0	0	70	46.7	2	1.3	150	100

\*These percentages do not add up to the total and the total percentage because a number of subjects have not been included and also because a student teacher may take more than one course.

From the above table it is clear that in the years under discussion, most students opted to take English as their teaching subject. This is indicated by the percentages of

student teachers who took the subject as follows: 61.9 percent in 1996; 37.4 in 1997; 45.1 in 1998 and 52 in 1999. In looking at the overall picture of language enrolment in this institution, it is clear that English is the most popular language subject. This picture only changed in 1997 when Xitsonga registered more student teachers than English as a teaching subject. The next language subject in the order of popularity is Xitsonga during the four years under discussion. This is obvious as the institution was meant for the Xitsonga ethnic group during the *apartheid* era and all other groups were catered for in their different areas.

The enrolment percentages for the subject Afrikaans language in the past four years at CA were as follows: 13.8 in 1996; 13.1 in 1997; 24.5 in 1998 and 0 in 1999. From the above percentages it is clear that interest in doing Afrikaans as a subject amongst the student teachers has dwindled to nil. However there is a discrepancy between the figure given by the management and the one furnished by the lecturers. The lecturers indicated during the interviews that nobody was admitted in 1997 and 1998 in the department and had that been the case the numbers could definitely not have risen to 127 in 1998. The researcher is forced to give an explanation in *expost facto* and say that the management provided this ridiculous figure because it was trying to avoid the rationalisation of the institution at the time.

The next section deals with the enrolment at CB.

#### **4.4.2 Language enrolment at CB**

Table 2 below will show the student enrolment in languages in the last four years at CB.

**Table 2**  
**Language teachers' enrolment at CB**

Years	English		Afrikaans		Xitsonga		Tshivenda		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1996	73	47.1	11	7.1	0	0	75	45.8	155	100
1997	54	76.1	5	7.0	0	0	12	16.9	71	100
1998	47	75.8	6	9.7	0	0	9	14.5	62	100
1999	10	66.7	5	33.3	0	0	0	0	15	100

\*These percentages do not add up to the total and the total percentage because a number of subjects have not been included and also because one student teacher may take more than one course.

As can be deduced from the above table English has been the most popular subject in the last four years with the following percentages in different years as follows: 47.1 in 1996; 76.1 in 1997; 75.8 in 1997 and 66.7 in 1999. The next most popular subject is Tshivenda as the college was meant for the Tshivenda speaking people during the *apartheid* era. The enrolment percentages for the subject Tshivenda are as follows: 45.8 in 1996; 16.9 in 1997; 14.5 in 1998 and 0% in 1999. It is clear from the above percentages that the language Tshivenda in this institution is not popular when compared to that of English; its future seems to be at stake. However what is more important for this study is the welfare of the subject of Afrikaans which will be to be discussed in the next paragraph.

The subject of Afrikaans enrolled the following percentages of student teachers in the last four years under discussion: 7.1 in 1996; 7.0 in 1997; 9.7 in 1998 and 33% in 1999. From the above percentages it is clear that of the three languages which are done at CB, Afrikaans' popularity as a subject is improving as illustrated in table 1.

At CA (see table1) , Afrikaans as a teaching subject comes third in the order of popularity in the table of language enrolment in this institution. The Afrikaans percentages as per table 1 are as follows: 13.8 in 1996; 13.1 in 1997; 24.5 in 1998; and 0 percent in 1999. Afrikaans' popularity is diminishing every year, 'except for the year 1998'. Enrolment figure for the subject Afrikaans in the year 1998 is dubious as was

illustrated in section 4.4.1; where lecturers alleged that not a single student has been admitted in the subject for the last two years and yet the administration furnished the enrolment figure of 127. This discrepancy is worth noting as it came during the time when the second round of the rationalisation process was in progress. The last language in the order of priority is Tshivenda, which was introduced in the last two years, with percentages of 2.11 and 1.3.

With the language enrolment for the past four years in mind, it is relevant to examine the admission process as practised in the two institutions. Discussion on the admission issue will be clearer if the two institutions are considered separately.

#### **4.4.3 The admission of students to college CA**

At this college the arrangement of subjects is flexible and as such students are free to plan and compile their own curricula. There are no streams to be followed, and all the languages except English are gathered together in the time-table at the same time. The implication of this step is that Tshivenda, Afrikaans and Xitsonga are by implication not to be taken simultaneously as there will be clashes in the internal classes, tests and examinations. It appears that there are also some hiccups in the admission process itself where students are allegedly discouraged by members of the curriculum committee from taking Afrikaans as a subject. Various statements made by members of the Afrikaans Department, who unfortunately are not represented on this committee, indicated that such unprofessional conduct prevails in this institution. Examples of such statements are (1) '... we see no point in your registering for a subject like Afrikaans because it's a dying horse and such things...' (CAL4). (2) '... when they (student teachers) come to register some other people in the admission committee influence them...' (CAL2). (3) '... some of the people who are in the admission committee are from the members of the academic staff and they, instead of guiding them, encourage them to register for their own subjects).

From the above statements by lecturers in the Afrikaans Department it is clear that all is not well with the admission of students to this department at CA. An interview with

the Senior Head of Department did not bear much fruit either as he declared that student teachers are simply not willing to take Afrikaans as a subject. When asked about the bunching of all African languages in the time-table at the same time, the other explanation given was that there was a lack of manpower in the College<sup>1</sup>.

With these in mind, it is not surprising that the number of students enrolling for Afrikaans as a subject at CA is dwindling to nil. The group which is taking Course III this year is the last class, as nobody registered for the subject in the last three, that is in 1997, 1998 and 1999. What is even more surprising is that there are no strategic plans in place to correct the situation. The management, curriculum committee and the department itself seem to be complacent about the situation - with the department blaming the management and the curriculum committee for this unfortunate situation.

From discussions in this paragraph it seems that the negative attitudes of African learners and lecturers at colleges towards the subject of Afrikaans as a foreign language comprise the main contributory factor towards poor enrolment in the subject. It is the researcher's personal opinion that this might be the influence of language planning and language policy as developed during the *apartheid* era (see sections 2.2).

An investigation of the admission of students to CB will indicate a different way of managing the situation (as described in the next section).

#### **4.4.4 Admission of Afrikaans student teachers to college CB**

Whereas the institution discussed in section 4.4.3 does not believe in channelling students according to streams, CB stipulates majors which are to be combined in the prospectus. Curriculum planning is done here by the college and not by the curriculum committee or student teachers themselves. Evidently the students have to consult the curriculum committee when they encounter problems in choosing a desired stream. Problems always come into being only when the prescribed streams clash with student

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication with the senior head of Departments at CA

interests, a situation which then requires counselling on the part of the college. It is interesting to note that members of the Afrikaans department are also included in the admissions committee. This committee is all inclusive as members of all departments are to participate in this admissions process. Departments are given quotas for admission which they cannot violate at will. As discussed with the Rector of this college, a situation is not foreseen where the Afrikaans department will have to struggle to enrol students, as is the case at CA.

The management in this institution is managing the crisis of the negative attitudes of African learners towards the subject and the language of Afrikaans by means of democratic admission committees and the curriculum packages prescribed by the college. On admission to the institution the emphasis is on the prescribed package rather than on the subject as such. In this instance the management acted proactively in order to solve the issue of admission to the subject of Afrikaans at this institution.

Having discussed the enrolment of students at both institutions one can now identify various subjects taken by students at colleges.

#### **4.4.5 Choice of teaching subjects at CA**

In this institution, student teachers who take Afrikaans as a teaching subject more often than not also have English as a teaching subject. At College A where the 1990 structure is in operation as there is no enrolment for the 1997 structure, other subjects which are taken as majors include Biblical Studies and Biology as popular combinations which supplement English and Afrikaans. Only a few students take Physical Science, Geography, Mathematics, and Xitsonga as additional majors in their diploma.

Of particular interest in the performance of students in previous years is the fact that even if numbers were dropping in the 1990 structure which was still used in this college, the Afrikaans results were good. They still register an annual pass rate of 80 percent plus as from 1994. The problems started with the 1997 structure where streams were abolished and students were expected to plan their own curriculum. It is at this stage

that a tremendous drop in the enrolment of Afrikaans student teachers was experienced by the Department. At this stage only students who have enrolled for *Afrikaans communication* are enrolled: evidently this course cannot be regarded as a major as it is meant to equip them with communication skills only. Lecturers in Afrikaans do express their views that students are at times so good in the language that lecturers feel that they should have opted for Afrikaans as a teaching subject. For a number of personal reasons they are just interested in knowing more about the culture and the language as such.

#### **4.4.6 Teaching major subjects at institution CB**

The 1990 structure required student teachers to do four major teaching subjects. Streams were prescribed by the Department of Education and Training. In this structure, as in CA, most of the students who took Afrikaans as a teaching major, also took English as a second major. The other two popular subjects were Biblical Studies and Biology as they were also popular in the secondary schools. Fewer students opted for Physical Science, Mathematics and Tshivenda/Xitsonga in their choice of courses. This was also a reflection of the streams in the respective schools.

CB college also admitted students under the 1997 structure, which prescribed two teaching majors instead of four as required in the 1990 structure. What was remarkable in the new structure was that the subject combination of English and Afrikaans was still popular with student teachers despite the existence of other subject combinations. In attempting to uncover reasons why students teachers chose the teaching subject they were majoring in, the following question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A was asked: 'Mark the reason why you chose the above subjects as mentioned in item 4 above'. Reasons given by student teachers are discussed in full in the next sections.

#### **4.4.7 The perspective of student teachers on their choice of subjects**

Because the choice of subjects was determined by the calendar of the institution at

college CB and by student teachers themselves at CA, it was felt by the researcher that the student perspective on the issue should be understood. A question in the student teachers' interview schedule with a closed option and an open-ended item will be analysed as per the next table three as follows:

**Table 3**

**'Mark reasons why you chose the above subjects as mentioned in item 4 above'.**

College	Arrangement of subjects prescribed by the college		You had no other available subject		They were your best subjects		You got the best symbol in standard ten		Any other		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
CA	1	10	0	0	7	70	1	10	0	0	10	100
CB	1	12.5	0	0	3	37.5	2	25	2	25	8	100

#### **4.4.7.1 Arrangement of subjects prescribed by the college**

As shown in Table 3, respondents were given four options to choose from. According to student teachers at colleges A and B, 10 and 12.5 percent respectively feel that the arrangement of subjects was carried out by the college. For respondents from CB this is understandable as streams are also shown in their prospectus. The same explanation could be valid for CA despite the fact that at the moment, their prospectus does not show streams (see section 4.5). However, it should be borne in mind that the respondents answering here belong to the old 1990 structure, which prescribed subjects for candidates.

#### **4.4.7.2 You had no other available subject**

Under this category, students expressed their feelings by indicating that when they chose their teaching majors, they were not influenced by the availability and non-availability of subjects to choose from. In other words, the respondents from both

institutions did not consider the availability or non-availability of subjects as an option at all, hence a percentage of nil percent was registered. The next option to be considered was whether these subjects were the best subjects as far as potentiality for that particular student teacher is concerned

#### **4.4.7.3 They were your best subjects**

In this category, respondents were called upon to evaluate their own potential as far as their performance in those teaching subjects was concerned. They were to express their feelings of ease and comfort in the daily learning of those chosen courses. 70% of respondents from college CA indicated that those subjects which they chose as their teaching majors are the ones which they understand and perform best in their learning process, a situation which will soon be transformed into their actual teaching career. The corresponding percentage of this category for CB is 37.5 percent. This is an understandable response from the student teachers at CB as their choice is not completely dependent on themselves, owing to streams being prescribed by the college. A situation may arise where one's best subjects may be found to fall under different streams, which may on its own create a feeling of unease in the learning process. This trail of thought will be pursued in the next paragraph.

#### **4.4.7.4 You got the best symbol in standard ten**

Ideally it would be best if all the respondents were to take as teaching subjects only those subjects in which they performed best in matric. As already explained, there are other factors which play a role in the process, therefore this is not always the situation. This state of affairs is emphasized by the percentages of respondents who confirmed that their choice of subjects was influenced by or correlates with their standard ten evaluation results as expressed by the symbols obtained. Only 10 percent from CA and 25 percent from CB were of the opinion that their subjects were chosen according to their potential. If the above discussion can be taken as correct, then the implication of the percentages can also be translated to mean that most respondents who enrolled for the Primary Teachers Diploma might not have been comfortable with their choice

of teaching subjects. This interpretation arises from the fact that only a small percentage of respondents from both colleges indicated that their choice of teaching subjects was influenced by the best symbols which they obtained in the standard ten examinations. Apart from the four closed questions, students were also allowed to provide other factors which influenced them under 'any other' category.

#### **4.4.7.5 Other factors taken into consideration by respondents in choosing teaching subjects**

Respondents provided varying factors as this was an open-ended section of the interview. 10% of the respondents from the CA institution felt that they had no control over the situation as '... we were not allowed to choose our own subjects' (CA1). The implication of this statement is that, despite the fact that subjects were prescribed by the college, respondents attempted to make their own choice but without success. It is clear that some of the subjects which are found in the curriculum might be unpopular to students. Subjects may be considered to be unfavourable for various reasons such as lack of potential, or a negative perception of the course, as well as many other factors not indicated here.

The next respondent from CB under the 'any other' category cited the fact that he chose his subjects, which are English and Afrikaans, because '... by doing these subjects I will communicate with Afrikaans and English speakers and socialize'. (CB3). This statement illuminates the reasons why a large contingent of students prefers to take both English and Afrikaans as their teaching subjects. Apparently they realise that taking two languages will be valuable for their social needs in future. This is further confirmed by CB6 in his statement: '... I want to be bilingual (English and Afrikaans) and use them in the job-situation...' It is clear therefore that a knowledge of English and Afrikaans is preferred to a knowledge of other South African languages because of their perceived utility in the respondents' projected future needs in employment situations. This perception disadvantages other languages which evidently do not offer much as far as social, economic and other utilities in the respondents' daily living are concerned.

In the light of the discussion in section 4.4, various reasons for choosing teaching subjects in the two colleges of education were described and advanced by respondents. Reasons ranged from personal, to prescription by the institutions by means of the prospectus. In this instance, college CA experienced an anomaly when student teachers did not apply for admission in the department of Afrikaans. However, at CB, prescribed curriculum packages apparently safeguarded the attainment of quotas set by the college. From this discussion one may conclude that where student teachers are given a free hand to compile their own lists of subjects for study, they tend to choose only those subjects they like or have positive attitudes towards, as illustrated by the admissions to the subject Afrikaans at CA. At CB, where prescribed curriculum packages are in place, any subject in a package will at least realise its minimum projected number as is the case at present. The fact that the management at CB acted proactively to curb problems of uneven admissions to the subjects also illustrates that they were conscious of the negative and positive attitudes of the student teachers towards some of the subjects. It can therefore be deduced that in the case of this study student teachers' attitudes towards the subject of Afrikaans foreign language will remain unknown at CB since the course forms part of a prescribed package composed of other subjects as well.

Having considered the two institutions, one should now view the language environment of those student teachers who are going to be Afrikaans teachers.

#### **4.5 LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT**

For the sake of this study it is important to determine the language environments from which students who majored in Afrikaans came. This step is essential as it is important at all times to determine the type of knowledge in the target language which the learner brings to the classroom. This type of exercise is necessary as it influences planning and teaching in the foreign language classroom. The degree of pre-knowledge of the target language is to be determined before a teacher starts with its teaching in order to determine a lesson's entry point (see section 3.2.1). Thus the interviewees were requested to answer a question which would furnish that information in section 4.5.1.

#### 4.5.1 'Mark the language or languages spoken at your home'

Student teachers were requested to answer the following question as per annexure A: 'Mark the language or languages spoken at your home'.

The following table shows the different languages which are spoken at the respective respondents' homes. In other words these are the languages with which student teachers taking the subject Afrikaans came to school, be it speaking or listening, as the orthographic knowledge is mostly gained from the classroom. Another reason for this exercise is to determine whether respondents learned any Afrikaans at home before entering school.

**Table 4**  
**Language or languages spoken at home**

College	English	Afrikaans	Tshivenda	Sepedi	Xitsonga	Total
<b>CA</b> no.	0	0	2	2	6	no. 10
%	0	0	20	20	60	% 100
<b>CB</b> no.	4	1	7	2	3	no. 8
%	50	12.5	87.5	25	37.5	% 100

##### 4.5.1.1 The home-language environment of Afrikaans student teachers from CA

When looking at the language environment table of Afrikaans students at CA as per Table 4 it is clear that different African languages are their first languages. This is illustrated by the 60 percent who speak Xitsonga, the 20 percent who speak Sepedi and the remaining 20 percent who are Tshivenda speaking. None of these student teachers speak Afrikaans or English at home. Thus for respondents at CA, English and Afrikaans languages are for all intents and purposes foreign languages. Only when we determine the medium of instruction at school (see section 3.2.1 of chapter 3, according to Kilfoil and van der Walt) do we distinguish between them as second and foreign languages. The distinction made by the above authors is not always clear in practice. The language environment at CA is characterised by the fact that all

respondents utilise only one language at home - a factor which indicates that they come from rural areas.

#### 4.5.1.2 Home language of respondents from the CB college of education

From the distribution of home languages in Table 4, it is clear that there are respondents who speak more than one language at college CB. The following facts are however worth noting: There are relatively more respondents who learnt Tshivenda at home, that is 87.5 percent. More than 50 percent of the respondents employed the English language use in their respective homes, followed by 37.5 percent and 25 percent of Xitsonga and Sepedi respondents respectively. It is also important to note that only one respondent, i.e. 12.5 percent, learnt Afrikaans at his home. No other languages besides the ones mentioned in the interview schedules are used by respondents at their homes as the 'any other' section of the interview schedule was not utilised by the respondents in either institution.

The discussions in the above sections illustrate clearly that student teachers in the two institutions came to school with no knowledge of the Afrikaans language at all. The one student who learnt it at home represents an anomaly in this instance. From this solitary instance it should be mentioned that one can even venture to say that attitudes towards the learning of the target language may depend on the way it is introduced to them by teachers in charge of the subject. Thus the task of the teachers in the subject should have concentrated on exposing the learners to the use of the target language if positive attitudes towards it were to be cultivated. This process should have continued throughout their school career if their knowledge of the language was to be increased to a stage where they could be entrusted with its teaching in the primary schools. A special task which should have been taken into account right from the start of inculcating the subject of Afrikaans, is to teach both the Afrikaans language and its culture so that learners would have confidence in utilising it appropriately in different situations.

It is now necessary to describe the linguistic flexibility which respondents exercise

during various breaks at their institutions.

#### **4.5.2 Distribution of languages which are used during breaks at the colleges**

It was appropriate for this study to identify those languages which are generally used by student teachers in general for communication purposes. The aim of this exercise is to determine whether the student population in general, and the Afrikaans student teachers in particular also utilise Afrikaans in their leisure times. In section 3.6.1.1 the literature survey suggests that a language flourishes best in a language rich environment. It is therefore important to determine whether Afrikaans as a language has a chance of survival in these institutions. A second aim is to determine whether student teachers do communicate in Afrikaans, as this is one of the prerequisites of knowing a language. The need to communicate in a given language in order to learn to know it is also important (see section 3.6.2).

The term 'break' as used in this paragraph refers to all the times outside the formal classroom situations when students are on their own. Needless to say, during these times there is no formal instruction or supervision by the lecturers or any educationist in whatever capacity.

##### **4.5.2.1 Language usage during breaks at CA college of education**

This is a college with boarding facilities, hence there are boarders as well as day student teachers on the same campus. These students have different activities during their short and lunch breaks. Boarders utilise the dining hall facilities during lunch whereas day scholars buy their lunch boxes. The importance of these encounters is that while mixing with them informally it was found that the students usually communicate with the strange person, their researcher in this instance, in English. Otherwise different African languages are used. Those students who happen to be communicating with officials during breaks, also use either English or the major language of the area, which is Xitsonga. Student teachers at this institution usually communicate in Xitsonga if they communicate with service workers and the

administrative personnel. English is mainly used when communicating with the academic staff members. Afrikaans during breaks is rarely heard during these times, as one lecturer (CAL4) correctly pointed out when he said: '... whenever jokes are to be cracked by colleagues and students they are done in an attempt to express oneself in Afrikaans'. This respondent who is an Afrikaans lecturer, is even more infuriated when other members of staff do this type of thing in front of the students as he feels that this 'show' influences students negatively. To emphasize the effect of mocking the Afrikaans language in that way he goes further to express himself as follows: '... you start to read that the attitudes are not correct. You find that even when students are around, such jokes are still continuing - so you can see the type of message being sent to students' (CAL4). In terms of the general situation in which the Afrikaans language is mostly used in this college, Afrikaans student teachers were called upon to identify the languages which they use during these breaks for communication purposes.

It was found during these interviews that in answering the question from the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A concerning 'Which languages are used during breaks at your college?' English and Xitsonga are used by 80 and 50 percent respectively at CA college. The situation, as already explained in the previous section, is due to the fact that English seems to be the language which is mostly used by virtue of its being a *lingua franca* in South Africa. Xitsonga, which is second to English as indicated by 50 percent of respondents who claim to use it, is popular because the institution is situated in a predominantly Xitsonga speaking area. This factor is apparently the main reason for its popularity. The implication of the statement is that even the personnel at the college, whether labourers, administrators or academics, are predominantly Xitsonga speaking. These factors encourage the usage of Xitsonga.

The Afrikaans language, though not being as popular as all that, was used by 30 percent of the respondents. If what respondent CAL4 says in the previous paragraphs is to be taken seriously, then it is clear that it is spoken by a few in a disjointed and joking type of way. Tshivenda and Sepedi are spoken by twenty and ten percent respectively, a factor that shows that native speakers of these languages form a lesser

portion of the population at this institution.

Let us also consider Afrikaans lecturers' language flexibility. Members of the Afrikaans Department at this college also take part in the teaching of subjects in other departments. Apart from the Head of Department who teaches Afrikaans and its communication only, other members of staff teach subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Science and Sepedi. This type of work-load distribution seems to affect their loyalty to the subject adversely. They appear to encourage student teachers in class to speak to them in Afrikaans, but come breaks they switch to English usage when they talk to students whom they teach in the English language. They also converse in the various mother tongues when communicating with colleagues and students. It is clear from this that even the lecturers' usage of Afrikaans outside the classroom situation leaves much to be desired. Other South African languages do not merit discussion here as they have not been identified as means of communication in this particular institution.

Observation of language use by the community of CA during breaks at this institution indicates that English, Tshivenda and Xitsonga and Sepedi are the languages that are used during leisure times. Afrikaans is not used at this place; where it is utilised by the lecturers in the staff room, the emphasis is on making a mockery of the language. It is this researcher's personal opinion that, as indicated by CAL4, attitudes of student teachers and lecturers at this institution can be interpreted as negative towards the subject and language of Afrikaans. The knowledge of the subject cannot survive under the circumstances as the learning of a target language can only be enhanced through exposure to the language, and its culture, and by positive attitudes of learners and teachers towards the subject in question.

This study now considers the situation at CB.

#### **4.5.2.2 Languages used at the CB institution**

This is a day college without boarding facilities at the present moment. However, the

boarding facilities are at an advanced stage of development, which means it will soon add a boarding component to its facilities. It is situated in a mainly Tshivenda speaking area, which means that its labourers, administrative and academic personnel consist mostly of Tshivenda speakers or of those people who can either speak or understand the local language. When one walks around the campus during short and long breaks, the student teachers speak various languages with Tshivenda being the main one. In the staff room three languages seem to be popular during tea times for informal communication. The popular languages which are utilised are Tshivenda, English and Afrikaans. It is interesting to observe as follows: Tshivenda is spoken by all those who are capable of speaking it, irrespective of the ethnic group, whereas English is used as a unifying language for those who are not capable of using the local language. Apart from these two groups, there is a third group which speaks Afrikaans. This group consists mainly of the members of the Afrikaans department. They speak to everybody, be they students or colleagues, in Afrikaans; apparently it does not matter whether she/he is the only Afrikaans speaking member in the staffroom, she/he will still speak to others in Afrikaans. This is the case even if she/he is spoken to in English; she/he will insist on answering in Afrikaans, but it appears that most staff members and students are gaining the required confidence to use the language in public. The departmental policy is to use the language at all times in the offices and whenever staff communicate with the college population. This exercise is bearing positive fruit in the sense that one finds that even those who do not have sufficient Afrikaans linguistic skills, do try to use the language. Having discussed the linguistic patterns in the CB college in general, one may look more especially at the communication patterns amongst student teachers themselves and also amongst the college population as such.

Whilst walking amongst students it is clear that they use various African languages for communication purposes. The main languages used are Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi. English is also popular, though one does hear Afrikaans being spoken here and there. As already explained in the previous paragraph, all the student teachers who find themselves having anything to do with the Afrikaans department during any time of the day will have to speak Afrikaans to members of the Afrikaans department.

There are also students who, for their own interest, do communicate in Afrikaans. It does not matter how weak the linguistic skill might be, the fact is, they are putting their point across. When concentrating on the student teachers who enrolled for Afrikaans as a subject, the researcher used the interview schedule to determine their usual pattern of linguistic flexibility in other languages in general and that of Afrikaans in particular.

Though college CB is situated in a predominantly Tshivenda area as already discussed above, it does display multilingual as well as multicultural tendencies. Apparently the population is from different areas as will be illustrated by different responses and the corresponding percentages to the question in the Interview schedule as per annexure A: '... which languages are being used during breaks at your college'.

The implication of the question is that the language concerned here may be spoken by the students and colleagues or by academic colleagues among themselves as well as by the college campus population as such. Most students did indicate that Xitsonga and English are the most popular languages with 62.5 percent each. Those who also identified Afrikaans as a means of communication constitute 37.5 percent of the respondents. On further probing the reasons for the popularity enjoyed by Afrikaans at this college, it was again confirmed that if in anyway one has to interact with members of staff in the Afrikaans Department, the language is compulsory and they are thus helpful in building one's language capacity. In short, the language policy is both directly and indirectly responsible for this positive attitude towards the language. Next to English, Xitsonga and Afrikaans is Tshivenda with 25 percent of the respondents indicating its usage and 12.5 percent utilising Sepedi for communication purposes during leisure time. The percentages used here are not mutually exclusive, as a respondent is allowed to identify any number of languages which are used during breaks. The language distribution in CB is also useful in the illustration of the linguistic flexibility which respondents and their colleges command. Bearing these facts in the language environment of both colleges in mind, media of instruction will be given special attention in section 4.6

From the observation and the analysis of the use of languages during breaks at CB, the following became apparent: a number of home languages are used at these times. Though English is also popular in this institution, Afrikaans is also used by a sizeable number of the members of the CB community. Reasons for the popularity of Afrikaans in the institution as shown in this section are ascribed to the language policy in the institution as designed by the Department of Afrikaans. The same department also encourages the implementation of the policy through its commitment to speaking the language to all the members of the community. It can therefore be claimed that both student teachers and the community at large at the CB institution are enjoying a rare exposure to Afrikaans language usage, and that consequently this experience is also helping them to develop positive attitudes towards the language in question.

#### **4.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

It is argued in this study that a language is learned better in a contextualised form than by learning disjointed words and sentences which do not make a meaningful unit (see sections 3.5 and 3.7). When it is contextualised it also encourages its language learners in general, and second and foreign language learners in particular. Using a second or foreign language as a medium of instruction will not only promote thinking, but will also afford learners opportunities to express, classify, compare and synthesize issues which are found in the target language learning process, as Met (1991) and Brinton *et al.* (1989) observe. It is along this train of thought that this study attempted to uncover the thoughts of respondents about the medium of instruction in colleges of education in the Northern Province. Respondents were requested to identify the languages used as media of instruction at their institutions. Not only were they requested to identify the present languages which were used as teaching media; they were also required to state their preferences with reasons for their choices. The purpose of this exercise was to discover their true feelings and attitudes towards various languages instead of depending on history, based on what happened in 1976 as explained by the researcher and confirmed by other researchers in section 1.1.1. The fact that the medium of instruction debacle (and the Soweto riots) happened in 1976, requires the re-evaluation of the situation in the nineties. Most of the present student

teachers were not yet born at that stage and they are not aware of the circumstances which caused the problem. Chick's (1992) ideas, though speaking about the use of the first language as medium of instruction, can also be applied to Afrikaans as it was been used as the medium of instruction in the Northern Province prior to the 1976 student riots. He (1992:275) is of the opinion that

'... the use of mother tongue as medium ... had the advantage of allowing teachers and pupils to learn through a language in which they were competent. However, in the minds of the black community, such advantage was overshadowed by the realisation that educational motives were secondary to political ones'.

Though Chick was arguing for using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, his point applies to the objective of this study where it is argued by Orlek (1993) that the African community reject Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Even in this instance the Black community ignores the advantages of using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the learning process owing to political - instead of educational considerations (section 1.2.1). To take this point further, it should be considered that the present language policy does not say that Afrikaans is useless or that it is not a South African language; it does mention that it is one of the official languages. To add another point, there are areas that may need a knowledge of Afrikaans if one is to progress further in that direction. Cluver, as quoted in section 2.3.1, says that people will keep on speaking Afrikaans if it has instrumental value in real life situations, as in work places for example, such as factories and businesses which will use only Afrikaans as the official language on their premises. This is further confirmed by respondent CAL4 when he expressed himself on the need of the student teachers and learners to know Afrikaans in this and the future era: '... competent technical entrepreneurs now, are Afrikaans speaking and most of them did their courses in Afrikaans and they hardly have any terminology in English to explain to them what they should be doing in their practical work'. The above vision represents the need of the future generation to know Afrikaans and cannot be ignored as it expresses a reality. This idea is further confirmed in section 1.2.1 where bodies presently being formed by members from different races consider the value of the Afrikaans language as a scientific language. It is therefore clear that those who lack the appropriate linguistic

skills will not be able to participate in such bodies or access knowledge through the language in question, irrespective of how crucial that information can be for their course or career.

The learning of a language like Afrikaans will evidently benefit those who might end up joining the technical and the corporate world, to name but two areas. Tollefson (1991:7) expresses this idea about language learning when he says that 'language competence remains a barrier to employment, education and economic well being due to political forces of our making'.

Thus if colleges do not succeed in encouraging student teachers to take Afrikaans as one of their teaching subjects, a situation will arise that even schools will think that the subject is optional because of its lack of utility in the future. The idea that a subject is optional will further be aggravated by the lack of teachers who are trained to teach the subject. In fact, the situation is now entertained in a number of secondary schools in the Northern Province that Afrikaans is compulsory up to standard seven (grade nine) only. Learners in higher classes may opt not to learn it further. This is an unfortunate situation if learners are left on their own to take this ill-informed decision without proper educational guidance on the issue. Education should mainly comprise the teacher guiding the not-yet-adult to self-actualization or adulthood, and teachers should not avoid their responsibility in this instance. This decision not to take Afrikaans as a subject could be regarded as immature and irresponsible, as learners do not always know what their future professions and the associated requirements might be. Discarding some of the linguistic tools in a foreign language like Afrikaans, which may be found to be of importance for learning in future, is not only self-defeating but suicidal in the learning process. Tollefson (1991:7), for instance, is be correct in summarising the value of knowing languages in a multilingual and multicultural society, such as ours, as follows: '... while modern social and economic systems require certain kinds of language competence, they simultaneously create conditions which ensure that vast numbers of people will be unable to acquire that competence...'

If Afrikaans as a language is discarded by learners at school and student teachers at

colleges of education, a situation will arise where the African community will bar itself from acquiring the competence to compete at places where the language is directly or indirectly required for further studies or job situations. As respondent CBL1 correctly pointed out: 'Afrikaans will be necessary in future as most employers in Louis Trichardt are Afrikaners and not everybody will find employment in teaching'. Simplistic as the statement appears at present, it will bear fruit in the near future as we are already in an era of unemployment and retrenchments, and when people will be called upon to make use of the required linguistic skills, they may find themselves wanting. At that stage, it will be impossible for those learners who opted out from learning Afrikaans to rectify the ill-informed decision they took, or were encouraged to take, at the junior secondary level if not at the primary school level.

Having considered the importance of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and also of its future role, it is necessary to discuss its function as a learning tool in the two colleges.

#### **4.6.1 The question of media of instruction in colleges CA and CB**

To the question from the student teacher's interview schedule as per annexure A: 'which languages at your college are used as media of instruction?', respondents from both colleges identified English as the language which is mainly used as the medium of instruction in teaching almost all the subjects. Evidently, English is only exempted from use during in during which African languages such as Afrikaans, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi are taught. Though that is the ideal situation, in practice it is also used during the above-mentioned periods when the lecturer's terminology seems wanting in the language concerned, as will be explained later in this chapter. The implications of using English as a medium of instruction almost everywhere create a number of impressions in the student teachers' minds. A few are named below.

The first impression given to the student teachers is that the English language is indispensable for their survival in the profession. This is owing to the fact that they observe their lecturers using English to explain concepts during the Afrikaans didactics

class, for example - this is a class at CA which includes all the language student teachers. When the English, Afrikaans, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi students are put together in the compulsory Afrikaans didactics class, those students who did not opt for Afrikaans as a teaching subject find it difficult to understand the language medium used in the class. It is because of this addition of student teachers who do different language teaching methods in one Afrikaans class, that lecturers admit that they do use English at times to explain themselves. As this condition only occurs at CA, a lecturer concerned (CAL3) feels frustrated and expresses himself as follows: '... the problem is where we use to have some students forced to do Afrikaans didactics... it takes patience and efforts because you even see that they are not even interested in the subject'.

Though the problem is administrative, and arises from the way in which the time-table committee interpreted the curriculum, it does place an extra burden on the Afrikaans department and deprives those concerned of the enthusiasm which should accompany their performance in class.

The second consequence of English being used as the only medium of instruction is that student teachers, just because they meet the language almost everywhere, tend to have the impression that they know it. Whilst it is advantageous to know English, they tend to think that it is not necessary to learn other African languages seriously, as they assume that it is possible to survive without them. They also think that if you happen to go anywhere in the world, English will be the only language used. This false assumption will later be discussed in detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Of course, educationally, they do get the opportunity to speak, listen, study and think through the language of English and thus gain confidence in using the target language, which is very important (see section 4.5.2.2).

It is important at this stage to explain how the problem of Afrikaans didactics is tackled at the CB institution. At this institution, despite the fact that the curriculum prescribes that Afrikaans didactics should be taught to all language methodology student teachers,

a decision has been taken that Afrikaans students will not be mixed with non-Afrikaans student teachers. Those who do Afrikaans are taught separately as a group and the other language methodology student teachers are on their own. This is educationally sound as their entry points to the subject Afrikaans are definitely not on the same level, due to the varying pre-knowledge which they bring to class. Their pre-knowledge will of course include language proficiency as well as the confidence which they have at their disposal in expressing themselves in the language. It is also clear that the lecturer concerned will work hard in equipping them with the skills necessary for the teaching of the language. The main concentration and emphasis on teaching strategies will be placed on Afrikaans student teachers, as Afrikaans is the nucleus of what they are supposed to excel at as their major teaching subject. Of course this type of methodology class which emphasises teaching methods will also be offered for other student teachers doing other languages.

At this stage the researcher will complete this discussion of the Afrikaans didactics class by describing how the subject is evaluated. At both colleges marks are derived from different language methodology classes and an average mark is composed mainly of assignments at CA, the students of which admit that they do help each other with tasks unofficially and then get off the hook. At CB tests and individual assignments are important for year marks. An examination is written at both colleges at the end of the year.

This confusion concerning the Afrikaans didactics class was improved by the 1997 structure which differentiates between Afrikaans general and special didactics. At the moment, CA has not enrolled student teachers for this structure due to the reasons given in section 4.4.3. CB also has its own problems with the structure. The new structure reduced their periods from thirteen to six, with the load of general and special didactics still being the same. The consequence is, according to the staff, that 'I have to rush through the syllabus' (CBL1); '... I cannot do any extra thing in my teaching due to lack of time...' (CBL2); '... the year is too short for me to finish my work'. (CBL3). From the above statements it is clear that both student teachers and lecturers are pressed to do the work and obviously they may not be enjoying it. At this point it is

logical to consider students' views about the utility of these language skills which they are supposed to acquire.

The language policy as designed by the government in power by interpreting the constitution of the country is advantageous to English usage in South Africa. This is the case also in the colleges of tertiary education, as learners in general, and student teachers in particular, are continually exposed to English as is the general medium of instruction. As student teachers are always exposed to the English language they tend to gain confidence in using it. The fact established by researchers, that there is a positive correlation between positive attitudes and proficiency in the language, is again confirmed here (see section 2.1.2). Apparently student teachers do not always attach importance to these foreign languages which have not been pronounced by the language policy of the country as being important. If the foreign language has some utility to them, like English which serves as a medium of instruction in these institutions, they tend to gain proficiency in the language and consequently develop positive attitudes towards it. In this instance the Afrikaans language finds itself at a great disadvantage as a foreign language because it is not usually utilised in the learners' natural and learning language environment.

#### **4.6.2 The vision of students with regard to acquisition of languages for their future needs**

Having identified how languages are utilised at different institutions as media of instruction and the accompanying complications in some of the courses, it is necessary to find out how students themselves value the utility of these languages. In other words the 'why' question of using a foreign language is to be answered here.

After identifying the languages which were used at the college as media of instruction, students were also requested to identify those languages which they regarded as important for their future linguistic needs. The question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A was framed as follows: 'Which languages in item 7 do you regard as important for your future linguistic needs? Mention them and give

reasons for your answers’.

The aim of this exercise was to find out whether student teachers do have realistic expectations of utilising their acquired target language linguistic skills in real life situations. To put it differently, the aim is to find out whether student teachers do know the reasons why they are learning a particular language or whether they are aware of its future utility in real life situations.

It is assumed in this study that if student teachers learn a second or foreign language, they become motivated if they are aware of its future usefulness. It is therefore clear that any attempt to avoid consideration of the future needs of the learners of the linguistic skills in the target language in question will result in the reduction of the desired motivation to learn that language (see section 3.6.1.2). Demotivation on the part of the target language learner will ultimately not empower him with the required linguistic skills to use it. Once that situation prevails, then the aims of learning second and foreign languages in general, and Afrikaans in particular, will not be achieved. Responses concerning important languages for the future needs of student teachers will best be discussed for each institution separately.

In this paragraph most student teachers indicated that English is an important language, as they will need it in future. Only a few respondents regarded Afrikaans as a language which they may need in future. The responses given show that in the learning of English, student teachers are motivated by their perceived future need for the language in question, a factor which is absent in the learning of the subject of Afrikaans. Researchers in language acquisition have indicated that some of the factors which influence the learning of a target language are the instrumental value in knowing the language and the satisfaction of students’ future needs (see section 3.6.1)

#### **4.6.2.1 Important language for future linguistic needs as identified by CA respondents**

As already explained in this chapter, respondents were requested to identify those

languages which they regarded as important for their future linguistic needs. Apart from the identification of such languages, they were supposed to furnish reasons to justify their choices. At this college all the respondents, that is 100 percent of the sample, identified English as the most important language as far as their future linguistic needs were concerned. Forty percent of the ten interviewees also felt that Afrikaans was important but they regarded it as a second choice. Through not identifying their first languages as of future importance, they seemed to imply that these do not have economic value as such. This discussion of the utility of their first language in their future is not within the scope of this study, hence it will not be pursued. A brief analysis of the major reasons advanced by respondents for choosing important languages will however merit some attention at this stage.

The following reasons for the choices made were given:

1. '... English is known everywhere' (CA7). According to respondent CA7, English is known everywhere and as such it will be important for his future linguistic needs. The impression gained from CA7's statement is that the interviewee is not aware of the limited English usage in some of the countries outside South Africa. He seems to be under the impression that every country in the whole world uses English as a *lingua franca* or a language of greater communication (as is the case in South Africa). A situation, e.g. in countries like Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and others, where they use their own languages, is not visualised by the respondent. In short, one can safely conclude that the respondent is under the false impression that learning English is compulsory for everybody in the whole world, an impression which is unrealistic. The above analysis can only serve to indicate the ignorance which prevails amongst some English second language learners as far as the utility of the language is concerned.
2. '... English and Afrikaans can make a better person in South Africa to reach out and socialise with... even for other things like when I go out and reach other countries like overseas' (CA1). In this case the respondent regards English as

important for socialising purposes. He is also, like CA7, of the opinion that English is used everywhere by everybody. This issue has been argued in the previous paragraph and found not to be valid. He goes on to explain and express the utility of Afrikaans as follows: '... with Afrikaans since it was used in the old South Africa and still today, it can be used to reach out for those people who are out there whom I can like to social with ... those who do not know English...'

The respondent also regards English as important for the purpose of socialising with Afrikaans-speaking people, an issue which will depend on various situations. Apparently this refers to learning and working situations, for example, where the respondent will have to discard his own language when he enters other multilingual, as well as multicultural, situations. It is however a bit disappointing to realize that in most cases he anticipates using Afrikaans only as a second best, as it will only be utilised with those Afrikaners 'who do not know English'. In other words if all people understand English, then the utility of Afrikaans will be discarded. This statement, if taken seriously, may mean that the respondent is not confident enough in the use of Afrikaans to be able to use it at random. He does not deny its utility but he appears not to have learnt it with the desired motivation, which could have enhanced his learning positively, as was discussed in chapter three. However, it is clear that the respondent still regards linguistic flexibility, with Afrikaans as its component in this instance, as an asset if one is to survive in a multilingual society.

3. '... English because it is famous and it links us with other countries...' (CA4)

As with the previous two answers the respondent is not able to differentiate between English speaking and other foreign language speaking countries. Apparently this is the impression which student teachers gained from language debates, interim constitutions, media, to name but a few. The message conveyed by these agents is that the knowledge of English is a key to communication throughout the whole world.

4. '... Afrikaans and English because I teach the learners English in order to communicate when a Tshivenda speaking person is in a meeting with a Xitsonga one - ... English and Afrikaans can be used in a meeting...' (CA8). Like the above three respondents, he values a knowledge of Afrikaans and English as tools of linguistic flexibility. They can be used where people from different language groups meet and communicate, using these common languages. These languages are common because they were taught at schools to all people in both the present and previous eras. In this situation, both languages are still enjoying this privilege as they are taught as second and third languages at all schools. However the situation is less favourable for Afrikaans which is fast becoming an optional subject after standard seven (grade nine).

#### 4.6.2.2 College CB and its future linguistic needs

In college CB, like the previous one, all the respondents feel that English is the most important language as far as their future linguistic needs are concerned. Next to English, 62.5 percent of the respondents also regard Afrikaans as important. Only 25 percent of the respondents regard Tshivenda as having a role to play in the map of their future linguistic needs. The following reasons were given for the identification of languages which will play a role in satisfying linguistic needs in future:

1. '... English because it is medium of instruction and I can communicate with other people, e.g. Xitsonga speaking people, Germans and others ...' (CB3). The respondent expressed his reason for his choice as being motivated by the fact that English is the language which he always comes into contact with in learning it as well as in learning of other subjects. By using English as a medium of instruction he assumes that there is going to be a correlation between his college and his future real life linguistic environment, hence the importance of English is identified. A second reason is similar to the one expressed by other interviewees from CA who view English as a common means of communication amongst people from different language groups. So according to respondent CB3 English is regarded as more important than other languages because of its

utility in multilingual and multicultural communities. This function of being a common means of communication cannot be performed by African languages as it cannot be assumed that all the Africans are equipped with the linguistic skills of each and every African language. The fact that English is regarded as a means of greater communication in the constitution and that it also serves as a medium of instruction in most institutions in the Northern Province, gives it an advantage over other South African languages. This is the case because most people learnt using it and they are evidently able to utilise it in all the linguistic situations involved.

2. Respondent CB4 chose English and Afrikaans for the simple reason that he has taken them as his main teaching subjects. He expressed his reasons as follows: ‘... I chose these subjects so that I can teach them at school...’ (CB4) In other words, he does not have any other utility for these languages beyond his future profession as such. He is only waiting for the job of teaching; beyond that he is not venturing to engage himself with these languages. The next interviewee, though, goes beyond these two languages, and includes his mother tongue in the repertoire of his future linguistic needs.
3. Afrikaans, English and Tshivenda are identified by (CB5) as important for his future linguistic needs ‘... because it is important to learn three languages in South Africa...’ This respondent is well aware of the vital importance of knowing as many languages as possible, three in this instance. These languages will serve as tools in advancing linguistic flexibility, which is essential in a multilingual or multicultural country such as ours. Of particular interest is the fact that this respondent is not only willing to learn English and Afrikaans which were the official languages in the previous era. He also regards Tshivenda, which is presumably his first language, as being of value to him in his future linguistic needs. In other words, he also identifies his own language as having a role to play in the future multilingual and multicultural society. The next respondent also identifies his mother tongue as having a role to play in his future linguistic needs.

4. '... English and Tshivenda because Tshivenda is my first language and English is a medium of instruction throughout the whole world...' (CB2).

Respondent CB2 seems to be in agreement with CB3 as far as the role of his first language in a multilingual and multicultural society is concerned (as discussed in section 2.2.4.2). He does not wish it away in order to remain with second and third languages only. Apart from the first language, he also regards English as important because '... it is a medium of instruction throughout the whole world'. The question of this ill-informed notion, of English being a medium of instruction throughout the whole world, cannot be emphasised enough.

5. Respondent (CB7) is of the opinion that '... when you go outside the country and you meet people who cannot speak your language, you use English or Afrikaans...'

According to respondent (CB7), like most of the other respondents in both colleges, English and Afrikaans are regarded as common means of communication amongst people of different languages. However the respondent takes the issue of common language a step further when he assumes that every person outside South Africa does understand English and Afrikaans. This issue has already being argued to the contrary above.

6. '... English is used everywhere to communicate...' (CB8). Respondent CB8, like other previously discussed respondent, is still of the opinion that English is the *lingua franca* of the world.

7. Respondent (CB6) regards English and Afrikaans as important for her future linguistic needs because '... I use them for communication purposes with people who cannot speak Tshivenda...' This corresponds with ideas expressed by respondent CB3 in paragraph (1), who also regards English as a common language. However respondent CB6 adds another linguistic component, Afrikaans, to the mix of common languages which can be used by people from

different multilingual and cultural backgrounds.

8. '... English and Afrikaans because I want to be bilingual in the job situation...' (CB1). This respondent has identified English and Afrikaans as languages in his future job-situation - thus he sees the utility of learning them. The identification of the need or utility of learning a second or foreign language is a prerequisite for motivation, of accomplishing this mission as already explained in section 3.6.1.2. In that section it is argued that learning in any second language should consider the future use of the target language by the learner. From the above argument it is clear that foreign and second language learners will learn the target language seriously, if they think that there is a reason for the acquisition of an additional linguistic skill, as already explained in this section.

Apart from identifying languages which will be important for the learners' linguistic needs of the future, it is also of importance for this study to discover how respondents feel about these languages. In the interview, respondents were requested to identify language difficulties which they encounter whilst learning those important languages which will feature in satisfying their future linguistic needs.

#### **4.6.3 Difficulties in learning languages which will cater for the respondents' future linguistic needs**

In section 4.6.2 interviewees were requested to point out those languages which they consider as important for their future linguistic needs. After that exercise they were also requested to identify those languages which they consider as being difficult for them to master, and also to furnish their reasons for finding them difficult. The purpose of this exercise was to determine factors which present obstacles to the student teachers in mastering these languages effectively and efficiently. These obstacles, when identified, were analysed with the aim of introducing counter-measures, as will be observed in the development of the proposed guidelines in chapter 5 of this study.

**Table 5**  
**Difficult languages**

		Afrikaans	English	Tshivenda	None
<b>College</b>					
<b>CA</b>	no.	4	-	1	5
	%	40	-	10	50
<b>Total</b>	no.	10.	-	10	10
	%	100	-	100	100
<b>CB</b>	no.	1	3	-	4
	%	12,5	37,5	-	50
<b>Total</b>	no.	8	8	-	8
	%	100	100	-	100

Discussion of this item will be done separately for each college in order to achieve maximum clarity for each situation. On the question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A: 'Which language in item **nine** do you consider as being difficult for you? Mention it and give reasons for your answer'. The following responses were given by respondents as per Table 5 :

#### 4.6.3.1 **Difficult languages identified at CA**

Students at college CA as shown in Table 5 above, did not seem to have problems in the learning of English as such. However 40 percent of the respondents did experience some difficulties in the learning of Afrikaans. The following reasons were cited:

1. 'Afrikaans has been troubling me for a long time because of the unfavourable background, as I memorised textbooks and fact... I was exposed to fearful situation as I was told that Afrikaans is going to be difficult for me...' (CA1)

Respondent CA1 identified Afrikaans as being difficult because of an unfavourable background where it was not utilised as a language. When it came

to its learning he depended mostly on memorisation as a method of learning it. By implication it is evident that this memorisation was at times, if not all the time, done without understanding. Despite the availability in the field of all types of teaching methods, the respondent seems to have been subjected to one and only method, that of memorisation. This type of teaching method reminds one of the grammar translation method which was discussed in the learning of Latin in section 3.4.1. The memorisation of language aspects without understanding does not promote the target language learning process. A language is learnt more easily if the input is comprehensible to the learner, as discussed in section 3.7. 1.1. With the explanation given by CA1 it appears that as a student teacher he is now aware of other possible methods which can be used to simplify the learning of the language as such. If he is not, then he feels that the teaching of the target language which he experienced could have been better if his exposure to the language had been richer as already explained in section 3.6.1.1. In this section it is argued that a language flourishes best in a language rich environment, a factor which evidently did not exist in the language background environment of respondent CA1. Thus, it is clear that a poor language environment did affect the target language learning process of this respondent negatively.

Respondent CA1 goes further to explain that he was told that Afrikaans was going to be difficult for him. On further probing of this issue, it became clear that his peer group, teachers and some lecturers, at both school and college levels, were always talking about how difficult Afrikaans was for them. They later generalised the issue of 'difficult' Afrikaans as a norm of study and assumed that it would be difficult for whoever learns it. Any subject, if not taught correctly can be difficult. This is also buttressed by Spolsky's (1989) view in section 3.3.1.2 of this study. Spolsky stipulates that motivation to learn a language is controlled by the attitude of the learner of the target language towards its native speakers. The causes of the negative attitudes of Africans towards Afrikaans were discussed in sections of chapter one.

2. '... I was told to memorise some notes from the textbook' (CA3).

The respondent seems to be experiencing some difficulties because instead of learning to speak the language, memorisation was regarded as the main method of learning and studying the target language. The impression is gained that if memorisation was targeted as a method of study, then the teaching of the target language would have always been done out of context. This issue has already been discussed in full in section 3.7.1.4 where it was observed that a target language can be learnt successfully if learners are provided with a context within which to learn it. Failure to provide this context tends to lead to meaningless memorisation as discussed in section 3. The above discussion reinforces the idea that erroneous teaching methods do not motivate target language learners and do not make the language learning process easier for them, as CA3 has experienced.

3. '... at school level we did not have enough teachers and we passed some standards without learning Afrikaans, e.g. standard 8' (CA4).

The respondent explains his reasons for finding Afrikaans difficult as being the lack of Afrikaans teachers at the secondary school level. If learners complete some standards without learning a second language then a few mishaps in that language can occur. This unfortunate circumstance can result in learners not hearing or speaking that particular language in that particular academic year. It is beyond the comprehension of any educationist to expect learners to deal with gaps in the knowledge of the target language which are created by unfinished curricula, or worse still by ignoring some curricula for particular standards as indicated by CA4 in his response. Educationally speaking, curricula for different standards in a subject can be compared to a series of steps in a ladder which one should climb in order to reach the top or to come down. Such an analogy is worth considering even in the teaching of Afrikaans as a subject - all curricula prescribed for different standards should be covered if the aims associated with the curriculum concerned are to be achieved.

4. '... the method of teaching and the department is condemning the teaching of Afrikaans in our schools' (CA7).

Respondent CA7 blames the method of teaching Afrikaans in schools as a major contributory factor to his finding difficulties with Afrikaans foreign language as a subject. Consequently the respondent is of the opinion that his language proficiency is not what it should be. He further observed the absence of the seriousness which should accompany the Afrikaans foreign language learning process when he says that: '...English is taken as serious'. This observation of the lack of seriousness in Afrikaans is compared to that of English, the language on which the department seems to concentrate at all costs. It is obvious that the seriousness accorded to English is further exacerbated by the fact that it is a medium of instruction in all subjects, except Afrikaans and the mother tongue.

5. The one respondent who cited difficulties which accompany the learning of Tshivenda could not give reasons for this assertion despite encouragement by the interviewer at the time.

In identifying difficulties which students at CA experience in learning languages which are important for their future linguistic needs, the reasons advanced indicated that they were caused by: negative attitudes transferred from the community to the learners of Afrikaans; correct teaching strategies not always employed by its teachers in the teaching and learning of the subject; and learners promoted from one standard to the next without Afrikaans.

#### **4.6.3.2 The extent of difficulties in target language learning at CB**

At CB, respondents indicated that they experience difficulties with the learning of English and Afrikaans as per table 5. 12.5 percent experienced difficulties with Afrikaans whereas 37.5 percent indicated that English presented problems in the learning process. The reasons for these difficulties were given as follows:

1. '... English is used everyday and Afrikaans is not used regularly ...' (CB7)

The above response by the only candidate who regarded Afrikaans as being difficult, claims that the situation is due to the fact that the language is not used regularly. He goes on to compare English usage with that of Afrikaans, with English being used as a medium of instruction in most subjects and Afrikaans being taught during its period only. As Afrikaans is only used during its prescribed period as per the timetable, it is clear that learners are only exposed to it for a short time and this limits their ability to speak and think through the language (which are major stimulants of learning a target language, as noted in section 3.7.1.3). Evidently it may not be far off the mark to conclude also that, besides the fact that Afrikaans is not used regularly, learners of this third language are exposed to a poor language environment which does not encourage language acquisition. This question of the poor language environment has already been discussed under the response of CA1 in 1 in the previous paragraph. The next factor is that if English is used regularly, learners tend to develop a positive attitude towards the language. This is even more so if language learners succeed in speaking the language fluently. Jacobs (1991), as cited in section 2.1.2, alleges that there is a strong correlation between fluency in a language and the positiveness of the attitude of the learner towards that particular target language. In the case of English, the situation is even more so due to the country being favourably disposed toward the language. It is also difficult to avoid the fact that the history of the country has marginalised the language of Afrikaans, as already explained in chapters one and two of this study.

2. Two respondents (CB8 and CB3) seem to link the difficulties which they encounter in English to pronunciation and the ability to teach the language. They express themselves as follows: '... in English there are some words that I cannot pronounce the way I should pronounce them.' (CB8); '... some words are difficult to pronounce and understand them' (CB3). After identifying these problems, it becomes clear that this situation could be remedied through

educational means. The situation is however different with Afrikaans where lack of regular use of the language is the problem, thus creating an impoverished language environment which is only dealt with during the Afrikaans period only. This rectification of problems in Afrikaans will only await one teacher to handle within a thirty minute period, and with fifty to sixty learners on the average to deal with. It is clear that even the situation in which the language is taught is not conducive to teaching and learning of the language.

3. '... I meet some difficulties when coming to teaching English' (CB6). This respondent, like the previous one in paragraph (2), identifies a problem which has to do with English but this time, with his teaching of the subject. Despite the fact that English does enjoy a rich language environment, he identifies the problem that he is not able to teach it the way he is expected to do so. As already explained in the previous paragraph, though, there are didactic strategies which can be employed to rectify such obstacles in the English learning process. Problems which have to do with English seem to be educationally straightforward and as such their solutions are easily managed across the teaching field, since the language is a medium of instruction throughout the college. It can be seen that in this college (CB) most respondents did not feel that there are difficulties connected with Afrikaans as a target language. This situation pertains despite the fact that it is not spoken most of the time in different subjects, periods and classes. It can however be assumed that lecturers in Afrikaans are first language speakers and they make an effort at encouraging everyone in the college, including students, to have confidence in speaking the language. The venture is pioneered by the head of department who goes as far as conducting in-service training sessions for her lecturers in the department. In short, the college is favourably disposed towards the Afrikaans language.

Unlike those at CA, respondents at CB had difficulties with the learning of English in aspects like pronunciation and teaching strategies. The only respondent who indicated that he experienced difficulties with the subject and language of Afrikaans felt that the

exposure to the language was very limited. He further indicated that more time was being allocated to English in the institution, a fact which confirms that the learning of a language is enhanced only if the learner is exposed to its usage frequently (see section 3.6.1)

#### **4.7 THE TEACHING OF AFRIKAANS AT COLLEGES IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE**

In order to strengthen the validity of the factors regarding the Afrikaans language environment, the interviewees were once again required to provide their teaching subjects. They were given the following question as per annexure A: 'Is Afrikaans one of your teaching subjects this year?' All the student teachers who were interviewed in both colleges once more confirmed that indeed Afrikaans was one of their teaching subjects at the time. Apart from confirming that it was one of their teaching subjects, they were also required to state where they first came across the language. In this respect it became clear that Afrikaans was not their first language, as explained in section 4.6. A large percentage of respondents from both colleges came across Afrikaans as a language for the first time at school. Only 16 percent of the total sample from both colleges did come across the language in towns where they stayed with relatives who worked for Afrikaans speaking families. Only one person heard Afrikaans for the first time in the working environment, as his family was one of the tenants' units who worked for an Afrikaans speaking landowner. Those who claim to have heard Afrikaans for the first time before coming to school were requested to further justify their presence in town, which they did as follows: '... in town in Johannesburg where I stayed with my aunt who was working for the Afrikaans speaking family' (CB4); '... in town- my mother was working in town and I played with some coloured Afrikaans-speaking children' (CB5).

In order to understand the above statements it is important to put them in their historical perspective. Apparently under the migratory labour system members of the students' families worked in town as under other circumstances it would not have been possible for them to stay there during their early childhood. From the above statements it is

therefore clear that for these learners to come into contact with Afrikaans, one had to stay in town for a particular reason or had to work for an Afrikaans speaking family. Otherwise ordinary rural areas did not afford learners the opportunity of mixing with Afrikaans speakers. Maybe it should be noted that even those respondents who learnt Afrikaans at school did not for one moment use it in their home situations. Besides towns as a source of Afrikaans language providers, a further 12.5 percent of the respondents from CB identified farms as the place where they first came across the language. Respondent CB7, says '... in the farm - my grandmother was working there and I use to visit'. Though he did not speak of playing with other children, it is assumed that he did play with others, as he speaks in terms of hearing other people and his grandmother speaking the language. Thus it is clear that in his case he is apparently not one of the people who only heard about Afrikaans for the first time at school. The last respondent from CB falls under the 'any other' category and he says: '... I heard Afrikaans for the first time when I visited my grandmother who was coloured and Afrikaans speaking. (CB8)' Depending on how often he visited her, one cannot safely deduce that the experience was beneficial for his language acquisition. It did however afford him with the opportunity to get the feel of the language.

Section 4.7 is aimed at determining the type of exposure which student teachers of the Afrikaans foreign language are getting from their language environment. The process of enriching the language environment, if done correctly, would definitely improve the language proficiency of the student teachers taking Afrikaans as a foreign language (see section 2.1.1). Not only will the language proficiency be improved, but the knowledge of the culture of the target language will also be assimilated and appreciated by the learners of the language in question. The two aspects of language learning, if mastered by the foreign language lecturers and student teachers, will culminate in positive attitudes towards the language in question and its culture - an issue which is strongly stressed by researchers as a requirement for the learning of a foreign language (see section 3.3.1.2).

At this stage it is necessary to look at ways of improving linguistic competency in Afrikaans

#### 4.7.1 Ways of improving linguistic competency in Afrikaans

Apart from students being in class and learning Afrikaans, other ways have been identified which could supplement the prescribed learning programmes in schools. Respondents were requested to identify ways which they utilise to acquire knowledge away from school or college situations. The aim of this exercise was to find out whether student teachers were aware of the various types of language learning strategies which they could use in the acquisition of skills in the Afrikaans second language learning process. They were expected to indicate their preferences among the following language learning strategies: reading, listening to the radio, watching television, speaking the language and the 'any other' category which supplemented these closed questions. Discussion of preferences indicated by respondents from the two colleges will be carried out separately.

**Table 6**  
**Strategies of learning a foreign language**

COLLEGE	Reading		Listening to the Radio		Watching Television		Speaking the language		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	NO	%
CA	5	50	5	50	4	40	5	50	10	100
CB	4	50	4	50	0	0	7	87.5	8	100

##### 4.7.1.1 Afrikaans language learning strategies at CA

The question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A was: 'If you were to improve your knowledge of any foreign language, for instance, Afrikaans, which activities would you prefer amongst the following? You can mark off more than one'. Respondents were requested to indicate strategies from table 6 which they utilise in learning a foreign language. As the subject of this study concerned Afrikaans as a foreign language, an emphasis was placed on the language. 50 percent of the respondents identified reading, listening and speaking the language as being equally important in the learning of a foreign language. Apparently this percentage was

influenced by the theory they learnt during the teacher training which they did. By the end of the second semester in their third and final year they should have been aware that all four activities were of equal importance in the learning of a foreign language (see section 3.6 and subsequent sections). This illustrates that learners of the foreign language should be actively involved in using the target language if they are to manage and master its proficiency.

The fourth learning strategy, which is watching television, was identified by 40 percent of the respondents as being important in the foreign language learning process. As this activity involved seeing, hearing, thinking about and analysing the television programme, it can be equated with the other four activities which were discussed in the above paragraph. Memorisation as learning strategy was rejected by all the respondents as being important in the learning process. The 'any other' category was not utilised by respondents from this college.

#### **4.7.1.2 Language learning strategies at CB**

The pattern of responses in college CB is similar to that of the first college as discussed in the previous paragraph. 50 percent of the respondents believed that reading and listening to the radio are important strategies in learning a foreign language like Afrikaans. Apparently those respondents who identified reading also preferred listening as a strategy of equal importance in the foreign language learning process. Besides reading and listening activities as strategies which enhance the learning of a foreign language, most respondents in this college, that is 87.5 percent, preferred speaking the language in extending their linguistic flexibility in the second or third language. As has already been argued in the previous paragraph under CA, some of the respondents in this college are not able to link theory to its application, as explained to them in class. If they had been able to link theory and practice, they would have identified the very basic requirements of learning any language, be it a first, second or foreign language. The basic requirement which is being spoken of here refers to the speaking, listening, writing and reading of the language.

The above argument can be taken further to mean that even if respondents from both colleges deny the fact that they use memorisation as a strategy in learning a language, as indicated by 0 percent, they do utilise it. It can be assumed that if the question in the interview schedule had not expected them to give an application of their knowledge they would have answered differently. The fact that it is known that memorisation, as a language learning strategy, is discouraged from different quarters, causes them to deny it.

A further surprising issue is that none of the respondents in this college regard watching television as an important activity in the learning of the target language. The fact that watching television would involve language learning activities like listening, thinking, analysis and the application of various learning aids does not seem to make sense to them. The inability of respondents to recognise the usual phases of language learning activities gives the impression that they are also not capable of linking the classroom theory to its application in practice. Under the 'any other' category one response indicated that 'working for an Afrikaans family' is another good idea which can contribute towards knowing the target language. A close examination of the above-mentioned response indicates that the interviewee is aware that the employer will provide the chances of listening and speaking the language in the working environment. The target language learner will also be afforded the opportunity of the correction of language mistakes which he might make in the learning process. Besides speaking the target language, the learner will be immersed in the culture of the people, a fact which deepens the understanding of the target language and its people in its entirety. Understanding the culture of the people is also an important factor which is desired in the learning of any foreign language (see section 3.3.1.2).

It is appropriate at this stage to find out whether student teachers do enjoy reading in Afrikaans.

#### **4.7.2 Reading of Afrikaans literature at CA and CB colleges**

Apart from listening and speaking the target language, it is also important to learn how

to read and write the language. As one progresses with the learning of the target language, the emphasis will often be placed on the reading of the available literature. This step will also serve to engage the target language learner with the culture of the language concerned. It was thus felt that for the purpose, of this study, an idea should be gained of the respondent's interest in reading of the Afrikaans literature. To the question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A : 'Do you like reading in Afrikaans?' 80 percent of the respondents from CA and 100 percent from CB answered positively that they do like reading in Afrikaans. 20 percent of the respondents from the CA college indicated that they do not like reading in Afrikaans. If the learning of the language has been done correctly from the beginning, then the learner will first be able to differentiate between the sounds from his first and the foreign languages. The second and third stages of learning the target language will consist of speaking and then reading in the foreign language. The last and final stage of this process will be in the form of learning how to write the language. As he progresses in the learning process, he will be able to follow these activities at different times as the situation may demand of him. The process of learning a foreign language is compared to that of learning a mother tongue by Rivers (1993: 41) as follows:

'...As we normally learn our mother tongue in spoken form before being introduced to its representation by graphic symbols, and as speech, or sound communication, is the form in which all natural languages first developed, proponents of the audio-lingual method laid stress on learning to understand and speak some of the language before learning to read and write it. This order of presentation ( listening, and speaking before reading and writing) was accompanied by great emphasis on correct pronunciation and intonation'.

To come back to the issue of the positive response to reading Afrikaans literature which was given by most respondents in both colleges, this response may be due to the fact that these are student teachers who are lacking a special interest in the teaching of the language. As they are not first language speakers, the only way through which they can improve their knowledge of the target language and its culture is by reading various types of literature in the language concerned. Failure to read constantly and continuously may erode the knowledge of both language and culture. Consequently 20 percent of the students from CA who indicated that they do not like reading in Afrikaans

will be unsuccessful in the foreign language teaching profession, as they will forget the language. As they are usually foreign language speakers, it is clear that by not engaging with Afrikaans literature, they may become poor role models for their learners in the language (see section 3.3.1). Another possible reason for these student teachers' lack of interest in reading 'of the target language might be attributed to the fact that some of the students took Afrikaans as a teaching subject because they did not qualify to do any other subject (see section 4.4.5. and other subsequent sections). Whatever the reason for being negative about reading Afrikaans literature as displayed by 20 percent of the respondents from CA, it is important to concentrate on the large percentage of respondents who do enjoy reading Afrikaans literature.

#### 4.7.3 Methods of acquiring Afrikaans literature at colleges of education

The question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A: 'If yes, how do you acquire Afrikaans reading material for personal use?' was asked during the interviews. The answers were given as per Table 7 below.

**Table 7**  
**Ways of acquiring Afrikaans reading material**

		College Library	Buy prescribed books	Buy newspapers	Buy Magazines	Borrow books	any other
<b>College</b>							
<b>CA</b>	no.	4	2	2	1	3	(See comments)
	%	50	25	25	12.5	37.5	
<b>Total</b>	no.	8	8	8	8	8	
	%	100	100	100	100	100	
<b>CB</b>	no.	5	3	1	2	3	
	%	62.5	37.5	12.5	25	37.5	
<b>Total</b>	no.	8	8	8	8	8	
	%	100	100	100	100	100	

#### 4.7.3.1 **Methods of acquiring Afrikaans literature at CA**

After providing 'Yes' and 'No' responses to the question in annexure A: 'Do you like reading in Afrikaans?' the 'yes' group was required further to indicate ways in which they acquired reading materials in Afrikaans according to the given categories. At the CA institution 50 percent of the respondents regarded the college library as a source for equipping them with reading materials in Afrikaans. A further probe with the librarian indicated that a few student teachers do fetch some reading materials from the library. Despite the fact that few students do visit the Afrikaans section in the library, the absence of daily newspapers and magazines from the shelves was very clear. A further enquiry into the reasons for the absence of Afrikaans newspapers from the shelves in the library was greeted by excuses from the lecturers, as follows: 'People do not like reading Afrikaans newspapers' (CAL1); or 'The absence of newspapers is due to budgetary constraints' (CAL2); or worse still ' We simply do not know most names of the Afrikaans magazines'(CAL3). Evidently, it should be expected of the Afrikaans Department in the college to carry out more than just its prescribed duties of teaching student teachers. It should also strive to strengthen its support system as well as nurture interest in the language, if it is to survive. In other words, Afrikaans second or foreign language student teachers should be afforded the opportunity to get used to all types of newspapers if their 'knowledge of the target languages, as well as their thinking capacity and familiarity with the language terminology used in discussing current affairs, is to be enhanced. It is important to expect our future Afrikaans teachers to become serious readers in the language. If the college libraries are not utilised to their maximum capacity, what will happen when these student teachers are deployed to various schools, in the country, where reading facilities are not available at all? If foreign language student teachers are not good readers of the target language, they will most probably also produce generations of learners who are poor readers. As this college is situated in a place where the Afrikaans language environment is very poor, what will result in Afrikaans teachers whose knowledge is devoid of the culture of the target language, which only be gained through reading in this instance.

As far as buying prescribed books is concerned only 25 percent (that is two

respondents) regard purchasing them as an important means of acquiring Afrikaans reading material. By implication it can safely be said that 75 percent of the respondents, do not see the real reason for possessing them. Apparently these respondents, have never come across the practical application of the value of the aims and objectives of reading in the teaching of Afrikaans second and foreign language. If they happen to know those aims and objectives theoretically then they are clearly having some difficulties in their practical application, as illustrated by the fact that a large percentage of them do not attach the required value to their use as an aid to learning the target language.

The next category is that of acquiring reading materials through buying newspapers. In this college only 25 percent of the respondents indicated that they do read and buy newspapers. Since they indicated in the first paragraph of this section that the college library does not provide such a service, the researcher had to probe further into student teachers' means of acquiring them. It was found that shops and bookshops in this area only sell English newspapers, so that students who enjoy reading Afrikaans newspapers have to devise some other means of getting them. One of the respondents cited family members who work in Johannesburg as a source of Afrikaans newspapers. This source of acquisition cannot be regarded as being constant and regular, as his family stays five hundred kilometres from the college and there is no possibility of communicating daily. Thus his family cannot be recognised as effectively contributing to the reader's acquisition of the knowledge of Afrikaans as a second and third language.

Whilst the supply of the Afrikaans newspapers can be regarded as being poor indeed, it is necessary at this stage to look at the next category of the reading material.

Despite the fact that most magazines in any language provide readers with knowledge about current events, fiction, advertisements and the language itself, only one person at this institution claims to utilise this service. There is however, one lecturer (CAL3) who claims to provide '*Farmers Weekly*' magazines to students with the aim of testing their comprehension of the language for oral evaluation purposes. Despite the fact that the lecturer is satisfied with this language exercise, respondents seem not to be

interested in its teaching value, as they regard it as a test or an examination.

As far as borrowing Afrikaans books is concerned, 37.5 percent of the respondents claimed to be using this activity as a means of acquiring reading material for personal use. A further probe into the issue showed that they either borrow books from other students, who are at different course levels, or from the college library. Out of the three respondents, only one of them indicated that at times she does buy books from the local bookshop when there is a 'sale' of books. The option of buying books was not listed as a category despite the fact that the researcher was aware of its existence. The reason for not listing it as a category was to allow interviewees to come up with it on their own under the open section, which is the 'any other category'. This exercise was aimed at finding out whether respondents ever think of buying Afrikaans books on their own to read for pleasure.

Having considered the situation at CA, it is necessary to have a close look at the situation in CB.

#### **4.7.3.2 Afrikaans reading materials at CB**

The situation regarding the acquisition of reading material at this institution is slightly different from that of CA. 62.5 percent of the respondents acquire their reading materials from the college library. Even the college librarian indicated that a small group of student teachers do come and utilise the Afrikaans section of the library. The fact that the group is small, when compared to the daily usage of the library as such, can be attributed to the fact that those who are taking Afrikaans as a teaching subject are also few in number. Besides the college library, students do acquire reading materials through other means (as will be discussed in the following paragraphs). 37.5 percent of the respondents indicated that they use prescribed books as a source of knowledge in the Afrikaans second language learning process. As already argued under CA in the previous paragraph, it is clear that the remaining 62.5 percent do not even regard Afrikaans books as reading materials. Apparently this situation can be attributed to the fact that they only read them with the assistance of the lecturers and from there these books form part of the target language evaluation process. Evidently

the assumption that the aims of reading are theoretically known by the respondents does not imply that, they are being successfully implemented in practice. In practice this implies that most of the respondents are not able to read prescribed books for the sake of literary enjoyment.

The next category of reading materials is newspapers (as it appears in the interview schedule). Only 12.5 percent, or one respondent, identified newspapers as one of the reading materials which she utilises everyday. Further probing came up with the information that she stays in town and works part-time in one of the large stores there, and obtains newspapers there. The fact that she also grew up with her family, who worked for an Afrikaans speaking family, contributes to her positive attitude towards the target language. Not only is her attitude towards Afrikaans positive, but her constant use of the language is also a contributing factor towards her confidence in using the language at college and in the job-situation.

From the discussions in the previous and present paragraphs, it is clear that the reading and buying of Afrikaans newspapers by student teachers is a rare occurrence indeed. This poor reading is evident among student teachers even during this era of the knowledge explosion which is brought to the man in the street by all types of media. The cheapest and most up to date medium available to them is the newspapers. Magazines form the next category.

At this college the head of the Afrikaans Department has a large number of magazines in her storeroom where student teachers are always invited to come and read them. Evidence of articles from the magazines which were needed and summarised by some of the students was shown to the researcher. Despite what has just been said about the issue, only 37.5 percent, or three students, admitted to using those magazines as reading materials for personal use. As has already been argued in the previous paragraphs under CA, student teachers do not regard literature which is ultimately used for evaluation purposes as their own. In practice, this seems to imply that after reading one magazine, they may not acquire the habit of buying and owning them for the personal use. The ultimate implication here is unpleasant because it means that

Afrikaans is only used as a fragile language which is not to be touched and used outside the classroom situation. If this supposition is true, this could be a very sad state of affairs in the learning and teaching of Afrikaans, as all the aims and objectives of its learning would be defeated.

The next category has to deal with the borrowing of books as one of the ways through which students acquire Afrikaans reading materials. A further probe into the issue illuminated the fact that books are usually borrowed from colleges, family members and friends. It is still encouraging to come across 37.5 percent of the respondents who nevertheless make some effort to obtain Afrikaans books for reading purposes on their own. Obviously the books which they borrow from different sources are for their own consumption, born out of interest in the language and not for evaluation purposes. When they read materials written in the target language, they tend to increase the knowledge of that particular language.

Under the 'any other' category respondents of this college, like those at CA, did not add any other strategy which they use in the acquisition of reading materials for their personal use. As was indicated in the previous paragraphs under CA in this section, the option of buying books was left out deliberately from the interview schedule. The reason for this omission was to find out whether respondents do buy books on their own for reading purposes without anticipating examinations on them. It was therefore discovered that the option of buying books was not volunteered by the student teachers, a fact which indicates that reading Afrikaans material is reserved for the classroom periods only.

#### **4.7.4 The utilisation of dictionaries in the Afrikaans language learning process**

The use of dictionaries in the second or foreign language is of the utmost importance as it helps student teachers with the meanings of words, usage, expression, pronunciations and many other functions. Respondents were requested to respond to the question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A : 'Do you use dictionaries when dealing with Afrikaans as a foreign language?'

All the respondents at CB gave a 'yes' answer whereas only 70 percent at CA admitted to the use of dictionaries. The other 30 percent from college CA indicated that they do not utilise dictionaries in their daily dealings with Afrikaans. Those respondents who did indicate that they utilise dictionaries when dealing with Afrikaans reading materials were further required to identify the types of dictionaries they use. The following table shows how different types of dictionaries are used by student teachers from different colleges.

**Table 8**

**Types of dictionaries used in the learning of Afrikaans as a second language**

College	<i>Verklarende woordeboek</i>		<i>Tweetalige woordeboek</i>		<i>Both verklarende and tweetalige woordeboek</i>		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
CA	1	14.02	4	57.1	2	28.08	7	100
CB	1	12.5	2	25	5	62.5	8	100

#### **4.7.4.1 The use of dictionaries for the Afrikaans second language learning process at CA**

Responses to the question from the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A: 'If the answer is yes, mention the types of dictionaries you use when dealing with the Afrikaans reading material', follow:

According to Table 8, at CA, 14.02 percent of the respondents who indicated that they use dictionaries when dealing with Afrikaans reading material, also mentioned that they use 'die verklarende' type of dictionaries only. The implication of the above statement is that the respondents acquire and understand the meaning in the target language. The second implication of the response is that learners in this category are quite familiar with Afrikaans as a language. Thus their understanding and usage of the language is of an average to excellent quality. They do not depend on the knowledge of another language in order to learn or utilise Afrikaans in their daily linguistic needs.

A second group of respondents indicated that they use 'die tweetalige' type of dictionaries whilst dealing with Afrikaans. This group constitutes 57.1 percent of the respondents and they constitute the largest group when compared with the other two groups. It also implies that most respondents in this group feel more comfortable when using English in their daily activities. Afrikaans seems to be somewhat difficult for them as they prefer to know the meaning of the word in English first, even in instances where they are dealing with the learning of Afrikaans as a target language. The problem with this approach is that the grammar translation method, as described in section 3.4.1, is still in operation. The disadvantage of this type of learning is that the target language is learnt through the medium of another language as already discussed in the above section. The activity of learning the target language through the medium of another language usually deprives its learners of the expected language proficiency to be gained in the foreign language learning process. It will not only deprive the target language learners of the opportunity of using the second language, it will also not acquaint them with the cultural background which goes hand in hand with the learning of any second or foreign language. The gist of the issue is that second and third language learners in this category will end up not developing the idiom of the language as such.

The third group of respondents use both the '*verklarende*' and the '*tweetalige*' type of dictionaries. As already explained in the first two categories, the latter group enjoy the advantages of using the Afrikaans language dictionary first, and where they encounter difficulties, they do go and consult the bilingual one. The same is the case with the issue which they understand in English, they do look for its Afrikaans language equivalent in the 'tweetalige' dictionary. In this college only 28.02 percent of the respondents do utilise this skill. The same factors at CB are to be investigated in the next paragraph.

#### 4.7.4.2 **Types of dictionaries used at CB**

The use of dictionaries at CB differs significantly from CA, as will be discussed in this section. Only 25 percent as shown on Table 8 do prefer the bilingual type of dictionary,

where they try and find the meaning of words in its English equivalent. This type of learning has already been explained in the previous paragraph under CA where the consequences were discussed. The worst result of this exercise is that the second or third language learners who learn through this process usually fail to gain the desired language proficiency into the target language. They tend to think in one language and then translate their thoughts into the target language. If this translation of ideas from another language to the target language becomes the mode of the language learning process, then the learning period will be prolonged and its success will be dubious.

The second group of respondents use only the Afrikaans language dictionary, that is, '*Die verklarende Woordeboek*'. This indicates some measure of confidence in the language usage. Unfortunately, those who chose this route of learning, are very few in number as they constitute only 12.5 at CB and 14.02 percent at CA, which equals only one person in each institution.

The largest percentage (62.5) of the respondents at CB use both '*Verklarende*' and '*Tweetalige Woordeboeke*', a route which they undertake with the aim offsetting the disadvantages of only one type of dictionary. Not only are the disadvantages of using one type of dictionary offset but the advantages of two types are also combined, to the improvement of the learning process.

After marking items which indicated the type of dictionaries which the respondents used whilst dealing with Afrikaans reading materials, they were requested to provide elaborate reasons for their choice.

#### **4.7.5 Reasons for different choices of dictionary types**

Respondents from both colleges were to answer the following question: 'After marking items in 18 give elaborate reasons for your choice'. In this item responses from both colleges will be discussed simultaneously. The '*Tweetalige*' dictionary option will be discussed first.

#### 4.7.5.1      **The bilingual dictionary**

Various reasons were given by different respondents for utilising '*die tweetalige*' type of dictionary. Only responses which were regarded as being important by the researcher will be discussed. According to CA1 the reason for choosing this type of dictionary was: '...I understand more English than Afrikaans. Some of the words in Afrikaans I can't understand them'. It is clear from the above statement of CA1 that he has confidence when using English for his daily needs, and that he experiences problems with Afrikaans as a language. It appears that when this respondent thinks of solving his linguistic problems, he does not foresee a stage where he will even find difficulties with English as a language. He is making a serious mistake as even first language speakers do utilise various types of dictionaries when dealing with their own language.

The issue of finding English easier than Afrikaans is further emphasized by another respondent who chose the bilingual dictionary. '.. I get the meaning from Afrikaans to English, I clearly get the meaning when explained in English. I have got problems with understanding Afrikaans and '... I use the '*Tweetalige Woordeboek*' because it helps me in comparing English words and Afrikaans words...' (CA2). As already explained in the previous and the present paragraphs, it is clear that those who utilise the bilingual dictionaries are those respondents who find English easier than Afrikaans. Consequently they always look up the English equivalent for the Afrikaans word or vice versa.

The next paragraph concerns those respondents who use only the Afrikaans dictionaries.

#### 4.7.5.2      **The use of Afrikaans only dictionaries**

Those who claim that they use the Afrikaans dictionaries only, seem to be confident in using the language as already discussed in the previous paragraphs of this chapter. The following are the responses under this category: '... it is easier to use, instead of

defining the term in difficult words, it puts it in a easier Afrikaans...' (CA4); '... it has a good clarification of words...' (CB3). One can deduce from the above statements that these types of dictionaries are used by a few exceptionally good Afrikaans second language student teachers.

#### 4.7.5.3 Use of bilingual and Afrikaans dictionaries

It is interesting to note that those who use both bilingual and Afrikaans dictionaries seem not to have clear reasons for their actions. Only one student teacher from college CB, could account for this exercise as follows: '... if I don't find any help from the Afrikaans *'verklarende woordeboek'* I use *'tweetalige woordeboek'*. It is clear from the above statement that at first he uses the Afrikaans dictionary, and only when he fails to find the meaning or does not understand the explanation given, will he try to find its meaning in English. Thus the second dictionary is used as the last option.

Apart from those who use different types of dictionaries, there is a category of those who do not utilise dictionaries at all.

#### 4.7.5.4 Reason for not utilising dictionaries

At CA, some of the respondents (30 percent) indicated that they do not make use of any type of dictionary and they gave the following reasons for their actions. Respondent CA5 indicated that instead of using a dictionary he makes use of the contextual meaning. He says that '... I use contextual meaning and I cannot use a dictionary every word..'. From this statement it is clear that he does not understand the way a dictionary is used in an everyday situation. From this respondent point of view it is apparently not technically correct, to assume that when dictionaries are utilised one will try to look up every word in the sentence; only words which are difficult will be checked for the meanings. If one is going to use contextual meanings only, one can easily assume that what he is understanding in a particular sentence is correct, whereas it might be not. It is also very difficult to understand that a target language can be learnt in the absence of the use of dictionaries. This false assumption is further

exacerbated by the fact that even first language speakers of a particular language do utilise dictionaries. If the habits of not utilising dictionaries exist in our colleges, then it is difficult to visualise a situation where foreign language learners could master Afrikaans as their target language.

The next respondent in the 'no' category is of the opinion that '... in preparation it does not need the dictionary because it does has terminology. There are no difficult words in preparing a lesson' (CA6). Even respondent CA6 seem not to understand what the usual purposes of dictionaries are for in a language learning process. The fact that he is talking about terminology in the *Reader (learners reading books)*, should give him more reason for looking up its meaning and usage in everyday language. It is also expected of the respondent to verify the given terminology used during the process of making various teaching aids which will support different lessons. The fact that the respondent disregards the looking up equivalent meanings of the terminology may also lead to the assumption that learners in his classroom would also not be encouraged to get used to the exercise. The result of the above assumption is that learners are either drilled or encouraged to memorise the subject matter in question. The ultimate mistake is that learners themselves are not encouraged to use dictionaries whilst learning the second language in class, a factor which will make them more ignorant by the day. As a result of this ignorance, they may end up assuming that Afrikaans is a difficult language.

The last respondent in this category will also shed light on the issue. Respondent CA7 says: 'we have never been taught how to use dictionary'. The respondent is a final year student teacher who is going to teach the following year, a function which he is going to perform without acquiring this important skill which is essential not only in the Afrikaans second language teaching and learning process, but also in the teaching and learning of the first language. Granted the fact that the respondent cannot use the dictionary, it is clear that even his command of the target language is still in its infancy. It is difficult to visualise how he can stand in front of a class and teach with confidence to the extent that learners will understand and like the language. Teachers in this 'league' usually opt for memorisation as a teaching and evaluation strategy. When this

memorisation type of learning is done without understanding it becomes hazardous to the language learning process.

Having discussed the use and non use of various types of dictionaries, it is important to take a close look at languages which are used in the Afrikaans classes for explanatory purposes. It is clear from section 4.7.4 that dictionaries are not adequately utilised as a strategy for improving the student teachers knowledge of the target language in question. The impression that is derived from the answers given is that the use of dictionaries in the learning of Afrikaans can be classified as ranging from fair to poor. This impression confirms the idea that the culture of reading amongst student teachers in Afrikaans is very poor and that the knowledge of the language (vocabulary) will remain static and weak if dictionaries are not utilised in the learning of the language. They are to be regarded as another measure of gaining a new vocabulary of the target language on their own. Worse still is the fact that some of the student teachers claim that they have never been taught how to utilise a dictionary: one wonders what skill in this regard they will transfer to their learners in class. This strategy, if not taken seriously, will hamper the exposure of the learners to the subject on their own.

#### **4.7.6 Other languages which are used during the Afrikaans teaching periods at both CA and CB institutions**

In these categories respondents were requested to answer the following question from their interview schedule as per annexure A: 'In your Afrikaans teaching periods which languages would you use, to explain concepts which are difficult for your pupils?'

The aim of asking this question was to find out the extent to which Afrikaans is used in its teaching period and also to see whether Afrikaans teachers have strategies of teaching without the aid of other languages.

In the above question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A, respondents were required to choose the languages which they use in order to explain difficult concepts. The responses are shown as follows in Table 9.

Table 9

Languages used during the Afrikaans period for explanatory purposes

College	English		Mother Tongue		Afrikaans		Afrikaans & mother tongue		English & Afrikaans		Any other		Total	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
CA	2	20	0	0	1	10	1	10	4	40	2	20	10	100
	0	0	0	0	2	25	2	25	4	50	0	0	8	100

4.7.6.1 The use of the mother tongue in the Afrikaans lessons

As seen from Table 9, all the respondents avoid using the mother tongue as an explanatory means during Afrikaans lessons. This is an encouraging sign which indicates that Afrikaans is not taught through the medium of any other African language.

4.7.6.2 English use in the Afrikaans lessons

Two respondents at this institution, that is 20 percent, indicate that they do utilise English in explaining difficult concepts during the Afrikaans classes. Reasons for using English for explanatory purposes were given as follows: ‘... English is famous and children understand it easily and those who are from townships usually use English’ (CA4); and ‘... English is easy to understand than Afrikaans’ (CA8). The first statement by respondent CA4 has various implications for the attitudes of both learners and the student teacher concerned. He is of the opinion that English is famous and as such he has to use it. It appears that he does not bother to investigate the origin of the idea that English is famous; his assumption is final and everyone is to accept it without question. But questions which should be asked here are: English is famous according to which, or whose, standards? Who made it famous and where is it famous? A more constructive question for this study would be the second one. As explained under section 2.2.1. English had been made well-known by the language policy of the previous and the present governments, where it was and is still regarded as the language of greater communication. An attempt to answer the first question can be

undertaken to the effect that English is well-known according to the standards of the present government and all those people who by nature or by choice cannot speak and understand Afrikaans as a language. The negative influence of the latter people on the teaching and learning process of the Afrikaans language should not be underestimated. If Afrikaans is taught by a person whose knowledge of it is in its infancy, he will always give his learners the impression that it is not important to know it as it is no longer well-known nor does it feature as a 'language of greater communication' as articulated in the languages debates. True as the above statement might be, Afrikaans is still one of the South African official languages ( see section 2.1). Its existence and development is guaranteed by the constitution of this country.

A second assumption made by respondent CA4 is that 'Children understand it easily and those who are from the township usually use English'. The assumption might be right or wrong but it is the researcher's belief that a teacher cannot go on teaching a language which he believes is difficult and then utilise a different language to simplify it. The teacher in this instance is not serving as a model of speaking the target language (see section 3.3.1.1). Surely there are other educational means through which the situation of a difficult language can be rectified. The other argument which can be advanced is that English, which in the Northern Province is not always the African learners' first language, cannot or should not always be regarded as a possible teaching aid for explanatory purposes in the Afrikaans language classes. By the respondent's own admission, he says that learners from the townships usually use English. This might be true in some cases, as explained in section 2.2.4.1, where it was pointed out that some of the parents do not worry if their children are not taught their first language at all. Though this might sometimes be the case, it should not be regarded as a norm, but rather as an exception to the rule.

Another question asked in the previous paragraph is: English is famous where? This question is also to be answered as follows: Even if English is regarded as famous in some quarters, it should not be made famous in irrelevant situations such as Afrikaans classes. Where it is used as the medium of instruction in teaching some other subjects, it is definitely relevant. However in the teaching of other living languages like Afrikaans it is most irrelevant and inappropriate. This is more so in cases where it does not feature as the learners' first language. If it is utilised in that capacity, learners may tend

to confuse the two foreign languages and not master either of them.

Respondent CA 8 (as CA4) is also of the opinion that 'English is easier to understand than Afrikaans'. The implication of the statement, as already explained, in this statement is that the inference made is his personal opinion which cannot be imposed on learners categorically without reservations.

#### 4.7.6.3 **Afrikaans as used in explanation of difficult concepts**

The third category of respondents is that which feels that only Afrikaans should be used in explaining difficult concepts encountered during the Afrikaans lessons. This conforms to the requirements of the direct teaching method where teaching aids will be utilised for explanatory purposes as already discussed in section 3.4.2. 10 and 25 percent of the respondents from CA and CB, respectively, believed in this way of teaching. Their reasons for using only Afrikaans in class during its period were given as follows: '... Afrikaans because we are going to write Afrikaans in Afrikaans - in mixing languages students are going to be confused.' (CA6); '... I want them to acquire knowledge in Afrikaans and I don't want them to mix languages' (CB6); '...Afrikaans so that when we are using Afrikaans it makes it well'. (CB5).

The first statement, by CA6, indicates that his (good) reason for using Afrikaans only is that learners of this particular language must use it without the help of other languages. If it is to be mixed with other languages when teaching it, learners will not be proficient in Afrikaans and the aims of teaching the language will not be achieved. All three respondents from both institutions agree with the fact that they do not want their learners to mix Afrikaans with other languages. If they mix Afrikaans with other languages they end up confusing their learners, a factor which may prevent them from speaking and writing the correct language, which is their main aim in teaching it. Linguistic flexibility in Afrikaans is largely determined by the learners' ability to use it.

#### 4.7.6.4      **The use of the mother tongue and Afrikaans in the Afrikaans lessons**

The next category is one in which the respondent shows whether he/she believes in using the mother tongue during an Afrikaans period for explanatory purposes. In other words it implies that whenever these student teachers realise that learners who are not understanding a particular concept in Afrikaans, the student teachers feel that learners may understand if the teacher uses the learners' first language, to explain, rather than other educational means. This exercise in turn produces learners who tend to explain themselves in their first language whenever they meet difficulties in the envisaged target language. If this language learning process is encouraged, it results in second language learners who fail to master the language and the idiom of the target language. In this instance, remedial work in Afrikaans will have to include literal translation of language, expressed in the idiom of the first language.

Various reasons for using the mother tongue for explanations during the Afrikaans lessons were advanced by 10 and 25 percent of the respondents from CA and CB institutions respectively. They justify using their first language in the Afrikaans classes as follows: '... in the lower level I switch to English if not understood I will then switch to mother tongue. Mother tongue should be used as the last resort: I use a "sandwiching technique" - you say a word in English and then in Afrikaans' (CA1). The above explanation is even more confusing to the learner as three languages will be used at the same time. The fact that the grammar translation method is used with three languages is even more confusing to the Afrikaans second language learners. It can also be deduced that learners in the Afrikaans lessons are not encouraged to speak one language at a time. This type of foreign language learning process does not emphasise the importance of gaining proficiency in a target language. A learner's ability to learn a target language is to be encouraged by means of a language rich environment (see section 3.6.1.1), otherwise learners will find themselves being unable to cope with the learning of the target language in an environment where it is rarely utilised. Coupled with the fact that the percentage usage of Afrikaans in the Northern Province is very negligible, it can only be fair to conclude that proficiency in this target language will be difficult to attain. The fact that some of the respondents to this

interview schedule do not propagate other ways of explaining difficult concepts in Afrikaans may lead to the belief that most teachers are ill qualified to give classes in methods other than traditional strategies (cf. Blackquière, quoted in section 1.2).

Apart from the reasons for using mother tongue and Afrikaans by CA1, there are other responses in this category. Respondent CB7 says: '... if I see that pupils find it difficult (to understand a concept) I use mother tongue to explain'. The above response takes us back to the grammar-translation method as discussed above. From the discussion of this method (see section 3.4.1), it is clear that the method was abandoned for the very reason that it propagated the teaching of a target language through the medium of another language. Looking at CA1 and CB7 second and foreign language teaching strategies it is clear that if they teach at this rate, the specific and critical outcomes of the Afrikaans second language syllabi will never be achieved. Not only will both outcomes miscarry but the language teaching process itself will not produce fluent users of the language. Here we also seem to be dealing with the issue of ushering the future generation into and equipping it for, the global village, which requires us to be equipped with linguistic flexibility. In multilingual and multicultural situations, knowledge of as many languages as possible can only be to the advantage of our learners if they are to cope.

#### 4.7.6.5 **The use of English during the Afrikaans lessons**

The next category of respondents are those who believe that in explaining difficult concepts during the Afrikaans lessons, English should be utilised in the teaching process. They constitute 40 and 50 percent of the responses in CA and CB institutions respectively. Thus, it is clear that almost half of the respondents seem to be in favour of using English whilst teaching Afrikaans, as will be illustrated by the reasons they advanced for this type of teaching practice. Some of the responses from both colleges are as follows: '... we use English as we are teaching a foreign language...' (CA2); '...it may be possible pupils are not Xitsonga, it is therefore useful to use English'. (CA5); '...English is common and some of the Afrikaans words are from English, example, teaspoon - *'teelepel'* ' (CB); '... pupils are from different language groups so it is better

to use English which is a medium of instruction...' (CB8).

The four responses were given by student teachers from both colleges as the reasons for using English in the Afrikaans lessons for explanatory purposes. Respondent CA2 is of the opinion that in teaching a subject which is a foreign language like Afrikaans, it is important to solicit the use of English. It is clear that his assumption is that all the learners in class are either first or second language learners of English. Taking the Northern Province and its language distribution (see sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2), this assumption is not justifiable as some of the learners are still struggling with English itself. Ntsandeni (1993:202), for example, is of the opinion that where two foreign languages are used to explain difficult concepts, learners of the target language tend to mix the languages and memorise the teachers' statements without understanding them.

Respondents CA5 and CA8 also regard English as the common denominator of all the local languages, hence they propose its use during the Afrikaans lessons as a means of explaining difficult concepts. The scenario which has been described in the above paragraph with regard to respondent CA2 should also apply in this case. Respondent CB8 goes further to say that English is a medium of instruction. It is further assumed by this respondent that all the learners do know English as it is supposed to be the *lingua franca* of all learners, as assumed from the above statement. All educational practices for teaching languages which do not serve as media of instruction are disregarded by the student teachers. It can also be assumed that a preknowledge of the language of English, which is definitely not the learners' first language, has definitely not been taken into consideration. The last response comes from CA5 where he says that he utilises English for explanatory reasons during Afrikaans lessons because he regards English as a common language for all his learners. He further alleges that English is similar to Afrikaans, hence the mixing of the two languages during the Afrikaans lessons. At this stage in his teacher training period, which is nearing its end, it should be noted that the issue is not as simple as all that. There are many differences between the two languages. To state but a few: syllabi, aims and objectives for teaching the subject, the idiom of the language and many others. The

fact that the respondent disregarded all these aspects apparently illustrates that the respondent is not quite conversant with the usage of the two languages. If that assumption is correct, it justifies Blackquière's (1989) comment that the training of Black teachers is characterised by the existence of some deficiencies which require some corrections (see section 1.2.1). The discussion in this paragraph is an example of one of those deficiencies in the training of black teachers which requires attention.

Having considered strategies on language teaching and usage as they pertain to the explanation of difficult concepts as perceived by student teachers in an Afrikaans class, it is of importance at this stage to investigate whether they understand certain theoretical matters regarding the aims of their syllabi and objectives of their lessons.

In this section 4.6.6 and subsequent sections, it is clear that during the teaching practice sessions, student teachers taking Afrikaans foreign language special didactics were not capable of utilising teaching strategies which would avoid the employment of other languages in their lessons. The practice of student teachers utilising other languages in explaining difficult concepts may be ascribed to insufficient knowledge of the target language, as well as a lack of capacity to utilise other teaching strategies in their lessons. As a result of the explanation offered by the researcher, student teachers taking Afrikaans foreign language special didactics cannot lay claim to an ability to teach the subject satisfactorily. They are found to be wanting in the role of serving as models for using of the target language (see section 3.3.1). These student teachers seem to defeat the very aim and objective of teaching a foreign language, which is to help the learner to communicate in the language in question. In short, this may be interpreted to mean that student teachers went to their final teaching practice session without mastering some of the teaching skills and strategies required in the successful teaching of the subject (see section 3.3.2). This deficiency in the teaching of the subject Afrikaans, if practised by most of the teachers in the field, as the student teachers in question will soon be teachers themselves, leads one to expect that the teaching of the subject will be affected negatively. At best learners will not be able to speak the language due to the absence of role models in speaking the target language, and at worst they will develop negative attitudes towards it.

#### **4.8 THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE AIMS OF THE SYLLABUS IN THE TEACHING OF THE SUBJECT**

To the question in the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A: 'Is it important to know the syllabus aims of teaching your subject'? All respondents (100%) from both institutions gave a positive response. These responses seem to illustrate that respondents understand that teaching has to do with the knowing and understanding of the syllabus and its aims. However, a different picture was painted when the respondents were requested to give reasons why they think that knowing the aims of the syllabus is important. The following reasons were furnished.

##### **4.8.1 Reasons for knowing the curriculum aims at CA**

The reasons for knowing the aims of the curriculum which were given by respondents from CA were as follows:

1. '... if you do something you don't know the reason for doing, the commitment is very low, in many cases I have seen learners when you teach Afrikaans they seem not to concentrate'. (CA1)
2. '... As a teacher I believe in imparting knowledge to the pupil - at the end of the lesson pupils should know direction...' (CA5).
3. '... you cannot teach Afrikaans without knowing it' (CA4)
4. '... Afrikaans is one of the official languages. It is simplest subject for learning and teaching.' (CA6)
5. '... it makes the language more interesting and understandable...' (CA7)
6. '... it is necessary to know whether the subject will lead you to interesting destination' (CA8).

Respondent CA1 seems to be talking about the word 'aim' in general, not in its educational context where it deals with the syllabus of a particular subject. The fact that he speaks about a lesson in progress and uninterested learners seems to point to the fact that he is talking about the lesson objectives. Another issue also comes to mind

when the issue of demotivated pupils comes into the picture, as this situation is caused by the fact that learners are not made aware of the future utility of the subject. Though that issue of demotivation may be taken as an excuse for low interest in the lesson, it also appears that the teacher at this moment had not succeeded in arousing his learners' interest in the lesson concerned. In other words, the student teacher concerned does not seem to know the difference between the aim of the subject and the lesson objectives. This type of ignorance is capable of unsettling any didactician when he or she realizes that this is one of the Afrikaans teachers who is going to be sent out to schools to teach the subject permanently in a few months' time.

Respondent CA4 is correct when he states one of the criteria which should be met by Afrikaans teachers before embarking on the task of teaching the subject. He says that 'You cannot teach Afrikaans without knowing it.' True as the statement is, it has nothing to do with the knowledge of the aims of the Afrikaans curriculum. This statement might have been made in one of the student teachers' textbooks, or better still, one of the lecturers, when realising the importance of this criterion, might always have stressed it in class. These assumptions boil down to the fact that the respondent has memorised the sentence without understanding it and hence has the habit of mentioning it whenever she recognizes something which has to do with the teaching of Afrikaans. The point which is being made here is that the respondent is aware that there are factors called 'aims of the syllabus' which are prescribed for the teaching of a particular syllabus, and that they have utility in the language teaching process.

The next response, by CA5, is: '... as a teacher I believe in imparting knowledge to the pupils - at the end of the lesson pupils should know direction'. The response illustrates the beliefs which he stands for in teaching. It also indicates that he cannot differentiate between an aim and an objective. However, he seems to have some slight idea about what an objective is because he does say something about the lesson in general. The explanation is rendered useless by its vagueness. This is a typical sign of student teachers who memorise concepts in general but fail to have a firm grasp of these theoretical aspects of their syllabi. This failure to understand the theoretical aspects of their syllabi will count against them when they endeavour to make its

practical implement theory practically, in real situations.

Respondent CA6 is of the opinion that: '... Afrikaans is one of the official languages' The first observation to be made as such is that this response has nothing to do with knowing the aims of any syllabus, least of all those which are concerned with the teaching of Afrikaans. Evidently the respondent, like CA4, has read or heard some statement about Afrikaans being important as it is one of the official languages. After memorising the statement without understanding it, he seems to regurgitate it wherever he sees or hears the word 'important' associated with the learning of Afrikaans - hence this irrelevant response at this moment. As has already been argued in the previous paragraph, it is clear that if student teachers go about memorising expressions and words when learning theoretical aspects of teaching Afrikaans, they end up not being able to put their hard earned theory into practice. When that situation arises, we find ourselves dealing with a generation of knowledge bankrupt teachers. This type of teacher will in turn produce ignorant learners in the subject. This vicious cycle, if not curbed, will continue until the time when the teaching qualification will exist on paper only.

The response by CA7 that '... it makes the language more interesting' is like other previous statements which were at a tangent to the question asked. It does not furnish reasons why CA7 should feel that knowledge of the syllabus aims is important in the teaching process. Apparently the respondent does not see any correlation between teaching a particular subject and the purpose of stipulating the aims of its prescribed syllabus. The same can be said of respondent CA8 who is of the opinion that '... it is essential to know whether the subject would lead you to interesting destination'. It appears that he does have a slight idea about the aim of a subject but he seems not to know exactly what he is talking about. His knowledge is not clear enough to form a firm basis from which he can implement his theoretical knowledge in practice. Thus with such scanty knowledge, he may end up not succeeding in deriving his lesson objectives from the aims of the curriculum.

#### 4.8.2 Implications of knowing curriculum aims at CB

The following responses concerning the importance of knowing the curriculum aims at CB have been expressed by different interviewees:

1. '... everything that a person do, did it with aim. So I ought to teach with aims' (CB4).
2. '... if I don't know the aims of teaching a subject I won't be able to teach the subject - be interested in achieving its aims' (CB5).
3. '... it is important to know the aims of the subject' (CB6).
4. '... because the aim of the subject matter is to achieve that lesson and see to it that every pupils understand the lesson well...' (CB7).
5. '... I must know why I am doing the subject'... (CB8).
6. '... if I do not have the aim of the subject, I'll find it difficult to teach as teaching is not my entertainment' (CB9).

In this institution respondents also seem to be experiencing difficulties in explaining the importance of knowing the aims of teaching a particular subject. The first response is so general that its meaning disappears behind words as follows: '... everything that a person do, did it with aim. So I ought to teach with aims...' (CB4). It appears that the above respondent understands what the word 'aim' means in general terms but it is not clear that he knows the importance which is to be attached to the aims of the subject as they stand in syllabuses in general and in that of Afrikaans in particular. The respondents seem to be experiencing difficulties when it comes to identifying the actual utility of these syllabus aims in the language teaching process. The difficulties may also be due to the language medium used in the learning of the concept, which was Afrikaans, and the question in the interview schedule, which was in English. However another variable concerning not knowing the utility of the concepts of the 'syllabus aims' seems to be operating here, as the interviewer tried to explain the concept in Afrikaans and the familiarity of the student teacher with the concept was still not certain.

The same unclear picture is painted by respondent CB5 when he states reasons for

regarding knowledge of the aims of the curriculum as important in the language teaching process: '...If I don't know the aims of teaching the subject I won't be able to teach the subject - be interested in achieving its aim'. However, respondents CB6 and CB9 also fall in the same category as the first two who were discussed in this section. Their responses are: '... it is important to know the aim of the subject', CB6; and '... if I do not have the aim of the subject, I'll find it difficult to teach as teaching is not my entertainment' CB9. Apparently both respondents, CB6 and CB9, do not have any idea that the 'aim of the syllabus' is important in the language teaching process in general and in that of Afrikaans second and foreign languages in particular. Their problem is that they are not able to express an explicit function of this concept in the language teaching process. The fact that these are final year students indicates that they are still failing to put their theory into practice and not only that, it also indicates that at times they read about issues, yet do not understand them.

The last respondents, that is CB8 and CB9, form their own group as they differ from those discussed in the previous paragraphs. Respondent CB8 regards the importance of the aims of teaching a subject as follows: '...I must know why I am doing the subject'. This explanation is acceptable as it indicates that the aims of teaching a subject as prescribed in the syllabus furnish the teacher of that particular language with reasons for teaching it. If the reasons for teaching a curriculum are known, then even the envisaged product can be predicted in the final analysis. Respondent CB9 has a problem with differentiating between aims of the subject and objectives of the lesson. He seems to be of the opinion that aims have to deal with lesson in particular when he says: '... because the aim of the subject matter is to achieve that lesson and see to it that every pupil understand the lesson well...'. This response would have been acceptable if we were dealing with objectives of a lesson, which help is to determine whether the lesson has been successful or not. This success of the lesson is based on the evaluation of the set of lesson objectives as laid down by the teacher concerned.

Lesson objectives, as a concept in the teaching of languages, will be discussed below.

#### 4.9 THE IMPORTANCE OF STATING LESSON OBJECTIVES DURING THE LESSON'S PLANNING STAGE

The question from the interview schedule as per annexure A was stated as follows: 'Do you consider it as important to state the objectives of your lesson during its planning stage?' To this question all respondents from both institutions answered yes. The only difference came about when they were required to give reasons for their answers. The following is the list of reasons for considering it important to state objectives of the lesson during their planning stage:

1. '... you state your objectives through your actions. What you do should show that the teacher is doing such and such a thing ' (CA1).
2. '... the teacher should know reasons behind things being taught...' (CA2).
3. '... children should acquire new concepts and the skills of writing those words' (CA4).
4. '... Every lesson should have objectives in the sense that you cannot teach the lesson being aimless' (CA5).
5. '... it makes the pupils to get the matter all right' (CA6).
6. '... learner must get something at the end of the lesson from the topic' (CA7).
7. '... it is important for the sake of teaching...' (CB9).
8. '... so that I must see whether the lesson is successful or not' (CB8).
9. '... because if you don't state the objectives, you'll be unable to achieve that goal' (CB7).
10. '... if I don't know the reason, I won't know the reason for the accomplishment - finalising the lesson...' (CB9).
11. '... there is no need, you see it at the end of the lesson' (CB4).
12. ... at the end of the lesson pupils might gain something in life (CB3).

Having listed all the reasons for stating lesson objectives as furnished by respondents from both institutions, it is necessary to analyse them in order to put them in their proper perspective.

Respondent CB4 does not see the reason why these aims should be stated during the lesson's planning stage as he pointed out that: 'there is no need, you see it at the end of the lesson'. He does not elaborate on how these objectives will be seen. It appears as if he is not aware of the fact that when evaluating the learners' understanding at the end of the lesson, it is important to first know which objectives are supposed to be achieved at the end of the lesson and not vice versa. Identifying lesson objectives in the planning stage will help in the choice of teaching strategies, identification of the source for the subject matter, development of teaching aids and establishment of the type of assessment which needs to be utilised. Planning lessons without these objectives will be fruitless, as it will also be impossible to link the aims of the syllabus to the objectives of the perceived lesson. If aims and lesson objectives are not linked and integrated when lessons are planned, then the expected or envisaged product of that curriculum will not be realised. CB4's response can be compared to that of CA1 who does not consider it as important to know the lesson's objectives before hand. He says that: '.... you state your objectives through your actions. What you do should show that the teacher is doing such a thing...'. The issue is here not about demonstrating through one's actions, it is about his knowing the lesson objectives and writing them down in his lesson preparation.

Respondent CB9 appears to be a typical example of student teachers who read and memorise terms and concepts without understanding them. A student teacher in the second half of his final year should at this stage be able to say something more penetrating about the utility of lesson objectives, than just: 'they are important for the sake of teaching'.

Apart from the three responses (CA1, CB4 and CB9), which have already been discussed, the other nine explanations as tabulated in the beginning of this paragraph indicate similar understanding of the concept. These nine respondents are aware that objectives of a lesson have to do with the direction and success of a lesson. However it seems as if these student teachers do not realise that the most important function of the lesson objectives is that in the long run they should translate to the aims of the curriculum, of the subject concerned. Not only are they supposed to support the aims

of the curriculum, but they should determine the type of assessment as well as the media to be used in a lesson.

In summarising discussions in sections 4.8 and 4.9 it is apparent that student teachers do not always know the basic concepts which are fundamental in the planning of their usual activities during the performance of their duties. The examples of basic concepts which have been furnished are so essential to planning the teaching activities in the learning programmes that any knowledgeable person in this area of expertise, may doubt the credibility of the student teachers in question as future teachers of the subject. The revelation about student teachers who seem not to understand what is expected of them in the teaching of the subject as a whole, and in each lesson in particular, confirms the notion of some researchers that teachers in certain sections of the population were not always well trained (see section 3.3.2)

#### 4.10 LANGUAGES TO BE USED AS MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION IN DIFFERENT SUBJECTS

The question from the student teachers' interview schedule as per annexure A which dealt with the question of medium of instruction in the teaching of different subjects was: 'If given a choice, which languages would you prefer to use as medium of instruction in your studying of different courses in the college?' The responses were recorded in Table 10 as follows:

Table 10

Preferred languages to be used as medium of instruction

Colleges	Mother tongue		Afrikaans		English		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
CA	1	10	1	10	8	80	10	100
CB	0	0	1	12.5	7	87.5	8	100

The above question in the interview schedule was intended to establish whether the

respondents were brave enough to change the *status quo* in the sense of English as a general medium of instruction. They were also expected to explain why they chose a particular language to be used as a teaching medium. In institution CA, 10 percent (one student teacher) preferred the mother tongue to be made a medium of instruction whereas not a single respondent from CB accorded that status to any first language. Respondent CA5 gave the following reason for his choice of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction: '... in mother tongue I'll be able to know everything. I'll understand every other thing.' From this remark it is clear that, according to him, difficulties in the learning of subjects are brought about by linguistic problems. These linguistic problems are created by the use of second and third languages as media of instruction in the teaching of different subjects. The respondent thus realises that his linguistic flexibility in other languages is not of a high enough standard for him to be able to use it for efficient learning purposes.

Two respondents, one from each institution, opted for Afrikaans to be used as medium of instruction in the learning of different subjects. They will be discussed separately as the rationale for their reasoning is not the same. Respondent CA4 is eager to use Afrikaans because '... Afrikaans is interesting'. The implication of that statement is that personally he has no objection to the use of the Afrikaans language as such. He goes further to explain that: '... Afrikaans is interesting but I am backgrounded on the situation where I was supposed to hate Afrikaans. English is international and I want to go out.' As already explained in this paragraph respondent CA4 does not hate the Afrikaans language as such, but he is a product of his environment where he admits that it is expected of him not to like the language, or perhaps not to show signs of its inclusion as one of the units of his linguistic flexibility. This attitude as described by CA4 has already been discussed in chapters one and two of this study, where reasons were given for Africans' negativity towards the Afrikaans language. CB6 says that 'Afrikaans is my best subject. I understand its meaning and I enjoy reading Afrikaans newspapers and magazines'. This quotation seems to indicate that there are student teachers who feel deprived of their knowledge when Afrikaans is not used. In practice, the wishes of this minority group, who want to use Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, are usually ignored by the authorities in the colleges and by the Department of

Education itself. Reasons for these actions from different quarters are not always clear, except for assumptions based on historical factors, which are not always proved.

The last category of students would like to use English as the medium of instruction for different courses. The reasons advanced for their choice are similar to those furnished by student teachers for choosing English as an important language for their future needs. For the sake of clarity they will be mentioned here as follows:

1. '... English is the language I like. It is in line with what I am going to do in future' (CA2).
2. '... because English is the only language with which I can communicate' (CA3).
3. '... English, because I want to acquire knowledge of my second language' (CA6).
4. '... Many subjects are done using English. Afrikaans is much difficult than English' (CA7).
5. '... English because I'll understand what I am studying ' (CA8).
6. '... English is the subject I understand. English will help me understand with all the foreigners' (CB8).
7. '... Most of the subjects are written in English' (CB4).
8. '... We are of different races, so if I use my first language it will be difficult'" (CB5).
9. '... English has a lot of reading material and it is commonly used' (CB3).

In summarising which languages would be used as media of instruction if student teachers were allowed to exercise their wishes, English emerged as the first preference of most interviewees. It is clear that home languages and the Afrikaans language are not perceived by student teachers as linguistic tools to be utilised as a means of acquiring knowledge. As far as the language of Afrikaans is concerned, student teachers doing it seem not to attach any value to using it as a means of acquiring knowledge. They seem to think that if one can just teach it in class, this suffices as a reason for knowing it. This idea also implies that they do not realise any other value of

learning the language and as such they may not strive to learn it to the best of their ability, as the motivation attached to the process is not strong enough to warrant such action. Another perspective is that previous and present language policies in the country have created negative attitudes towards the language in question. The *apartheid* government imposed the learning of Afrikaans on people and the government of the African National Congress have contributed towards the process by demoting the language from being an official language to that of an ordinary indigenous language (see section 2.2 and subsequent sections)

#### **4.11 TEACHING PRACTICE AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

Teaching practice is carried out at both colleges as prescribed by the syllabus. Students do peer group teaching as well as visit various schools during prescribed periods during the three years of training. Teaching practice periods are taught at various schools, twice a year. At the end of the last teaching practice period, student teachers' marks are added together and a final mark is determined by the Department of Teaching Science. This final mark is ultimately moderated by the relevant Department of Education which may increase the mark, leave it as it is, or decrease it before it is finally ratified.

Having described teaching practice as done in colleges, interviewees were requested to indicate difficulties which they encounter during the teaching practice period. The aims of this exercise were to uncover difficulties which they personally encounter in the teaching practice field because more often than not, difficulties which are ascribed to the learners often have to do with the teacher himself. Six aspects of the curriculum were mentioned in the interview and respondents were expected to indicate where they encountered difficulties. They were also expected to briefly describe the kind of difficulties which they claimed to come across. Aspects of the curriculum which were presented in the interview schedule were as follows: essay writing, letter writing, oral work, grammar, idioms and literature. Each aspect will be discussed separately as follows:

#### 4.11.1 **Essay writing**

A number of respondents from both CA and CB institutions regarded essay writing as a difficult aspect to teach. Reasons contributing to these difficulties were given as follows:

##### 4.11.1.1 **Inability to make a summary in essay writing**

Amongst them, only one respondent expressed his personal difficulty whilst trying to teach this aspect. He said: '... I find myself not knowing how to make a summary' (CB4). The implication of this statement shows that the student teachers find it difficult to determine main ideas for a particular essay during the oral essay period. These problems not only stem from the inability to make a summary alone, they may also be a result of failure by the student teacher to use teaching media whilst handling the lesson (see section 3.8.4). These shortcomings are rectifiable if they are brought to the attention of the relevant lecturers when a teaching practice session is reviewed. Apart from the (CB4) response, there were other responses which point to the learners other characteristics.

##### 4.11.1.2 **The problem of language usage**

All other respondents who complained about teaching essays seem to point at the problem of learners who are unable to speak the target language (Afrikaans) correctly , as will be discussed in the next paragraph.

##### 1. '... learners tend to make long incorrect sentences' (CA1)

The respondent here is concerned with long sentences, which ultimately brings up the problem of word order in Afrikaans. This issue is a problem because as a foreign speaker himself the student teacher seems to be unable to curb this practice. If he could use appropriate graphic organisers as explained in section 3.8.4, this problem would be solved. Maybe the question to be asked has rather to do with the student

teacher's efficiency in handling the graphic organisers. This is a skill which he should acquire at the college.

2. '... pupils cannot express themselves in Afrikaans' (CA7).

The student teacher (CA7) has a problem with learners who cannot express themselves in the target language at a primary school level. This is normal, as these learners started learning Afrikaans at the higher primary level and their knowledge of the subject is that of the early grades in the junior primary level of schooling. What seems to be the problem here is that the student teacher may not possess the junior primary skills which are essential in introducing a learner to a foreign language at that particular stage and in the circumstances of a poor language environment.

3. '... they mix tenses...' (CB6): '... when they write essay they don't know the difference between past and present tense' (CB7). The two responses by CB6 and CB7 both have to do with the tenses of Afrikaans. The problem seems to stem from teaching the language out of context as discussed under 3.7 and the subsequent sections of chapter 3. If tenses are not taught in context, learners tend to recognise them only when they are taught separately but fail to apply them in a context situation ( see sections 3.7.1.4).

#### **4.11.2 Letter writing**

As already explained previously with regard to essay writing, the principle of teaching language in context is seemingly not always practised in this instance either. This assumption stems from the fact that all the student teachers in this section complain about difficult aspects in the writing of these letters but not one of them informs us what happened when the communications part of the lesson transpired, which should have preceded the writing part. Responses will be discussed as follows:

#### **4.11.2.1 The inability to transcribe from the chalkboard**

Respondent (CA4) is worried because '... the child copies something not written on the board'. This skill of transcribing some written work from the board does not particularly pertain to the teaching of Afrikaans only, it is found in all subjects. The fact that learners in the higher primary level are not able to transcribe from the board should be addressed in different subjects, and from different angles for that matter. It is hoped that this problem can be isolated because if not, it spells difficult times ahead in the education of the learners concerned.

#### **4.11.2.2 The skill of letter writing not taught in lower classes**

Respondent (CA5) traces his difficulty about teaching letter writing to the fact that 'they (learners) are not taught letter writing from the lower levels'. This response shows that it is not the learners who are failing, but the student teacher, who seems not to know what to do with the learners who are just beginning to learn the target language for the first time in his class. Afrikaans is taught as a foreign language in all the African Primary schools in the Northern Province. Consequently it is only taught from grade five upwards, or from grade three in exceptional cases. The problem arises when colleges do not cater for the teaching of Afrikaans in the Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD). When student teachers are supposed to apply those skills which are taught in the JPTD but are not always emphasized in the Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD), they get confused. The confusion is brought about by the fact that in this instance, the SPTD student teacher is supposed to implement the skills of introducing a target language for the first time to a learner who has only just started learning the language. The skills which are needed here can only be acquired in the JPTD; that is the reason why the inability of this respondent to acquire the skills of teaching Afrikaans to beginners is a cause of concern to him, as he does not possess the required skills to perform the task.

#### 4.11.2.3 Learners unable to speak Afrikaans

The question of learners who are unable to speak Afrikaans is a cause of concern to more than one respondent. They express themselves as follows: '... the pupils are unable to construct a sentence in Afrikaans' (CB4); '... unable to construct sentences and they can't give the requirements of a friendly letter' (CB6). It would appear that both respondents expected the preknowledge of their learners to be of a higher standard, even though they knew very well that Afrikaans is a foreign language to the learners. For them it is a concern because they fear the task of enabling the learners to acquire the skills of speaking the language correctly, a fact which could be rectified by implementing various teaching strategies which they should acquire at the college, and by the experience which will be gained in the field. It is up to the student teacher concerned to do remedial work and bring the target language to the desired level through various teaching methods.

#### 4.11.3 The teaching of oral work in Afrikaans

Surprisingly enough, most of the respondents did not indicate the teaching of oral work as presenting difficulties. Only one respondent regarded oral work as an issue, as he indicated as follows: '... pupils are shy to speak and may not even say anything, she may prefer to use her first language.' (CB3). The respondent is concerned with the unwillingness of learners to communicate in Afrikaans, which he ascribes to shyness. The fact that he is of the opinion that learners seem to prefer to utilise the mother tongue may also indicate that they have not acquired enough vocabulary to speak using the target language. Another factor which may contribute to their 'not saying anything' may be due to the fact that in the learning of any language, the learner goes through different stages, with the listening stage being the first one. Given that fact, the learner might still be in the first stage and it is the duty of the student teacher to go through all the language learning stages with his pupils, using all the relevant teaching strategies and techniques. These strategies and techniques which are to be used by student teachers are supposed to be acquired during their teacher training. This issue will be discussed in chapter 5 when guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans will be

compiled.

#### **4.11.4 The state of reading activity amongst the Afrikaans language learners**

Though this activity is important as one of the learning strategies of Afrikaans second and third language, it appears to be poorly addressed. This is reflected in one response by CA4 when he says '... there is a lack of reading material'. As already discussed in section 4.6 of this chapter, the lack of material is to be coupled with the general lack of interest amongst student teachers in reading materials written in the target language.

#### **4.11.5 The teaching of idioms in the schools**

This aspect of the syllabus seems to present problems to various student teachers when they try to teach it in the schools. The problems seem to be similar as follows:

1. '... idioms are difficult because learners cannot find meanings thereof' (CA1).
2. '... since it is a foreign language, learners experience problems in understanding idioms' (CA2).
3. '... idioms because when I teach them, they won't be able to master the meaning when I am busy teaching' (CA3).
4. '... pupils could not understand them easily...' (CA5).

From the above four responses, student teachers seem to experience problems with the idioms themselves even before trying to teach them to learners. If teachers do not understand the subject matter itself, there is a problem in transferring the knowledge to the next person, let alone in teaching it to the foreign language learners. The extent of the teacher's difficulty in teaching, is usually blamed on the learners inability to grasp what is being taught at that particular period. There should be strategies and techniques which are to be applied to each and every item to be found in the syllabus. The catch in the situation is that these strategies and techniques are to be acquired in

the form of relevant skills. The inability to translate the theoretical knowledge into practice in teaching acquired by the student teachers, becomes a source of difficulty as illustrated by the above responses.

Having looked at the factors involved in the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language, it is important to try and design a way of overcoming the difficulties identified.

In section 4.11 it is clear that despite the fact that student teachers were only three months away from completing their course of study, they seemed not to be ready to assume the required responsibilities. A number of areas in the curriculum still needed to be covered and practised before these student teachers could be released to the profession of foreign language teaching in subjects like Afrikaans. If areas in the curriculum which need remedial work are not identified and corrected, student teachers may be erroneously certificated before they are equipped with essential skills to handle the subject.

#### **4.12 RÉSUMÉ**

In this chapter it was established that the enrolment of PTD student teachers who are taking Afrikaans as a teaching subject is decreasing every year. The importance of this observation is that unless something is done in the near future, primary schools will be without Afrikaans teachers, as more and more student teachers are not opting for this course. The problem with this observation is that if the trend continues, the basis of the subject, which should be laid in the primary school, will be weakened, as unqualified teachers will be utilised to teach learners at that delicate stage when they come into contact with the target language for the very first time. Correcting the learners' deficient learning process in the secondary school is difficult. This matter is made still worse by the fact that even colleges do not make provision for training teachers for teaching Afrikaans in the junior primary school classes either, a factor which further weakens the teaching and learning of Afrikaans in the African schools.

The Afrikaans language environment in the Northern Province is poor, since most of the

learners are third language speakers who were not afforded language enrichment opportunities during their learning career. At tertiary level, where they are at this stage, it has been discovered through interviews with them that almost all of them heard the Afrikaans language for the first time at their schools, and presumably during its classroom periods only. They also have a negative attitude towards it as they seem not to be aware of its future utility in their lives. They receive implied messages from various agencies like the media, teachers of other subjects, educational policies on the medium of instruction, other peers and bookshops that: 'It is not essential to know Afrikaans'. Consequently, they are more exposed to the English language in their daily communication with the world. The implication of the above observation is that whoever teaches them Afrikaans, should be aware of the negative attitudes and different perspectives in the learning of Afrikaans and devise means of counteracting them in his teaching.

It has also been observed in this chapter that most student teachers doing Afrikaans foreign language do not necessarily utilise skills for learning, teaching and enriching their language. Skills which one may assume to have been acquired by student teachers at this stage of their training are: the use of different types of dictionaries, reading of newspapers and magazines in the language, and reading of any Afrikaans literature for the sake of enjoyment, instead of reading only when expecting assessment, of whatever form, in class. It is thus important to realise that the teaching of Afrikaans student teachers should include remedial work which should be aimed at equipping them with the desired skills. Where a deficiency exists, their knowledge will have to be enriched in one way or another.

A further observation is that student teachers' attitudes towards the use of Afrikaans during the Afrikaans lessons are questionable, because they believe in supplementing learners' understanding of the learning material through the utilisation of the English language. Very few interviewees regarded their first language and teaching aids as being essential in simplifying their task of teaching in this instance. It is therefore clear that the training of student teachers in the teaching of Afrikaans foreign language should strive to equip them with the knowledge of this language and the development

of resource materials for teaching. The potential of developing resource materials will help them to simplify the teaching and understanding of the subject matter by the target language learners. This process should be accompanied by the acquisition of the teaching strategies and assessment procedures relevant to Afrikaans as a foreign language.

Interviewees were requested to show their understanding of concepts used in Afrikaans subject didactics, for example, the aims and objectives of a lesson. It became apparent in the interviews that most of the student teachers are not conversant with these concepts and as a result they do not know how and when to utilise them in the teaching process. Guidelines to be developed for the teaching of Afrikaans should be informed by such deficiencies in the teacher training process.

Interviewees were requested to identify problematic areas which they encountered in their teaching during their teaching practice period. This was done with the aim of managing the difficulties which were identified through the teacher training programme designed for the purpose. It was established that most of the affected areas emanated from deficient language acquisition on the part of the learners and from unsuitable teaching skills on the part of the student teachers.

In the next chapter, guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans in Colleges of Education in the Northern Province are proposed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### GUIDELINES PROPOSED FOR THE TEACHING OF AFRIKAANS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE

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#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country which is both multilingual and multicultural in nature. This identity is enshrined in the constitution of the country and the language policy of the present democratic government regards all languages as being equal. All citizens are given the right to use and participate in whatever culture they so desire (see section 3.1).

Since the importance of respecting each other's language and culture has been emphasized by the Bill of Rights, which has been entrenched in the Constitution of the country, it is again relevant to look briefly at the position of various languages during the previous era of the *apartheid* government.

##### 5.1.1 The language policy during the *apartheid* era

Of the eleven South African languages in the *apartheid* era, only two were regarded as being official throughout the country. The two official languages were English and Afrikaans (see section 2.1). The process of establishing these languages as official was more complex than meets the eye; the African National Congress (1995:65) illustrated in its rationale for developing a new language policy in the new post-*apartheid* era that 'the official policy in South Africa has been interwoven with the politics of domination and separation, resistance and affirmation'.

This language policy placed English and Afrikaans in an equal and advantageous position. Both languages were equal when utilised in government, businesses,

education, churches and any other place where a common language was essential in unifying people belonging to different language groups.

### **5.1.2 The position of Afrikaans as a language in the post-*Apartheid* era**

Having sketched in chapter two the position of Afrikaans as a language of learning before the Soweto students' uprisings, that is before and up to 1976, it is important to describe its present status in the post-*Apartheid* era. In this era where the democratic government of the African National Congress is in power, Afrikaans has lost its preferential status above the other nine South African languages.

#### **5.1.2.1 The choice of language of learning in the black schools as per the Constitution**

At present, section 29(2) of the Bill of Rights in The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:14) states that everyone in the country is given '...the right to receive education in the official language of their choice...'

The above section has made it possible for most South African citizens to choose English as their official language, as well as their medium of instruction and learning. Still, the Constitution does not prevent those who wish to use Afrikaans from utilising it as an official language or language of instruction and learning.

#### **5.1.2.2 Afrikaans as one of the official languages in South Africa**

Despite the fact that Afrikaans is now *not a compulsory* subject and a medium of learning at schools and tertiary institutions, it is important to note that it is still a recognized language in South Africa. The language is valuable in the following fields: literature, culture, commerce, employment, education, and research (Van Rensburg 1997).

It is therefore a personal opinion of the researcher to adopt the advice offered by

Cooper (South African Broadcasting Corporation 1998) to both Afrikaners and other members of South African society with regard to the Afrikaans language. His advice is '...Erken die verlede, *neem verantwoordelikheid* vir die hede. En laat die toekoms werk. Wees trots op jou kultuur. Koester die diversiteit in die land, maar moenie dat jou *kultuur jou tronk word nie..*.' ( own emphasis)

In the above statement, it is clear that the Afrikaans language should be seen by both its first language speakers and speakers of other languages, as one of the eleven South African languages. *It should therefore not be regarded as a communication tool of the previous apartheid government.* It should be regarded by all its stakeholders, be they first, second, or foreign language speakers, as a communication tool in the multilingual and multicultural society of South Africa.

Not only is Afrikaans a communication tool but it is also one of the items in the South African heritage - a language which has been so developed that it serves as both subject and medium of instruction from school level right up to tertiary level in the country. A great deal of literature and research is found in the language, and consequently a working knowledge of Afrikaans is essential if that information or knowledge is to be accessed for the future benefit of the country.

### 5.1.2.3 **Rationale for learning Afrikaans**

Having discussed the importance of the learning of Afrikaans in section 5.1.2.2, it is appropriate for the researcher to give reasons why Afrikaans should be learnt by Africans in black schools:

1. The language policy of the present government is based on the following principles as per the African National Congress document (1995:52) '...the right of the individual to choose which language or languages to study and use as a language of learning and the right of individual to develop the linguistic skills in the language or languages of his or her choice...'

2. The Afrikaans language markets itself because of its socio-economic power. When students learn Afrikaans, as a foreign language, they end up utilising it even in work situations (Prins 1989:42 and Van Rensburg *et al.* 1997:65). Possible uses of the Afrikaans language are described by Van Rensburg *et al.* as follows :

'...moontlike terreine is onder meer die gebruik van Afrikaans op die ekonomiese terrein, op opvoedkundige terrein, op die sportveld, as landboutaal, in die ambagswêreld, in die staatsdiens, as wetenskaptaal en as vaktaal. Afrikaans is bruikbaar in die jongste ontwikkelinge op die gebied van die tegniek en tegnologie, as ontspanningstaal en as 'n tweedetaal in die algemeen...'

Reasons have been advanced above as to why Afrikaans should be learnt by those who wish to use it in various situations in their daily lives. The gist of the matter is that its *learning* and utilisation should be optional and should thus depend on the individual, as stipulated in the *Bill of Rights* which is enshrined in the Constitution of the country.

## 5.2 PROPOSED GUIDELINES DEVELOPED FOR THE TEACHING OF AFRIKAANS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

These proposed guidelines which were developed for the teaching of Afrikaans in Colleges of Education in the Northern Province will inevitably depend on the quality of teacher education, lecturers, student teachers and the strategies employed in the process. Each aspect will be discussed below.

### 5.2.1 The quality of teacher education

In considering the quality of education, it is important to note that a respectable type of education depends very much on its stakeholders being *committed to their respective duties*. In this instance, internal stakeholders will include lecturers, student teachers, and the management of the institution concerned. External stakeholders will include, amongst others, the community and the relevant department of education in charge of the process of producing teachers. Lecturers and student teachers are important

because in this instance, they are directly involved in the teaching and learning process of Afrikaans. The management of the institution provides governance support for the teaching and learning process.

Researchers on the education system of South Africa in general indicate that there is a problem in the school system as such. Although the problem is particularly apparent in schools, the researcher feels that other types of institutions in general are also affected. Other institutions in this case include amongst others, colleges of education. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:5) expose the problem as follows: '...In South Africa there is however, a lack of responsibility, dedication and commitment on the part of many teachers and learners...'

This lack of commitment amongst teachers and learners is further expressed by Rathando (1997:103) as follows: 'another problem facing us in our schools regarding teachers is the lack of commitment to their work. The culture of teaching has declined significantly...'

When the dedication, commitment and responsibility of teachers to their work cannot be guaranteed, a corresponding deterioration in the standard of education cannot be ruled out. In practical terms, the implication of the above statement is that student teachers who have gone through the system might have been promoted to the next year without gaining the necessary knowledge expected of them in that particular standard or grade. The lack of knowledge which resulted from teachers who neglected the work in their subjects in general and in Afrikaans in particular, may consequently necessitate more enrichment in order to upgrade the learners' existing knowledge to an acceptable standard. From the above discussion it is clear that for the sake of the learners' knowledge, the commitment of lecturers, teachers and student teachers in particular to their work, should be regarded as an absolute prerequisite for any subject in the education system. A healthy education system will therefore depend on the quality and the calibre of teachers who are active in their posts.

### **5.2.1.1 The quality of the teaching corps in teacher education**

It is important to qualify *teacher education* as its quality differs from system to system. The difference in the quality of education depends very much on the calibre of the teaching corps available in the system. De Lange in Nicholls (1996:42) expressed the opinion that 'the quality of teachers more than any other factor, determines the quality of education'.

The implication of the above statement is that with weak teachers we get an undesirable type of education in general, and of teacher education in particular. The opposite is also true. Ondiek (1990:9) supports the idea of teacher education as a process which depends on the utilisation of expert teachers, and he expresses his views as follows: '...if the university faculties are to improve their expertise in the training of teachers, they must make better use of expert teachers in the education of other teachers...'

### **5.2.1.2 Development and revision of ideas in teacher education**

Since it has just been established that the quality of teacher education depends very much on the quality of the teaching corps available in the system, it is also important to realize that all the changes which are to be introduced for the sake of the development or revision of the curriculum, will have to be effected in teacher training institutions by the lecturers concerned.

It would be a mistake for anyone in the field of curriculum development in faculties of education or departments of education to assume that the teaching fraternity readily accepts either minor or overwhelming changes in teaching strategies without question. Some of the reasons given for this resistance to change are supplied by the teachers themselves as being the following:

1. sometimes teachers do not want to embrace changed ideas in teaching strategies and practices because of the familiarity which teachers enjoy in the

*status quo* of the teaching process (Flanagan 1998: 4);

2. teachers may resist changing their way of teaching because they fear that change may affect their attitude towards their work negatively (Department of Education 1997:31);
3. teachers are capable of sabotaging any innovation even if there is evidence that their learners' performance does improve with the application of such strategies (Chapman and Snyder 1997:90).

In the post *apartheid* era, the National Department of Education decided to change from content-centred to learner-centred education. Content-centred education concentrated on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge only, which was not accompanied by the acquisition of the relevant skills. In changing from the previous system introduced *Curriculum 2005* which is outcomes-based in nature. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7-8). *Curriculum 2005* is both learner-centred and result-orientated. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7) and Spady (1998:26) further stated that it is based on the following beliefs:

- Outcomes-Based Education ( OBE) is all inclusive and all learners involved in the process of education should be allowed to realize their full potential without taking into consideration factors such as; sex, background, race, learning abilities and the types of subjects they are engaged in;
- practitioners of OBE should also maintain the principle that 'success breeds further success'. The implication of this statement is that when a learner experiences success in a given learning area, his self-esteem and self concept improves and he strives to perform even better in the next exercise;
- education is no longer the responsibility of the Department of Education alone, but it should embrace different stakeholders. The term stakeholders in this instance should include: parents, learners, members of the community, teachers

and the relevant Department of Education. All these stakeholders should work in partnership with one another to produce the desired results in education. The network of stakeholders should be activated through consultations on the design of curricula, holding regular meetings to discuss matters of common interest, and parents seen as active in the learning of their children. This exercise will also culminate in making teachers do their job as expected of them by the stakeholders.

It is fundamental to realise that lessons offered in Curriculum 2005 and OBE should always focus on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values by the learners. If the transformation of curricula is to be successful, it should definitely be embraced by the colleges of education first, as they are responsible for the production of the future generation of teachers.

The idea is that development and revision of strategies for teaching subjects at colleges of education should be subject to periodical reviews if new evidence from research so dictates. Once the idea of reviewing and revising practices becomes common in teacher training institutions, its acceptability will soon be embraced by schools as an inevitable and common practice in the profession.

### **5.2.3 Foreign language teachers of Afrikaans as a foreign language at colleges of education**

Teachers of Afrikaans as a foreign language in colleges of education, although they share many characteristics with their colleagues, should realize that there are some aspects which are peculiar to their subject only. Roets (1994:262-263) wrote explicitly that language teaching is different from other subjects: 'Daar is geweldig baie wat 'n onderwyser moet weet wat nie nodig gewees het as hy nie 'n taalonderwyser was nie...'

The above statement is valid for the teaching of first, second, and foreign languages in general, but there are some factors in language teaching that affect foreign

languages in particular. These include knowledge of the target language and its culture, as well as the attitude of its teachers and learners. A discussion of each aspect separately will help in formulating the proposed set of guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans as a foreign language as a in the colleges of education in the Northern Province.

#### **5.2.3.1 Teachers' knowledge of the Afrikaans language**

Lecturers of Afrikaans foreign language at colleges of education could themselves be first, second, or foreign language speakers. Irrespective of their affiliation to Afrikaans, their knowledge of the target language should be impeccable, to the extent that they could serve as models for their learners. Teaching languages in general, and Afrikaans foreign language in particular, is only possible if teachers themselves possess the knowledge and are capable of conveying it to the student teachers or learners in their classes. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:49) agree that teachers should be knowledgeable in their teaching subject, but go further to state that '...teachers should know the subject they teach and also live knowledgeably in the presence of others, specifically pupils...'

This idea is also reinforced by Hamachek (1979:373) who is of the opinion that 'good teachers are thoroughly knowledgeable in their major areas of interest'.

Major areas of interest which concern the Afrikaans foreign language student teacher would include not only knowledge of the language itself but also its culture and methods of teaching relevant to the learners' level of learning.

The lecturers' knowledge, though important, should not only be available when needed but should also have a higher level of concentration than that of an ordinary teacher in the school. This idea was confirmed in the National Education Policy Investigation report on Teacher Education (1992:41) where it is stated that '...teacher educators should be required to demonstrate competence in a wider range of skills, and at a higher level than competent practising teachers...'

Thus it is expected of Afrikaans foreign language teachers at colleges to know more of the language itself so that they will be able to demonstrate language proficiency and act as models for both student and practising teachers in the system. This is more so as it will be impossible for the college teachers in general, and the Afrikaans foreign language lecturer in particular, to work with the college only, to the exclusion of the schools. This co-operation between college lecturers and practising teachers empowers tertiary institutions in general, and the Afrikaans subject lecturer in particular, to play a key role in the revision and upgrading of the subject. The role of lecturers in leading revision of the curricula and practices in teacher education depends on the expertise of the tertiary teaching corps involved. According to the Natal Teachers Society in the National Education Investigation Report on Teacher Education (1992:52), '...the quality of teacher educators is recognised as a key feature in the revision of teacher education as a whole...'

In summary it can be said that the knowledge of the lecturer in his subject of specialisation is important in the three levels of teacher education as indicated below:

1. in the lecture room with his student teachers
2. with his colleagues
3. and in schools with practising teachers.

Whereas the knowledge of the Afrikaans language is important for its lecturer, it is also of value to him to know its culture, as well as that of the different learners in his class.

#### **5.2.4 The requirements of the Afrikaans foreign language student teachers**

As stated in section 5.2.1 college lecturers should be committed to their duties in the teaching process; it should also be added that learners form another constituency which should exert some efforts towards its learning. As such, the full commitment of both players in the teaching and learning situation will determine the quality of teacher education during a particular era in history. The following requirements are essential

for the student teachers of both Afrikaans foreign language and its special didactics, if the teaching of the language is to be continued in the African schools

#### 5.2.4.1      **The attitude of African student teachers towards Afrikaans as a foreign language**

For the successful teaching and learning of target languages in general, and that of Afrikaans in particular, attitudes of learners and teachers of the subject in question should be positive (see section 3.3.1.2). The role of positive attitudes towards the language and subject should be accompanied by a strong commitment by the stakeholders to the learning process of the subject. It is thus clear that those who teach Afrikaans should work harder at changing attitudes, utilising all their available skills in the process. Positive attitudes of student teachers in general, and of those student teachers who are going to teach Afrikaans foreign language in particular, are an absolute prerequisite. As Dachs (1996:98) points out, '...a teacher promotes certain values in the classroom - attitudes to work, to ecology, to behaviour and to life in general ...'

If the teacher is responsible for developing such attitudes, he should first be convinced that his own attitude towards the target language he is teaching are positive. If his attitude towards Afrikaans as a foreign language is negative, he may end up transferring this negativity to the learners. Transference of negative attitudes from teachers to learners is a process, the results of which may not be noticed for quite some time. Dachs (1996) is of the same opinion when he says '...attitudes develop slowly and it is often said that they are caught not taught...'

Thus in the process of teaching Afrikaans foreign language, the student teachers' attitudes may be negative or positive towards the subject. In the process of interpreting both the lecturers' and their student teachers' attitudes towards the subject they are teaching, Mynhard (1996: 106) has the following to say: '..teachers need to hold understandings about the nature of Mathematics which will profoundly influence the way in which they teach but having the *knowledge*, however *flexible* and sound, is not

enough...' ( own emphasis ).

It is therefore clear that attitudes towards any subject, such as that of Afrikaans foreign language, may manifest themselves in the form of beliefs, as Mynhard realized in the teaching of mathematics. These attitudes go a long way in affecting the manner in which a particular subject is taught and learned in the classroom. At times these beliefs which usually constitute attitudes may be transmitted to the learners directly or indirectly by the teachers concerned, in raw or subtle forms. This transfer of attitudes may affect student teachers positively or negatively in their acquisition of knowledge and teaching skills. These attitudes are advantageous if they promote the student teachers' ability to like the subject and they are disadvantageous if they demotivate them from learning the subject. It is therefore desirable that the adoption of teachers' attitudes by learners should at all times be beneficial to their learning process.

### **5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS OF THE AFRIKAANS FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENT TEACHERS**

In order for student teachers to succeed in the learning of the subject Afrikaans and Afrikaans as foreign language in the African schools, the following statements about their needs were derived from the literature survey and empirical research:

1. the state of knowledge of Afrikaans has deteriorated amongst Africans in general, and the learners of the language in particular (see chapter 2);
2. teachers and learners of the target language Afrikaans should have a positive attitude towards the language and its culture if they are to learn and teach it successfully (see section 3.3.1);
3. teachers should understand and implement principles which are fundamental to the acquisition of languages in general, and the Afrikaans foreign language in particular (see section 3.6);
4. teachers of a target language should always know the language well in order to serve as models of language usage to their learners (see section 3.3.1.1);
5. at present, teachers should know principles, strategies and skills involved in the

implementation of learner-centred education (see section 3.8);

6. in order to acquire the ability to use a target language in different situations, learners of the language in question should use it as a vehicle of learning (see section 3.7).

A number of needs have also been derived from the action research in chapter four, as follows:

1. there is a need to increase the enrolment of student teachers taking Afrikaans in the PTD course as it is deteriorating by the day (see section 4.2);
2. student teachers of the subject Afrikaans should be made aware of the future utility of the subject in their lives (see section 4.6.2);
3. student teachers should be made to understand those concepts which are supposed to serve as the basis for determining teaching strategies in the planning of their classes (see section 4.8);
4. strategies of exposing learners to the Afrikaans language should be utilised (see section 4.7);
5. student teachers should be equipped with a wide Afrikaans vocabulary in order to enable them to explain difficult concepts in the language itself during their Afrikaans lessons (see section 4.7.6);
6. student teachers in the subject Afrikaans should be able to teach without experiencing difficulties during the teaching practice sessions (see section 4.11).
7. student teachers should be helped to develop a positive attitude toward the language of Afrikaans and also encouraged to prefer both Afrikaans and English as media of instruction in their learning process (see section 4.6).

Before analysing the different needs of these student teachers, it is important to realize that a good teacher is the one who has the potential to *adapt himself* to any teaching situation. The ability to adapt is a prerequisite for teaching which teacher-trainers should strive to attain in their daily work. That is the reason why teachers should be trained to be able to work in the different systems in which they may find themselves.

Skills which student teachers acquire in class should carry them through and make them comfortable in teaching specific subjects across various systems of education in different countries.

The OBE system of education which is being introduced at present is taught in the foundation phase only and it is hoped that it will gradually be introduced to higher phases of education.

The main characteristic of the OBE education system is that learners should be actively involved in their own learning, as against the passiveness which is claimed to have been the norm in the previous system. It is important to note that whether the system is OBE or not, the teacher should play a role which enables him to select subject matter, and corresponding teaching strategies, which will lead to the learner's acquisition of knowledge and skills both in and outside the classroom. As far as this study is concerned, it is important that student teachers should be helped to acquire these skills of teaching in the college of education through the curriculum at their disposal.

OBE aims at showing what learners can do at the end of the learning process, in the form of specific outcomes which are to be realized then. These outcomes also involve other learning areas, instead of pertaining to one learning area only.

Specific outcomes are based on critical outcomes which are designed and linked to the constitution of South Africa. These critical outcomes are the basis of the whole education system, since they cut across all learning areas. In other words, it is imperative always to link specific outcomes of various learning areas to their corresponding critical outcomes. Failure to do so may lead to incongruencies between the two types of outcomes.

For teacher education in general, and for Afrikaans foreign language special didactics in particular, it is important to consider range statements in OBE. Range statements have to do with the complexities and hierarchy of these specific outcomes in different

grades. Despite the fact that outcomes are prescribed for different learning areas, it is the duty of the facilitator to gauge the difficulty (range statement) which is ideal for a particular grade. These range statements will have to be considered by both teachers and student teachers as they will become more and more complex when the learners ascend the learning ladder from one grade to the next.

### **5.3.1 Implications of introducing OBE to teacher training institutions**

Whenever a new system of education is to be introduced, teacher trainers at various institutions should be able to transmit its principles to student teachers in their classes. This is important, especially if the changes are overwhelming and tend to change the usual way of doing things in the classroom. It is therefore important at this stage to mention the following implications of introducing OBE to the teacher training process:

1. Student teachers themselves have not gone through the process of OBE during their school career, and as such their training should aim at equipping them with the required skills to function in the system.
2. At the moment, lecturers themselves have not gone through the system in their various levels of education either. As already explained in section 5.2.1.1, they should adapt their skills accordingly in their teaching.
3. Despite the fact that lecturers have not gone through the OBE system in their school and teacher training career, they are supposed to lead in the development of new ideas in teaching (see section 5.2.1.2). At the beginning of this stage, even teacher educators cannot claim to possess a higher concentration of OBE knowledge than practising teachers. However, they should strive to maintain their leadership position by gaining and accumulating as much knowledge as possible the shortest possible time.
4. Despite the fact that OBE is a relatively new concept in our education system in general, and in teacher education in particular, student teachers should be

equipped with knowledge and skills which will enable them to operate in the system. This enabling process should take place before they leave their teacher training institutions. In this case, they should be able to use the knowledge gained at the institution before they transmit it to learners.

Apart from the implications which arose as a result of the introduction of the OBE to the teaching fraternity as a whole, there are needs which pertain to the teaching of Afrikaans foreign language in particular.

### **5.3.2 The needs of the Afrikaans foreign language student teachers**

The following are the needs of these student teachers:

1. Their language proficiency is scanty due to the existing poor language environment, as discussed in section 2.1.1, because English is the dominant language in the Northern Province. Afrikaans, as illustrated by interviews in sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2, is spoken by a negligible percentage of student teachers at colleges CA and CB outside the classrooms.
2. Student teachers in Afrikaans foreign language classrooms, like their peers in other college courses, will need to cope with OBE technicalities at this late hour of their school career. In practice this means that they should cope with both acquainting themselves with language environment enrichment skills and learning the concepts and principles involved in OBE.
3. Although all the student teachers studying Afrikaans foreign language subject didactics at the two colleges are blacks, they do not belong to the same cultures. These differences in the student teacher's cultures necessitate that they should know the culture of the target language speakers, both their own and those of their peers in the classroom. This exercise is essential as it helps them to understand the cultural diversities and commonalities which exist in classrooms today. In essence this is important as their present set of cultures in the college

lecture-rooms will definitely reflect the culture in their future classrooms. This situation, gives the student teachers practice in living with different cultures, bringing them together and integrating them into the teaching of the target language. In the final analysis, all cultural groups should know, understand, like, and apply the culture of the target language appropriately.

4. The issue of Afrikaans being marginalised as from 1976 (see sections 2.2.3 and 5.1.2) led to most of its foreign language learners being negative towards it. These negative attitudes have affected black students in one way or another, in learning the language. Consequently, these student teachers should be helped to adopt the correct attitude to the subject.

#### **5.4 OUTCOMES ENVISAGED IN THE PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING OF AFRIKAANS**

In order to counteract all the problematic issues involved in the teaching of Afrikaans expressed in section 5.3 above, it is important at this stage to formulate the outcomes which are to be achieved by the guidelines. Such outcomes are the following:

1. Lecturing strategies which are aimed at enriching the language environment are to be introduced in order to increase the tempo of acquiring Afrikaans linguistic flexibility at all times. Linguistic flexibility in Afrikaans foreign language will be dictated by circumstances in class and in the province in general.
2. Student teachers of Afrikaans foreign language in colleges of education are to be helped to acquire the required basic skills in language teaching and learning, which are the listening, speaking, reading and writing of the target language. The mastering of the skills of language learning should be made an absolute requirement even before student teachers attempt to learn to teach any language as a subject.
3. Guidelines to be developed will also aim to make students and lecturers of

Afrikaans aware of the fact that the Afrikaans language is a communication tool like all other languages, and should not be politicised it as already explained in section 2.2.3. Everyone should reap the benefits of possessing linguistic skills in Afrikaans.

4. Attitudes towards the language should be made more positive if the teaching and learning of the target language is to be embraced by all its stakeholders.
5. Student teachers should acquire those teaching skills which are essential and relevant in the teaching of the subject.

Having identified the outcomes, it is necessary to address the *how* of achieving them.

## 5.5 LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

Language environment is described by Dulay *et al.* (1982:13) as follows:

'Language environment encompasses everything the learner hears and sees in the new language. It may include a wide variety of situations - exchanges in restaurants and stores, conversations with friends, watching television, reading street signs and news papers, as well as classroom activities - or it may be very sparse, including only language classroom activities and a few books and records...'

It is at this stage, where the language environment is very sparse, that a process of language enrichment should be devised to improve the situation. Enrichment of the language environment can thus be described as the process through which alternative means are artificially devised to maximise the exposure of the learner to the target language, in order to enable him to acquire the language in question more easily.

It has already been mentioned that most black student teachers in the Northern Province are for all intents and purposes foreign language speakers when it comes to Afrikaans. This is the case because the language is mostly used by very few in their daily activities. Only one interviewee in CB claimed to have learnt Afrikaans at home

as his grandmother was Afrikaans speaking (see sections 4.5.1.2). This scenario, of the poor Afrikaans language environment, shows how vital it is for colleges to involve themselves in introducing enriched language environment programmes which will benefit the relevant student teachers. Failure to take cognisance of the poor Afrikaans language environment in the province will lead to the fact that schools will be provided with 'illiterate' teachers on the subject. This illiteracy spill over to learners at schools; as it is, the buck will ultimately be passed on. Roets (1994:262) describes the consequences of having a teacher with deficient language as follows: '...Die onderwyser is die leerling se model en as vaardigheid te kort skiet, sal die leering se vordering belemmer word. Dit behoort 'n absolute vereiste te wees...'

To substantiate the dangers of engaging teachers with deficient language proficiency, it is appropriate to explain the principles of language teaching and learning.

### **5.5.1 Language learning**

In language learning we are concerned with the learners' ability to use the language as a means of communication. In other words, the learner of any target language in general, and of Afrikaans third language in particular, should be able to converse with other people in it. According to Willems (1994:217) proficiency in foreign language is always defined as '... a command of oral skills, production and receptive...' It is clear that in learning a target language, one must be able to speak and understand messages communicated by it.

Looking at the ability to speak and understand the target language, one can realize that memorisation of language rules and rote learning is to be kept to a minimum. It is clear that rote learning is to be kept to a minimum as communication in any language, be it first or third, is based on responses to unforeseen needs and demands. These principles of language learning will determine the strategies to be employed when enriching the Afrikaans of student teachers at colleges of education.

## 5.5.2 Strategies of improving student teachers' language proficiency

It is essential for student teachers who are learning foreign languages in general, and Afrikaans third language in particular, to identify their own needs and try to augment their knowledge as much as possible. Identification of needs by the student himself *will involve him as a person* in his own learning and *thus cause him to accept the responsibility for it*. The two issues, that is, involvement and acceptance of the responsibility of learning, will of necessity motivate the learner to enquire more and more about the target language. Some of the strategies which can be employed in enriching the language are:

### 5.5.2.1 Speaking and listening

In communication, these are the two activities which happen simultaneously in everyday life. In or outside the classroom situations, they may take place in the form of dramas, debates, conversations, speeches, explanations, group discussions and follow-on reports. These activities, though common to everyone, do deserve special mention if one is to consider the *milieu* from which our students come. For instance one interviewee, CA4, alleged that in his school career he passed some standards without being taught Afrikaans, owing to the unavailability of teachers (see section 4.6.3.1). When this fact, is coupled with the possible inefficiency of some of the teachers in the next standard, one can only conclude that this is a recipe for disaster in any language teaching situation. It is particularly disastrous in the Afrikaans foreign language teaching of student teachers who are supposed to lay the foundation of the subject at schools in future.

The above scenario necessitates that various strategies should be employed in order to enrich student teachers' knowledge of Afrikaans. In essence this implies that their capacity to use the language should be built in order to engender positive attitudes which can best be prompted through the ability to speak the language. It is therefore clear that real life situations should be simulated in and outside the Afrikaans classroom in order to provide the student teacher with opportunities to utilise the language.

However, utilising the language should be accompanied by a clearly envisaged purpose which is to be achieved by such exercises. A few examples of strategies which can be employed are provided in the following paragraphs.

## 1. Drama

Literature available to the teaching fraternity often refers to drama and the dramatisation of stories as a strategy to increase vocabulary in a foreign language learning process. What is worrying is that they do not explain how the process of language acquisition will take place in dramatisation. Another obstacle is that authors do not explain how the knowledge of the language will be accumulated (Rivers 1993: 199-200; Kilfoil and Van der Walt 1991:136). Will it be through memorisation? or in other ways? This study in this section intends to show how knowledge will be created, personalised and be used by the learners/student teachers during this exercise.

If student teachers are involved in performing dramas, which may be staged formally on cultural days, they will tend to feel proud of their performances. Not only will they be proud, but they may identify with some of the characters being depicted in the story. The joy of being able to speak the language and dramatize the story will enhance the actors' feeling of satisfaction which will in turn motivate them to speak and listen to the language. The chance to utilise the target language will in the meantime enrich their language environment and encourage their knowledge of the target language to flourish (see section 3.6.1.1).

At that time the lecturer will also be providing hints and advice during the rehearsals which precede the actual staging of the drama. During these practices, student teachers will be adding more hours to their target language conversation time every week. The nature of conversation in Afrikaans might be awkward in the beginning, and words from other languages might be used at times. With the sympathetic guidance of the lecturer, student teachers will become more and more comfortable during practices and may even comment formally and informally by means of the target language. This voluntary use of the target language will also come to change their

attitude to Afrikaans as there is a positive correlation between fluency in the language and the attitude towards it.

Not only will the actors gain knowledge during practices, but spectators who are also student teachers will also be there if they like drama. No matter how few they may be, they will be adding listening hours, if not both listening and speaking hours, in the target language. They will for instance comment about the lecturer-in-charge, the characters and the story itself. In so doing, knowledge of the language will be created. The nature of the knowledge which is being created in this process from the beginning right up to actual performance is worth analysing. Student teachers, both players and spectators, may in the final analysis speak Afrikaans when taking instructions, comments from the leader and when helping each other with learning, and listening to, their own and fellow actors texts. As they get used to the play, they will not only come to know their own parts, but they will also subconsciously master those sections which belong to their friends and fellow actors as well. In interaction with other players, commentators outside the cast and the lecturer, more Afrikaans may be spoken than if this discourse were not in process. Knowledge in the form of informal conversations will be created and be used by student teachers who created it. The knowledge acquired will be possessed and used by them during other formal and informal situations which will require Afrikaans as a means of communication.

## **2. Debates**

Debates are another means of helping student teachers with the Afrikaans language. The debate in this instance is regarded as a source of creating language knowledge which student teachers will possess and utilise freely without a sense of tension. A sense of tension usually exists in utilising a foreign language, and it manifests itself if a target language learner cannot use or manipulate a language to express his needs in the form of desires and impromptu arguments and answers. Despite the fact that he may know some words in the target language, it is useless if he has to prepare himself first before he uses them or fails to utilise them if some person asks him a question unexpectedly which requires him to answer using the same words. The uselessness

of the mere knowledge of words inheres in the fact that language usage does not consist of prepared speeches only, it should be a spontaneous process. A discussion of various types of debates will be pursued in the next paragraph.

Here we can differentiate between formal and informal debates. At times, one type of debate usually leads to the other. An example follows, of a formal debate with a given topic. Participants in the debate will have to prepare their points for arguments, using different ways of gaining information on the topic. Examples of such preparation activities will include the following:

- Perusing of literature which is relevant to the topic;
- Consulting peers and lecturers where difficulties are experienced;
- Consulting different types of dictionaries to clarify on terms and concepts;
- Translation of information into Afrikaans if knowledge has been gained in other languages;
- Trying to organise and synthesize the acquired knowledge;
- Rehearsing the debate alone in privacy before staging the performance;
- If debating as a team, team members come together to share and evaluate their ideas.

During the actual debate, members of both teams will be listening to each other with the aim of counteracting what has been said by the opponent before they put forward their own point of view. They also learn to negotiate their viewpoint in a very practical way.

Though language mistakes will be made in the process, the fact is that the time spent using Afrikaans, will have been increased significantly.

Usually after the debating session members of the audience will informally further discuss or debate issues and characters arising from the debate. At times some mannerisms and arguments presented by both able and weak performers will be imitated or ridiculed by members of the audience - that does not matter. What matters

in this exercise is that the student teachers taking Afrikaans foreign language spoke the target language, argued in it, thought critically in the language, came to conclusions and indirectly felt motivated to utilise the language. If these Afrikaans language learning activities were realized in any debate, whether during its formal or informal stages, the language environment of the student teachers would have been enriched.

When considering the examples of drama and debates, it will be realized that conversations, explanations, group discussions and follow-up evaluations of events will take place at different stages of the process in informal and formal ways, depending on how members of the Department of Afrikaans have programmed these.

A further advantage of these events is that student teachers learn to take responsibility for the creation of knowledge which they can claim to own. When a target language learner feels that he creates knowledge which he can utilise, he automatically owns and uses it. That also implies that he will use the knowledge in his thinking, re-organise it when necessary and even question or add to it in the light of new information. In this instance the researcher feels that tertiary students, of Afrikaans in this instance, should as far as possible create their own knowledge, with lecturers merely facilitating the process.

### **3. The target language as a learning medium**

In the case of Afrikaans no one can deny its unfortunate history of being rejected by the African pupil as a medium of instruction (see sections 1.1.1 and 2.2.4.1). However, it is still the belief of the researcher that if the value of reintroducing Afrikaans as a language of learning can be explained to those learners, parents and school governing bodies, some learners may opt to utilise it as one of their learning media. Through knowing and utilising the Afrikaans language efficiently, the process might lose its tainted character over time.

The essential decision is that it should be introduced gradually in a subject or two where practicals are essential, as the exercise will afford the lecturer concerned an immediate

feedback. When student teachers fail to comprehend instruction, they should use the multilingual skills available to them, but they should still go back to reinforce the idea or concept in the target language in question. An even more effective way would be to encourage them to use two types of dictionaries (which are '*die verklarende*' and '*die tweetalige*' types). As the student teachers' knowledge of Afrikaans increases, their rate of understanding will increase and the need to use a bilingual dictionary will gradually diminish.

The use of Afrikaans in the teaching of some practical subjects such as physical education, gardening, housecraft, arts and crafts should be taught in collaboration with the language lecturer. The word collaboration will in this case mean lecturers from different subjects planning together and supporting each other in their teaching. In practice this for instance means that if cookery lessons are based on the types of vegetables, that is their planting and cooking, the language lecturer may give student teachers a supplementary lesson on the topic of vegetables. The language project may encourage them to go and look for more information. When student teachers realize that there is a relationship between the subjects, they will end up gaining more confidence by using the target language in a practical way.

In the process of using Afrikaans as a language of learning student teachers will find themselves conversing and discussing with peers and lecturers, and at the same time thinking in the target language. In the thinking process, knowledge is gained, classified, organised, synthesized and evaluated in the most practical way.

In order to create positive attitudes towards the subject, all the participators in the teaching process should refrain from using the language to admonish, belittle and demean the students and their cultures. Thus, Afrikaans should not be used as a language of resistance, where many of its words and expressions are used only in that context.

Student teachers who are doing Afrikaans as a foreign language can in general be regarded as post school youth. As post-school youth, they should be made part of the

planning process and also be shown the advantages and disadvantages of using the target language as a medium of instruction. Difficulties at the beginning of the process should be explained by the lecturers using all the skills available to them.

It is now necessary to consider the other two skills which are used in language teaching and learning, namely reading and writing.

#### 5.5.2.2. **Reading and writing**

It is appropriate at this stage to discuss reading and writing skills, which are not exactly independent of each other, as they are supposed to complement and supplement each other in practice. As in all language learning processes, learners in natural and artificial situations should first learn how to listen, then how to speak, how to read and finally how to write. Brown (1987: 39) compares the process of learning a language to the way in which any child acquires his language as follows:

' A small child listens and speaks and no one would dream of making him read or write. Reading and writing are advanced stages of language development. The natural order for first and second language learning is listening, speaking, reading and writing...'

For the sake of clarity, reading will be discussed first.

#### 1. **Reading**

At tertiary level, student teachers in general and those taking Afrikaans as a foreign language in particular need to read for enjoyment and with the aim of accessing knowledge and linguistic skills. If reading is used only for the purpose of making summaries for examination purposes, it automatically loses its value, which is supposed to be that of increasing reading skills and enriching the relevant language capacity of the target language learner.

The researcher feels that she will not be far off the mark if she recommends that student teachers should be invited to take part in the requisitioning of the Afrikaans

reading materials for library use. The reason for the above recommendation is that student teachers will know and cater for their own interests. These interests should be catered for, even if students suggest items outside the scope of materials prescribed by lecturers and librarians. Allowing student teachers to select their own reading materials for informal reading, will make them feel that they own these materials and thus legitimise their reading in realistic and practical ways. There seems to be a clash of interests in reading materials between the needs of lecturers, librarians and student teachers which may hamper the reading and utilisation of the existing Afrikaans literature on the library shelves. This happens if the requisition committee has excluded the student component from its composition from the outset.

It is important however to remember that when it comes to prescribed literature for teaching, the teacher will have to lead and facilitate the requisitioning and ordering of such items. In the case where student teachers do come up with alternatives and use the additional literature as supplementary literature, this should be encouraged at all costs. The encouragement should however be negotiated skilfully as the college lecturer is the one who knows both the specific and critical outcomes desired to be achieved in that particular class. It is therefore clear, that in his own way, the lecturer should still remain in charge though not in an autocratic way.

Formal evaluation of reading aloud and silently will take place now and then but one would like to see this as a process and not a once-off event. At this stage of learning Afrikaans as a target language, one hopes that student teachers will acquire reading and writing as life-long learning skills in the acquisition and creation of knowledge. The implication is that student teachers will for example read all types of literature long after they have completed formal schooling.

## **2. Writing**

Writing is a component of language learning which is not independent of other activities (see section 5.4). At present there is a strong link between writing and assessment, so much so that when we talk about writing in foreign language learning, we

immediately think of tests, examinations, essays and other aspects for which we will be awarded marks for our performance.

Writing in our classrooms should be free from anxiety. Student teachers studying language in general and Afrikaans in particular should be required to construct journals on their own. These journals should be written on topics in their fields of interest, with the aim of cultivating a spontaneous love of writing. In their three years of study they may each end up with three or more corresponding journals which are original in nature. Then both the student and lecturer can boast of having taught and learnt some form of creative writing respectively. There are advantages attached to this process, for example: the appreciation of the culture of the target language, understanding and construction of knowledge, and also the utilisation of that knowledge which has been acquired by the student teacher.

Indeed, it is true that writing will always be preceded by teaching, researching, discussing, learning *et cetera*. But, it will also always be part of the learning and assessment process of student teachers. What is emphasized here is that it should not be the only form of evaluation, as this demotivates student teachers in general about the learning and application of the skill.

### **5.5.3 Depoliticising the Afrikaans language**

It has already been mentioned in 5.4 that the proposed set of guidelines also aims at making student teachers aware that the Afrikaans language is to be regarded as a communication tool, as with any other language. The political stigma attached to it previously should be consciously removed by the Afrikaans lecturers, by making it accessible to student teachers. The more they have the chance to hear and speak the Afrikaans language, the more easily their attitude will become positive. A number of strategies will be discussed in this section which can be of value in demystifying this 'monster' called the Afrikaans language, which is feared by student teachers taking it as a subject.

### 5.5.3.1 Links between colleges

It has already been established in sections 2.2.1 and 5.3.2 that the Afrikaans language environment for Africans in the Northern Province is very poor indeed. In sections 5.5.2.1 and 5.5.2.2 a number of strategies which could be employed to enrich the language of student teachers were suggested for Afrikaans Departments at colleges of education. At this stage the researcher feels that mixing with Afrikaans speakers by means of various exchange programs in the country will demystify the language at various levels, as will be discussed in the following examples.

Since 1994 it has become legal for learners of different racial groups to mix and learn together without offending the existing constitution of the country. It should be interesting for colleges to engage in links and arrange exchange programmes for student teachers of Afrikaans. Immediate benefits of this exercise should be the following:

1. Students from a poor Afrikaans language environment, e.g. those from the Northern Province, will get the chance to see and communicate with their counterparts who will be utilising Afrikaans as a first language. The duration of this exchange programme could be four weeks for every year of their training. For the duration of this exchange programme period they should receive their lessons in different subjects through the medium of Afrikaans, as they will be in an Afrikaans medium institution. Though the language process may be difficult in the beginning, they should end up appreciating their newly acquired language proficiency, having new insight into the culture of the Afrikaans language and coming to the realization that speakers of Afrikaans are not all politicians, as is sometimes falsely assumed. The above-mentioned gains will in turn prompt more positive attitudes towards both the target language and its culture.
2. These envisaged exchange programs, if properly planned by concerned institutions and provided with clearly attainable objectives, should benefit both groups of student teachers involved. Afrikaans speaking student teachers when

visiting other student teachers at their institutions will also learn more about their third languages and come to appreciate the different cultures which they are taught theoretically.

3. When student teachers from different institutions work together for the duration of their training, even if it is during the short prescribed exchange period, they may eventually extend this working relationship to the post-training period. This exercise may create friendships or partnerships in learning which will, hopefully, be incorporated into their individual lifelong learning programmes.
4. The exchange programme will help those student teachers with poor facilities to see and learn to use the available technologies to which they are not exposed at their own institutions. The same experience is important to student teachers with many facilities at their institutions, as they will learn how to improvise for the missing technologies at the host institutions. Both groups, *the haves* and *have nots* will gain new insights: that there is another side to the story about teaching and learning which they have not been aware of.
5. Lecturers on the other hand will be offered the opportunity to discuss significant and learn strategies of doing things differently. It is hoped that the researcher's suggested guidelines for the teaching of Afrikaans in Colleges of Education will also be confirmed by this exercise.
6. Lecturers from institutions involved in the exchange programmes will need to adapt themselves to this new situation, of teaching visiting student teachers, in order to cover the scope of work agreed upon at the beginning of the process. Though covering the work is important, what is still more challenging is the satisfaction of the visitors' needs. The special effort which host lecturers will need to make in the teaching of the visiting student teachers should cause them to become more committed to their work.
7. The exchange programs, if properly planned by the parties involved, will not

involve interruptions of daily time tables, as the lecturers should have coordinated the themes which are to be covered within that period.

Apart from the benefits of the exchange programmes, another option in addition to links could be occasional visits to neighbouring Afrikaans medium schools.

#### **5.5.3.2 Mentoring of Afrikaans foreign language teachers**

The exposure of Afrikaans foreign language student teachers to the expertise and work ethics of the Afrikaans medium schools will benefit them greatly as they will be observing something which is different from their own experience. In the meantime, even if they are only afforded a period for observation during the first two weeks at the beginning of every academic year, they might benefit in the following ways:

- their language proficiency will improve as they realize that there are not only differences between them and first language speakers, but that commonalities also present themselves in various ways;
- a work ethic which is different from their own, as most African schools are just emerging from a poor culture of teaching and learning, will be made practical and realistic for their own experience. This practical experience gained by the student teachers concerned will definitely have a positive effect on their attitude towards their prospective profession;
- another advantage of this venture is that they will see and observe different cultures in operation, instead of merely reading about the process;
- student teachers who come from an education system where extra-mural activities were not taken seriously due to the breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching will be observing different sports being played.

All the above benefits which students can learn from their mentors in the Afrikaans

medium schools will depend very much on the co-operation of the staff members and governing bodies of the schools concerned.

### **5.5.3.3 Teaching Practice in African schools**

Mentoring should not be extended to Afrikaans medium schools only. Black teachers in African schools should also help student teachers to adapt to the profession. Whilst teachers of Afrikaans in the schools are expected to keep abreast of new knowledge through lifelong learning skills, they should, in case of doubt, consult teacher training institutions as centres of research into the practices of teaching. Student teachers on the other hand should be able to gain first hand experiences, and also guidance from the teachers in the school. Whilst trying to put their theory into practice, they should feel free to consult their mentors where they run into practical problems.

Having looked at some ways of demystifying the Afrikaans language, it is necessary at this stage to discuss some of the skills which student teachers of the Afrikaans target language should acquire before leaving the college.

## **5.6 ACQUISITION OF TEACHING SKILLS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

The word skill is defined by *The Readers Digest Universal Dictionary* (1987:1426-1427) as 'a capacity to accomplish successfully something requiring special knowledge or ability'; the same source goes further to say that 'a skill is an art, trade or technique acquired through training or experience...'. Collins (1999: 768) defines a skill as a 'special ability or expertise enabling one to perform an activity very well...'. For the purposes of this study teaching skills will be regarded as those abilities and special knowledge in teaching which can only be acquired through knowledge, training, and regular use of the piece of work or concept in question. It is therefore clear from the above description that the concept 'skill' does not come of its own; it has to be practised and developed, hence we talk of the skill development process in the teaching profession.

Having discussed some of the outcomes and skills which underpin the proposed guidelines in sections 5.4 and 5.5, it is important to look at some of the theoretical aspects which student teachers of Afrikaans foreign language should possess if they are to be effective in the teaching of the subject. This is a complex task, but only *important* aspects will be highlighted in brief. Aims and objectives, critical and specific outcomes, selection of learning content, teaching strategies, management and assessment procedures will be discussed individually below.

### **5.6.1 Important aspects to be considered in the planning of teaching activities**

For the sake of fostering adaptability of the teacher in any education system, the researcher is of the opinion that all four concepts below are specifically important in developing learning programmes and lesson plans: *aims* and *objectives*, and *critical* and *specific outcomes*. For the sake of clarity these two sets of concepts will be discussed separately in the next sections.

#### **5.6.1.1. Aims and objectives**

Aims of the curriculum are usually stipulated by curriculum designers to indicate the long term aspects which that course or subject should achieve. Aims cannot be summatively assessed as they are more formative in character. Each step will be fulfilled in each lesson sufficiently, so that at the end of the curriculum it is possible to conclude that through achieving the cumulative objectives of different lessons in the subject, most of the long term aims have been achieved. Objectives on the other hand, which are informed by the aims, are mostly behavioural in nature. The achievement of these objectives can be assessed by the teacher at the end of the lesson when he determines whether students are able to do what was stipulated in the planning of the lesson in relation to the fulfilment of the requirements of the curriculum. The curriculum is to be followed with few or no alterations made by the teacher. Curriculum developers are responsible for developing and prescribing aims and objectives of the syllabus.

### 5.6.1.2 Critical and specific outcomes

These terms have to do with the recently introduced OBE and Curriculum 2005. Critical outcomes are the principles which an education system wishes to achieve. They are fundamental in the sense that they are entrenched in the constitution. These outcomes cut across different learning areas.

The Department of Education (1997:10) maintains that, in South Africa, the following are the critical outcomes:

'Learners will:

1. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking
2. Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community
3. Manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively
4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
5. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic, and/or language skills in various modes
6. Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environments and the health of others
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner, and social and economic development at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:

1. Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
2. Participating as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities

3. Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
4. Exploring education and career opportunities, and
5. Developing entrepreneurial skills'.

Specific outcomes of a particular lesson inform the teacher how it should be taught and evaluated. Specific outcomes should specify what learners should be able to do at the end of the lesson, should take the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. A teacher should facilitate the lesson with the attainment of the above aspects in mind.

Having discussed the importance of the aims and objectives (see section 5.6.1.1); and critical and specific outcomes (see section 5.6.1.2.), it is obvious that student teachers of the Afrikaans foreign language should be able to utilise them in practice. Failure to apply these concepts will definitely create misunderstandings and complications in the choice of teaching strategies. Examples of this inability to formulate aims and objectives and various types of outcomes were explained in sections 4.8 and 4.9 where student teachers seemed not to know the utility of and the differences between these aspects.

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:52-53) the following are the Specific Outcomes of the Language, Literacy, and Communication learning area:

- (1) Learners make (*sic*) and negotiate meaning and understanding
- (2) Learners show critical awareness of language usage
- (3) Learners respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts
- (4) Learners access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations
- (5) Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context
- (6) Learners use language for learning
- (7) Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations'.

The importance of stating outcomes in language teaching of Afrikaans should be emphasised during the subject didactics class and various exercises should be given to student teachers. At first exercises will be theoretical. They may take the following forms:

- students may be given prescribed activities in the language and literacy learning area and be requested to furnish both critical and specific outcomes;
- students may be given specific and critical outcomes and be asked to develop learning content to suit the outcomes;
- in both instances student teachers should be able to indicate the crossfield outcomes which will be involved in the teaching of that particular lesson.

Along with the theoretical exercises the lecturer can proceed to allow them to work in groups and pairs with their peers, in order to help them to acquaint themselves with working with others, with the aim of attaining a common goal. If he is satisfied that student teachers have acquired the skill of utilising group and pair work, he can then assesses them before he returns to individual exercises on a more complex more level.

### 5.6.2 Selection of the learning content

In order to achieve aims and outcomes, it is important to know which learning content can serve as a vehicle towards the desired critical or specific outcomes. At this stage the Afrikaans subject lecturer should supply the student with some of the criteria for the *selection of learning content* (Vermeulen 1997:62). However, one should realize that learning content should at all times target some specific and critical outcomes, if OBE and *Curriculum 2005* is to be effective. Some criteria for selecting content named by Fraser *et al.* (1990:119-122) and Vermeulen (1997:62-63) are the following:

1. **Applicability:** learning content should be applicable to the learners' interest and stage of development. Stage of development in this case will include needs

which may be both physiological and biological in nature.

2. **Learnability:** Level of development and cognitive abilities should be taken into consideration when selecting learning content. If one is to reverse the previous emphasis on separate races, one should choose learning content which encourages the accommodation of multilingualism and multiculturalism.
3. **Usefulness and relevance:** After learning specific content, the learner should on his own be able to identify the suitable occasion where the particular knowledge will be used. An example of *irrelevant* knowledge would be that: girls are taught how to clean carpets and furniture although they come from rural areas where such items are unheard of. They end up not knowing what to do with the knowledge gained.
4. **Cultural and environmental comparability**  
According to Vermeulen (1997:63): 'When content is selected to achieve a given aim, objective and outcome, such content should be drawn from the cultural heritage and environment of the learner. Content should therefore be culturally and environment friendly'.

It is easier for a learner to understand an item from his culture, than when an abstract term from a foreign culture is to be learned. It takes time for a learner to contextualise its meaning.

Having looked at some of the criteria which are used in the selection of the learning content, it is logical to discuss how such learning content will be transmitted to the learners, and how the information given by the teachers will be assimilated by the learners.

### 5.6.3 Teaching strategies

A number of teaching strategies exist in the fields of both general and subject didactics.

Their employment will depend on the type of knowledge already discussed, which will be informed by the outcomes which are to be achieved in that learning program. Researchers such as Vermeulen (1997), and Fraser *et al.* (1990) divide types of knowledge into cognitive, psychomotor and affective experience.

Cognitive experience has to do with knowledge which requires thinking, recalling, application and assessment. In short it deals with the mental capacities. It is these aspects of knowledge which the Afrikaans foreign language student teacher should be made aware of. He should be helped to choose specific teaching strategies which will correspond with the specific and critical outcomes desired in the teaching and learning process.

Psychomotor skills have to do with the performance of certain skills at the end of the learning programme. Even in this instance, objectives will inform the types of teaching strategies which are to be chosen and be utilised by the student teachers of Afrikaans. Every type of teaching needs language to serve as a vehicle of learning.

Affective types of knowledge deal with the attitudes which accompany learning, for example the learner and the teacher may like or dislike certain portions of the curriculum. It is the duty of the lecturer teaching the learning material concerned to rectify the situation. In transmitting positive or negative attitudes, he will at the same time impart values based on the critical outcomes to them. The process ends when the lecturer has succeeded in equipping the student teacher with these skills which the student teacher himself will be able to utilise firstly in peer group teaching, then in teaching practice situations with real learners and finally in a real classroom during the course of his duties.

A number of teaching strategies which are informed by critical outcomes of OBE and Curriculum 2005 need particular mention as they have been recently accorded a special place in the system.

### 5.6.3.1 **Co-operative learning**

This is when a group of student teachers (5 to 6 in a group) are given a task to work on together. At the end of the process, the lecturer should assess them as a group but he or she should ensure that principles of this approach have been adhered to (Vermeulen 1997, Van der Horst and McDonald 1997). These principles are:

1. interdependence of students during the process as they will direct, assess information, be satisfied or disappointed together in the process;
2. accountability: all the students should be accountable for their own learning. Passivity and laziness should be identified and uprooted by both group members and the facilitator concerned;
3. social skills: learners learn how to communicate, negotiate, debate and rephrase statements when discussing and planning the report. Leadership skills are also developed in the process;
4. self evaluation: now and then members of the group will assess themselves as to whether they are making progress or co-operating in finding information;
5. linguistic practice: in the target language (Afrikaans in this instance), learners have the chance of using the language with their peers. In this instance they have the opportunity to correct each other, appreciate their colleagues' progress and thereby feel motivated to learn on their own.

### 5.6.3.2 **Group discussion**

When education was aimed at individual learning, learners were encouraged to compete against each other instead of concentrating on knowing the learning content. Now that the system has changed, student teachers should learn to form groups which are heterogeneous in nature, with the aim of employing all available strategies in

learning a particular skill. These groups will be formal or informal, temporary or permanent, depending on the given objectives at the time. What is important is that skills gained during different group discussions can be utilised in life-long learning with the same or different group members.

Principles involved in group discussion are the same as those discussed under co-operative learning in sections 5.6.3.1 and 3.8. These two techniques deserved a special mention as they were not emphasized in the past. However other teaching methods and approaches are still valuable to the teaching process, and as such they need to be known and be utilised by student teachers.

#### 5.6.4 Management

The ability of a student teacher to manage his class is emphasized by different researchers as a prerequisite for good teaching (Roets 1994:262; Cullingford 1995:12). Cullingford further elaborates on *class management* as a concept which is guided by good preparation, clear rules and expectations, attention to detail, and the best use of the classroom as a whole, in groups and individually.

All these aspects of management, can be successful if used together with discipline and authority, which are described by Pretorius (1982:49) as follows: 'Disipline is 'n interpersoonlike konsep. Dit verwys na die stel reëls en norme wat aanvaarbare gedrag in die klaskamer spesifiseer...'

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:48) are of the opinion that these qualities which will make classes manageable should also be coupled with a sensitive and tactful approach towards the needs of pupils. These tactics should be acquired by student teachers of Afrikaans foreign language and they should be able to assess the progress of their learners in class.

### **5.6.5 Assessment of learners' progress**

One of the main duties of teachers is to assess the learning progress of their learners. This could be done in three major ways as follows:

#### **5.6.5.1 Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessment**

These two types of assessment should be known and utilized by student teachers as they form the basis for evaluation in the teaching profession. On the one hand, there is a set of criteria which learners should satisfy in order to have attained knowledge, values, skills and attitudes in an identified learning area - hence the name of criterion-referenced assessment. In cases where the assessment of one learner is placed against that of another learner, it is termed norm-referenced assessment.

Despite the fact that OBE and Curriculum 2005 requires criterion-referenced assessment, it is important that student teachers of Afrikaans should know how to utilise both types of assessment in their teaching.

#### **5.6.5.2 Formal summative assessment**

This is usually done at the end of the learning programme where pass or fail results will be awarded to learners. Though various exercises and tests may have been used to prepare for the final examination, in written or oral or even practical forms of assessment, the final judgment whether candidates should proceed to the next standard in the hierarchy of learning is based on a summative assessment.

#### **5.6.5.3 Formal continuous assessment**

A learner should be assessed in various ways and contexts over a period of time (Vermeulen 1997:86). The assessment should correspond with the aims and outcomes specified at the beginning of the learning programme or unit. The results of the assessment will help both the learner and the teacher to know or understand the level

of competency achieved in the learning area.

Having discussed aspects which student teachers of Afrikaans as a foreign language should know about assessment, it is necessary to remember to evaluate the proposed guidelines.

## **5.7 EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED SET OF GUIDELINES**

Bearing in mind some of the fundamental skills which student teachers should acquire in the proposed set of guidelines, it is necessary to mention that the guidelines will be submitted to the relevant authorities, as recommendations to be implemented in the envisaged curriculum of Afrikaans foreign language for the PTD in colleges of the Northern Province. Where modifications of these guidelines are found to be required to improve the perceived outcomes, the practitioners in the field will validate the practice through discussions and further research in the form of action research.

The proposed guidelines( see p.229) in this study should also be submitted to various Faculties of Education at universities and Inservice Centres for evaluation purposes. After the evaluation process, which might involve modification of some aspects, these guidelines could be implemented in these institutions which train and update teachers in the teaching of the subject Afrikaans foreign language for the PTD.

The next chapter contains deductions, conclusions and recommendations, based upon this study.

# GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING OF AFRIKAANS AS AN AFRICAN LANGUAGE

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**Language Environment**

section 5.5

1. Language learning
2. Strategies for improvement of student teachers' language proficiency
3. Depoliticising Afrikaans



**Skill Development**

section 5.6

1. Aims, objectives and outcomes
2. Selection of learning content
3. Teaching strategies
4. Management
5. Assessment



**Outcomes**

Section 5.4

Needs of Afrikaans (as an African language) Student Teachers  
section 5.3

**Knowledge**

Construction of knowledge

**Society**

Multicultural  
Multilingual  
Eleven languages

**Learner**

Active participant  
Responsible  
Functional value of Afrikaans

**Instructional Theory**

Outcomes-Based Education  
Learner-centred  
Experience-based

Afrikaans in post-*apartheid* era  
DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION OF SA (1996)



Afrikaans during *apartheid* era  
Chapter 1

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## DEDUCTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study deals with the teaching of the subject of Afrikaans in colleges of education in the Northern Province. In delimiting the study, only, colleges which offered Afrikaans for the PTD were selected for the sake of this study. Coincidentally these colleges are only found in region three of the Northern Province. During the *apartheid* era the subject of Afrikaans was compulsory in all schools and across the departments of education as they existed in that era. Not only was the subject compulsory but the language was also an official language at the time. Presently the subject has been relieved of its compulsory status as a subject in various institutions and consequently it is now an optional subject in all the black institutions. The status of Afrikaans is now similar to that of the other nine official African languages which have been upgraded as per Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It is in the context of the above-mentioned factors, that the teaching of Afrikaans was investigated in this study with the aim of developing guidelines to teach the subject in the colleges of education.

### 6.2 DEDUCTIONS OF THIS STUDY

In the light of literature research, action research and empirical observations the following deductions for this study were arrived at.

#### 6.2.1 Deductions pertaining to literature research

- the language planning and language policy of the *apartheid* era had a negative impact on the teaching of the subject Afrikaans in African schools and colleges;
- the classification of English as the language of education in the Constitution of the country is having a negative effect on the learning of other languages, as they are taken to be of lesser importance;

- learners of a target language are more motivated to learn it if they are aware of its usefulness in their future;
- teachers of a foreign language are required to possess the following characteristics:
  - positive attitudes towards the culture and the language in question;
  - knowledge and ability to implement principles which promote language acquisition in their daily task of teaching;
  - knowledge of methods and approaches applicable to language teaching;
  - knowledge and understanding of different types of language instructions;
  - currently the knowledge of principles, strategies and skills involved in the implementation of learner-centred instruction is an absolute requirement of every teacher in the profession.

## **6.2.2 Empirical data in action research**

A number of interviews have been conducted for this study; deductions from each type will be listed separately as follows:

### **6.2.2.1 Deductions pertaining to the rectors/ senior heads of department**

- the manner in which student teachers choose their teaching subjects in the 1997 structure differs from college to college;
- the manner of catering for the interests of departments differs from college to college;
- in one college it is a casual affair with no strategic planning in place to cater for the enrolment of student teachers in the Afrikaans department, whereas the other college addresses this issue through admission policies and the quota system.

### **6.2.2.2 Deductions pertaining to the heads of the Departments of Afrikaans**

- the drawing up of the subject policy was found to be optional and dependent on the wishes of the individual head of department;
- support of management regarding the enrolment of learners in the department of Afrikaans comes in the form of prescribed packages in one college, but is non-existent in the other;
- in the 1997 structure the number of periods of teaching as prescribed by the Department of Education is insufficient to complete the syllabus;
- heads of the departments of the subject Afrikaans do not take part in the selection of Afrikaans reading material for the library;
- only matters listed in the syllabus are regarded as important for the subject.

### **6.2.2.3 Deductions pertaining to the lecturers' interviews**

- both first and second language speakers teach the subject Afrikaans in the colleges of education;
- Afrikaans first language speakers' linguistic flexibility includes Afrikaans, English and a little French;
- lecturers in one college blame the question of the low enrolment in the subject of Afrikaans on the negative attitudes of African people and the unregulated admission process;
- enrichment of the language environment of the target language student teachers is done by first language lecturers by using the language Afrikaans for communication purposes;
- foreign language lecturers utilise the language Afrikaans during its class period only;
- reading of Afrikaans literature is common amongst its first language speakers only but a rare activity for the lecturers who are foreign language speakers of the language.

#### 6.2.2.4 Deductions pertaining to the student teachers' interviews

- student teachers, Afrikaans language environment is extremely poor;
- no strategic planning is put in place in order to improve the student teachers' language environment;
- student teachers in the subject Afrikaans do not know and realise the utility of the language in question beyond the classroom situation;
- student teachers' attitudes towards the subject Afrikaans are negative, but positive towards the subject English;
- student teachers do not understand concepts which should form the basis of their planning of lessons and choice of teaching strategies;
- student teachers are not capable of creating language situations and skills which will enhance language situations in their teaching;
- student teachers utilise other languages than Afrikaans in the explanation of difficult concepts during their teaching practice lessons.

### 6.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON LITERATURE RESEARCH

The study as a whole identified problems which affect the teaching of Afrikaans in colleges of education found in the Northern Province. This study concentrated on those colleges which train primary school teachers in the Northern Province. Makhado and Shingwedzi are the only colleges which are relevant in this case and they are therefore the only ones which were utilised in this research project (see section 1.6). The following conclusions are based on the literature survey conducted for this study.

#### 6.3.1 Language planning and the language policy in the teaching of Afrikaans

The effect of language planning and language policy in the attitudes of speakers of other languages towards Afrikaans cannot be ignored. During the *apartheid* era when the language was enforced as an official language and a compulsory subject many second and foreign language speakers associated it with the apartheid government and made the learning and speaking of the language a political issue (see sections 2.2.3).

It is the consequences of the *apartheid* era, which tend to hide the benefits of possessing the linguistic skills from its foreign language speakers and learners, that prompted the researcher to undertake this study (see section 1.2.1).

### 6.3.2 The status of the Afrikaans language in the present era

According to the South African Constitution of 1996 Section 6 (1) Afrikaans is one of the main South African languages and it therefore deserves the right to be developed like all other ten official languages in the country. All citizens who wish to utilise it as a language, subject, or medium of instruction are legally free to do so. It has also been established that as a subject it has much to offer in the field of education, as it is taught at various levels, from pre-school up to tertiary level both as a subject and a medium of instruction (see section 2.3). The utility which the language has for its speakers, should benefit all those who wish to possess its linguistic skills. This can only be done by improving the calibre of teachers who are capable of teaching the language properly from the primary school level. These skills can only be realized if the lecturing corps of the subject in colleges of education are dedicated to their work and knowledgeable to the subject they are supposed to teach.

Afrikaans is a language with first, second, and third language speakers, many of whom own and value the language and its culture. The Afrikaans community, unlike other communities, is ready to lobby and fight for its language rights in all spheres of life as Du Plessis in Krog indicated (see section 2.2.4.3). Those who are against the Afrikaans language, are acting as individuals, since the government has not declared a rejection of the language in any way. In fact, the government has indicated that because Afrikaans is a language spoken extensively in the country it should be regarded as being as important as any other language.

A major current aspect which seems to disadvantage the language in the African community is that it has lost its status of being a compulsory subject in all schools, as per the present language policy. However, it should be pointed out that a lack of Afrikaans linguistic skills will disadvantage African learners more than any other

population group. An obvious conclusion is that African learners who opt out of doing Afrikaans will not access the knowledge and the economic power which requires the linguistic skills of the language in question.

### **6.3.3 The negative attitudes of African learners towards Afrikaans**

It has also been demonstrated through literature research that African learners have mostly not been in favour of the Afrikaans language as a subject or language since the period of the 1976 Soweto student uprisings (see sections 2.2.3 and 1.1.1). At that stage the language was utilised as a compulsory subject and medium of instruction which was imposed on African learners without prior consultations with the population group concerned. These negative attitudes are further aggravated by the fact that at the moment in the Northern Province the language is mostly a foreign language and most of its learners hardly come into contact with the language and its first language speakers, despite the fact that *apartheid's* rules of separate development are no longer in operation.

### **6.3.4 Disempowerment of teacher trainers in the subject of Afrikaans**

It has been discovered through the literature survey that some teacher trainers have remained static in their knowledge to the extent that a number of them have continued training their student teachers in the traditional way as Conrad (1993) indicated (see section 1.2.1). This type of allegation prompts the idea that some of the teacher trainers deliberately or inadvertently are insensitive to innovations in the system, a factor which will disadvantage their student teachers as well as their employers. Their employers will be forced to update the knowledge of the newly trained teachers to bring them on a par with their counterparts in the profession. This static knowledge of some teacher trainers also creates the impression that they will not be able to act as leaders in adapting the innovations which are made in the education system from time to time.

### **6.3.5 The teaching of second and foreign languages**

In the literature survey it was established (see section 3.2.1) that it is important to differentiate between second and foreign languages if teaching of these languages is to be done correctly. In this sense, the correct way of teaching will need to accommodate the pre-knowledge of the learners in the planning of the teacher's lesson. One of the most outstanding characteristics of teaching a second or third language is that numerous situations should be created by the teacher or facilitator in order to give its learner chances to speak the target language, as its knowledge can only flourish through speaking it (see section 3.6.1.1). Teacher trainers are also expected to know the language so that they can act as models of pronunciation. Failure to do so will manifest itself in the form of a negative attitude which will be transferred from the lecturers to the student teachers in question.

Various language models of teaching second and foreign languages have been put forward by different researchers, but the common factor amongst them is that language learners should be given the chance to speak the language as much as possible. Whilst speaking the target language, those who want to teach Afrikaans as a subject in the schools, should learn both the language and the relevant strategies and skills of teaching it. Student teachers should be mentored by both lecturers and school teachers if they are to grow in the profession of teaching in general, and of teaching Afrikaans in particular.

## **6.4 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON ACTION RESEARCH**

The researcher's rationale for doing research in Makhado and Shingwedzi colleges, which train teachers for primary schools, is that if learners of the Afrikaans foreign language can receive a proper grounding through good teaching in the primary school level, they will experience fewer problems as they proceed to higher grades. The proper grounding which the learner should receive at this stage should prompt a positive attitude towards the target language ( see section 2.1.2).

The following conclusions were drawn from the interviews conducted during the research:

#### **6.4.1 Poor Afrikaans language environment**

The student teachers taking Afrikaans as a subject are mostly foreign language speakers who are rarely exposed to the target language in question. Most of them heard Afrikaans for the first time when they came to school and it was spoken during school periods only (see sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2). Not only was it taught and spoken only during school hours, but the teachers were foreign language speakers who were not always diligent in the teaching of the subject, and learners had to pass some of the grades without the services of an Afrikaans teacher. This fact that learners were promoted from one grade to the next without being taught Afrikaans, in this case, has led to knowledge gaps which are not easy to fill.

#### **6.4.2 The value of learning a target language as perceived by the student teachers**

Most student teachers do not see the value of learning Afrikaans as it 'will not be of value to them when they go overseas', ( see sections 4.6.2.1 and 4.6.2.2). They are of the opinion that if you know English you are advantaged, as everybody anywhere in the world can speak English. Only a small number of students regard the knowledge of Afrikaans as of importance to them as a communication tool which could also unify people of different language groups in a meeting or gathering.

#### **6.4.3 Desire to utilise Afrikaans as a medium of instruction**

Very few students indicated that they may opt to utilise Afrikaans as a medium of instruction ( see section 4.10). The rest indicated that they had an unfavourable background to the subject or that they were told by their teachers and peers that 'it is a very difficult subject' and thus developed a fear of the subject. In essence they seemed to lack confidence in the use of the language. As a lack of confidence is not

a permanent feature which cannot be corrected, various strategies are recommended remedy to correct the situation. However it should be mentioned that some of the student teachers do realize that Afrikaans as a language does have an important role to play in their future map of linguistic needs.

#### **6.4.4 Reading and acquisition of Afrikaans reading material**

It was discovered through research that most student teachers do not read Afrikaans newspapers for enjoyment or for increasing their knowledge (see section 4.6.3). Reasons were the unavailability of newspapers and other reading material in the bookshops. Although this can be accepted as an excuse, it was also discovered that even where Afrikaans magazines are available both lecturers and student teachers regard the purpose of their reading evaluation of the student teachers comprehension of the story and nothing further. The researcher is tempted to conclude that the culture of reading in different languages in general, and in Afrikaans in particular, is very poor indeed. As such it is not of any significance in the acquisition of independent knowledge.

#### **6.4.5 Utility of dictionaries in the learning of languages**

Dictionaries are indispensable in the learning of any language, whether second, or third language. Despite the value of dictionaries, it has been established that some student teachers in the two institutions are not using them regularly (see sections 4.7.4 and 4.7.5).

If the impression gained in the interviews in this study is anything to go by, that student teachers tend to regard the use of various dictionaries as optional, then unfortunately a stage will be reached when most of them will transfer this view to their learners. Learners will necessarily also follow their teachers in not reading literature in the target language. If learners do not read and listen to the target language being read or spoken, they in turn will not see the need to utilise various types of dictionaries.

#### 6.4.6 Theoretical knowledge of teaching

Through questions on the interview schedule it was discovered that most student teachers are not well equipped with the basic skills of teaching. These uncertainties which exist in their teaching knowledge, more especially if detected in their final year, may influence their attitudes negatively in their career. The fear of the researcher is that learners of the target language, who are in a poor Afrikaans language environment, are going to be taught the subject by a third language speaker who is not a reader in the language and whose teaching knowledge is very scanty. The effect of this circumstance on the teaching of Afrikaans is too dismal to contemplate.

### 6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher wishes to submit the following recommendations in the teaching of the subject of Afrikaans in colleges of education:

#### 6.5.1 The role of interested parties in the teaching of the subject should be visible

As in other subjects, e.g. English, the role of the National Department of Education and that of some Non-Governmental Organisations like *Molteno Project* should be visible to both learners and teachers in the schools. Though most learners in African schools are not experiencing the language as a medium of instruction, they should be made aware that it is one of the *viable routes* which they can take in their learning. The present position where *everybody who matters in the education system* is quiet about this route is sending the message that such a route does not exist or is not viable in the system. Funding for the development of the subject should be provided by both the government and the private sector.

#### 6.5.2 Supplementing the knowledge of the language of Afrikaans

Both student teachers and their language lecturers, who are not Afrikaans first

language speakers, should increase their knowledge of the language through *various extra-curricular means*. Strategies which can be used may include studying further in the language, joining cultural activities, listening to and watching various language programmes on the radio and television and reading Afrikaans magazines and newspapers. Another important and viable option would be to learn through the language, that is, to utilise Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in some of the college subjects. All these activities will in one way or another help participants to improve their linguistic skills in the target language.

### **6.5.3 Language teacher training curriculum**

The teacher training curricula of languages in general, and that of Afrikaans in particular, should include a language proficiency aspect which is taken seriously. Designers of such a curriculum should state: the expected outcomes and competencies of its practitioners. Its practice should be augmented by continuous evaluation and in-service training which is based on research.

Research may be done by college lecturers as well as competent teachers who by virtue of their ability and confidence may be ready to initiate innovative ideas in the teaching and learning of the subject. Skills for teaching the subject should also be subjected to evaluation, and where they are found to be redundant they should be discarded and replaced by others which have been proved to be effective through experimentation and research. Subject facilitators should be so equipped with the theory and practicalities of their learning area that in their teaching they should design, modify and augment ideas in their work. This practice should be evident in their writing of books, publishing in relevant journals and conferencing with colleagues and experts in the field.

### **6.5.4 Leadership role of colleges of education**

Departments of various disciplines in colleges in general, and of the subject Afrikaans in particular, should regard themselves as leaders as far as innovations in the education

system are concerned. It will be unfortunate if the Department of Education at provincial or national level ignores this leadership role of colleges, when introducing changes in the education system. The implication of this statement is that if the two parties do not work together they may find themselves working against each other and the teachers who are produced will find themselves redundant to the extent where they will not fit into the system they are being prepared for. Teachers, on the other hand, should feel free to consult lecturers at colleges about difficulties and seek clarity on matters of a professional nature.

Colleges on their own should be ready to work hand in hand with institutions offering in service training (INSET) in order to revitalise the teaching of the subject at all times. Workshops in the teaching of Afrikaans should be arranged at regular intervals to improve the teaching of the subject. This exercise will afford the under-qualified teachers opportunities to upgrade their knowledge, and will bring newcomers in the field up to date with the prevailing ideas and teaching strategies in the field. It is important that teachers in the field will be made aware of practices which are to be introduced in the discipline.

#### **6.5.5 The value of learning the subject of Afrikaans**

The value of learning the subject Afrikaans should be made clear to parents and guardians of learners. Those who provide such explanations should have researched the topic so that parents and school governing bodies will take informed decisions on the issue. This is even more important with the introduction of OBE and *Curriculum 2005*, where parents of learners are now expected to play an active role in the education of their children, as Lemmer and Squelch (1993:96) have indicated:

'...parents can thus make a valuable contribution to the educational process through their commitment to and knowledge of their children. Parents can help teachers develop their knowledge and understanding of their pupils and thereby also help teachers to be more effective....'

Failure to provide an informed explanation on the issue may lead to unfortunate decisions which may disadvantage learners in their future careers.

### **6.5.6 Extension of the period for training teachers for the primary schools**

When interviewing student teachers on issues pertaining to the teaching concepts and difficulties they experienced during teaching practice sessions, it became very clear that they were not yet ready to be released to schools (see sections 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11). It is therefore a recommendation of the researcher that an extra year in the training of these student teachers will improve their performance in the understanding and implementation of the teaching strategies of the language and subject in question. After all, the four year diploma in the training of the primary school teachers has already existed in the other departments training white candidates since the *apartheid* era. Then this recommendation is already accommodated in the constitution, based on the equity proclaimed therein. The only issue left is the proposal, for a four year diploma which needs to be submitted by the stakeholders and formalised by the relevant authorities.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

Although the teaching of Afrikaans and factors surrounding it have been identified in this study, it is clear that further research will still have to be conducted, with the aim of improving practices in the teaching of the subject, through action research by the practitioners in the colleges concerned.

### **6.6.1 Further research**

In this study some problems involved in the teaching and learning of Afrikaans by foreign language speakers have been identified and analysed, which prompted the idea that this study could not do justice to all the aspects raised. The following recommendations are therefore made for further research in the form of action research:

- the evaluation of guidelines developed in this study could be utilised as a topic for research in the faculties of education which train teachers for the PTD. The

researcher has in mind universities like the University of South Africa or Vista University for instance;

- the question of reinstating the Afrikaans language as a second medium of instruction could be explored in the form of a pilot study of those learners who would like to choose professions in the teaching of the subject, corporate and technical world. This study can best be done amongst African schools by both non governmental organisations and the corporate world.

One matter is apparent: that is, the value of learning the subject should be made explicitly clear to its learners and their parents through governing bodies before decisions to *learn or not to know* the language in question are taken.

### 6.6.2 Final word

In this study the question of explaining how the deterioration of the Africans' knowledge of the Afrikaans language occurred in their education system was answered.

The question whether student teachers taking Afrikaans in the colleges of education are equipped with the skills of enriching their language environment in the language in question has been answered in the negative, hence the proposed guidelines have been submitted with the aim of improving this aspect.

The third and final question, namely, whether student teachers taking the Afrikaans foreign language primary teachers course are exposed to a variety of language learning and teaching skills for the successful teaching of the subject has been partially answered in the sense that the researcher did get the impression from the student teachers' interviews that student teachers do need more time for the acquisition of theory and implementation of teaching strategies. This issue of their teaching strategies gave rise to the idea of the necessity of conducting further research in the form of action research by implementing the guidelines and increasing the period of training teachers for the diploma by a year. Presently there are a number of shortcomings in this area of teaching strategies as revealed by the student teachers' interviews.

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# ANNEXURES

## ANNEXURE A

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

*This interview schedule is aimed at identifying issues involved in the teaching and learning of the Afrikaans language and its didactics as subjects. You are requested to answer the questions to the best of your ability. You are not required to furnish your name, so that you can express your views freely. Thanking you for your co-operation in anticipation.*

Please answer questions as posed by me to you

1. Name of the college:.....
2. Highest standard passed at school:.....
3. Teaching subject in the diploma: .....
4. Mark reasons why you chose the above teaching subjects as mentioned in item 4 above. You chose them because
  - they were your best subjects
  - you had no other available subjects
  - arrangements of teaching subjects were prescribed by the college.
  - you got the best symbol in the subjects in Standard 10.Any other reason, please explain.....  
.....
5. Mark the language or languages which are spoken at your home.
  - Xitsonga       Tshivenda
  - Afrikaans       Sepedi
  - English       Any other please mention them.....  
.....
6. Mark all the languages which are used during breaks at your college.
  - English       Xitsonga

- Afrikaans       Sepedi
  - Tshivenda     Any other (please mention it) .....
- .....

7. Which languages are used at your college as medium of instruction? Mark them.

- Afrikaans       Xitsonga
- English         Sepedi
- Tshivenda     Any other.....

8. Which languages in item 7 do you regard as important for your future linguistic needs? Mention them and give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

9. Which of the languages in item 7, do you consider as being difficult for you? Mention it and give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

10. Is Afrikaans one of your teaching subjects this year?

- Yes       No

11. If yes, where did you first come across this language?

- at home                       in town
- at school                     in the farm
- playing with neighbours  any other place, please state it:

.....

12. If you were to improve your knowledge of any foreign language, for instance, Afrikaans, which activities would you prefer amongst the following? You can mark off more than one.

- reading                       speaking the language
- listening to the radio     any other: mention it.....
- watching television      .....
- memorising the language book

13. Do you like reading in Afrikaans?  Yes  No
14. If yes, how do you acquire the Afrikaans reading material for your personal use? You can mark off more than one.
- College library
  - buy prescribed books
  - buy newspapers
  - borrow books
  - Any other way (Please mention it).....
15. If your answer to item 14 is no, please supply your reasons why?
- .....
- .....
16. Do you use dictionaries for lesson preparation purposes?
- Yes  No
17. If your answer to 17 is **yes**, when preparing for your Afrikaans reading lessons, which types of dictionaries do you use?
- verklarende woordeboek
  - tweetalige woordeboek
  - both verklarende and tweetalige woordeboeke
  - any other (explain)
- .....
- .....
18. If your answer to item 16 is **no**, kindly give reasons for your answer.
- .....
- .....
19. After marking items in 17, give elaborate reasons for your choice
- .....
- .....
- .....
20. In your Afrikaans teaching period, which languages would you use to explain concepts which are difficult for your learners?
- mother tongue  Afrikaans and mother tongue
  - English  English and Afrikaans

Afrikaans  any other .....

Please give reasons for your choice

.....  
.....

21. Is it important to know the syllabus aims of your subject?

Yes  No

Please give a short explanation for your answer:

.....  
.....

22. Do you consider it as important to state the objectives of your lesson?

Yes  No

Please give a short explanation for your answer:

.....  
.....

23. If given a choice, which language would you prefer to use as medium of instruction in your studying of different courses in the college?

mother tongue  Afrikaans  
 English  Any other.....

Please, give reasons for your choice:

.....  
.....

24. If you chose Afrikaans as medium of instruction in item 19, how would you like to see that idea in operation? You can mark off more than one item.

Afrikaans should be used as

a subject only  
 a medium of instruction for some of the courses  
 medium of instruction in all the courses  
 any other .....

Please, give reasons for your above choice/s

.....  
.....

25. If you chose English in item 24 please give reasons for your answer.  
.....  
.....  
.....

26. Does your college send you for teaching practice at your school?  
 Yes                       No

28. If your answer to item 28 is **yes** mark sections in which you experience difficulties whilst teaching Afrikaans to primary schools pupils. You can mark off more than one.

- essay writing                       letter writing
- oral work                               idioms
- language usage                       literature
- any other .....

29.. Explain as briefly as possible, difficulties which you encounter in the teaching of the item which you marked in item 29.  
.....  
.....  
.....

## ANNEXURE B

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE AND DIDACTICS LECTURERS

This interview schedule is aimed at identifying and clarifying issues in the teaching and production of Afrikaans teachers in colleges of education in the Northern Province. As some important aspects may emerge through this research in the teaching of the subject in general, its image and target learners' interest may be enhanced. Please try to answer the question as honestly as possible. Thanking you for your co-operation in anticipation.

**Please answer questions put to you by me as honestly as possible**

1. Name of the institution: .....
2. Highest Qualification:      Academic: .....  
   Professional: .....
3.            In your academic qualification was Afrikaans your
  - 3.1             first language
  - 3.2             second/foreign language
  - 3.3             I do not know.
4.            If your answer to item 3 is 3.1, please indicate other languages besides your own, which you know.  
  
 English                       Sepedi  
 Xitsonga                    Any other.....  
 Tshivenda
5.            If your answer to item 3 is 3.2, please indicate other languages, besides

your own, which you know.

- English                       Sepedi
- Xitsonga                       Any other.....
- Tshivenda

6. When reflecting on your student teachers' knowledge of Afrikaans would you regard it as . . . .

- above average                       fair
- average                               bad
- excellent

7. In your endeavour to enrich your student teacher' knowledge of Afrikaans, which strategies do you employ? You can mark off more than one.

- dramatization of stories    creating communication situations
- reading poetry
- debates
- newspapers
- any other.....

Please give reasons for your choice: .....

.....

.....

8. How are student teachers admitted in the Afrikaans Department? .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Do you like reading Afrikaans literature for pleasure?

- Yes                               No

If your answer is **yes**, mention the types of literature you enjoy most.

You can mark off more than one.

- daily newspapers                       drama
- magazines                               poetry

novels

10. Kindly give reasons for your preferences.....  
.....  
.....

11. If your answer to 9 is **no**, please give your reasons for disliking the Afrikaans literature.  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. Which subject do you teach in the college?  
.....

13. What are the frustrations which you experience in teaching of the subject Afrikaans. Please explain.....  
.....  
.....

14. What are the rewarding experiences which you experience in the teaching of the subject Afrikaans? Please explain  
.....  
.....  
.....

15. Do you think that Afrikaans should remain in the curriculum? Please give reasons for your answer .....  
.....  
.....

## **ANNEXURE C**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRIKAANS**

1. How does the management of the college support you in the admission of student teachers in your department?
2. Do you participate when Afrikaans reading material is acquired for the library?
3. What constraints do you experience in the running of your department?
4. Are you satisfied with the enrolment in your department?
  - 4.1 Please give reasons for your answer
5. Do you have a policy through which you run your department?
  - 5.1 is there a chance that you can show it to me and explain some of the items about issues about how it functions?
6. How did the low enrolment in your department come about?
7. How do you support your members in the department?
8. Which factors of your subject Afrikaans concern you most?

## **ANNEXURE D**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RECTORS/ SENIOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. Is there a policy concerning the choice of teaching subjects when student teachers are admitted for the first time in your institution?
2. How do you help your student teachers with their choice of subjects?
3. How do you admit your students?
4. How do you cater for the interests of different departments?
5. How do you intend to encourage student teachers to take Afrikaans as a subject?