A Review of Challenges in Developing and Empowering South African Indigenous Languages: The Case of isiXhosa

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **A Review of Challenges in Developing and Empowering South African Indigenous Languages: The Case of isiXhosa** is my work and that all resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature   Date

AP Sotashe

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Dedication

The dissertation is dedicated as follows:

- To my Ancestors and all the Ancestors of the isiXhosa speakers for bequeathing us with such a valuable heritage;
- To those who revealed to us the beauty of our language and worked hard to restore its dignity, among them, S.E.K. Mqhayi, A.C. Jordan, W.B. Rubusana, J.J.R. Jolobe, Z.S. Qangule, the list is infinite;
- Posthumously, to Neville Alexander, we hope all his toil will not be in vain, and I also remember the message he left with me, which has always encouraged me to move forward, "If it is true, it is scientific" (February, 2012, Cape Town); and
- To those who **will** take the baton, the current and following generations to whom Mqhayi has this to says:
  Intetho nemikhwa yesiXhosa iya itshona ngokutshona ngenxa yeliZwi nokhanyo olukhoyo, oluze nezizwe zaseNtshonalanga, oonyana bakaGogi noMagogi.

  Yindawo yomlisela nomthinjana wasemaXhoseni, ukuba ukhangele ngokucokisekileyo ukuba iya kuthi, yakutshonela iphele le ntetho nale mikhwa inesidima yakowayo, kutshonele nto ni na emveni koko. (S. E. Krune Mqhayi, 1914, *Ityala Lamawele.*)

Summary

The study endeavoured to establish what had been done after 1994, by looking at the literature that reported the activities and documents that were produced. This was done against the background of what language policy and planning stand for. How these are conducted and how they influence the language ecology, was also central to our discussions. The analysis of what took place on the ground revealed that all the promising activities that were engaged in immediately post-apartheid were not sustained and did not produce the much anticipated outcomes. Much evidence for the dismal failure can be attributed to lack of accountability on the part of the powers that be.

Recommendations are offered, emphasising, among others, an understanding of the importance of languages to their speakers. It is also important to understand the effects of colonisation and apartheid on the dehumanisation of the South African indigenous languages and how this has also influenced the current generation. We also need to demystify the myth that a language that is foreign to the majority of the population can serve as a unifying element and the idea that foreign and colonial languages can help us access education, employment, economy and law. These are some of the things we are advised to heed in our attempt to improve the situation of these languages. An ideal situation has been alluded to for the stakeholders to follow in the steps of those engaged in the Modernity/Coloniality-Decoloniality Collective Project. It follows two closely related directions: one analytic and the other programmatic. The analytic seeks "to excavate the dark side of domination, where racialization on inter-subjective social relations, and the control of knowledge, labor, land, and nature are revealed as operations of power" over the oppressed people (Veronelli, 2015). This goes hand in hand with the programme which is articulated around the notion of decoloniality, intended "to decolonize all areas of the colonial matrix of power to release the fullness of human relations" (Mignolo 2013, quoted in Veronelli, 2015).

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In the 1970s (mid/late-70s), when the researcher was studying for an undergraduate degree, a friend (peer from one of the villages in the Tsomo District) asked him regarding the major courses he was studying. When he answered that one of his major courses was isiXhosa, the friend retorted asking why he was not taking relevant courses like Sociology. His response was very sharp and to the point; asking him what language he used when asking for a job and the reply was emphatic, 'English'! And he reminded the friend that if English is such a popular and powerful language, was it not because it was studied, developed, empowered, popularized by its speakers? The conversation came to an abrupt pause. The researcher was thinking of English intellectuals, such as William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, and the list is infinite. These famous writers, among others, laid the foundation for the promotion of the status and use of their language, that is, English.

From the very outset, the South African indigenous languages were managed and developed by people whose first languages were not African languages. For instance, the missionaries, who committed them to writing, developed their orthographies, wrote their grammars, etc. When they were introduced to be studied at universities, the departments offering them were managed by academics whose first languages were languages other than African languages. Little has changed even after the country obtained freedom and democracy. Under various regimes (colonial, apartheid) education and various indigenous languages were managed through colonial and apartheid languages, namely; English and Afrikaans.

From the Dutch rule through British colonial occupation to the recent apartheid government, these African languages (isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sesotho sa Leboa,

siSwati, isiNdebele, Setswana, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) were dominated, oppressed and marginalised. After the first democratic elections in 1994, the South African Constitution (1996) granted official status to 11 languages, including the nine previously marginalised languages (PMLs). This ensured the reversal of their diminishing use and status. The then Minister in the Department of Arts Culture, Science and Technology, Dr. Ben Ngubane, appointed the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) (1995), to advise him on language matters. The LANGTAG Report with its recommendations, was tabled before the Parliament in 1996, and followed by the National Language Policy Framework in 2003. Then the Implementation Plan was completed in 2003, which resulted in a document that would guide the implementation of the policy through the Language Research and Development Centres of South Africa (2004), allocated for the nine PMLs. The importance of this document lies in the fact that it was able to cover much of the work that needed to be done, with emphasis on coordination, centralisation and collaboration. Unfortunately, these were discontinued after a very short period (about three to four years of pilot testing). After they were dumped, no much serious language development seemed to be visibly taking place (except perhaps for individual groups doing this or that at their secret corners). But their neglect and marginalisation during these oppressive regimes denied them being developed and empowered. Consequently, their status did not change. For their status to change, these languages have to be developed and empowered.

Despite the fact that they had been granted official status more than 20 years ago, all evidence points to the fact that these languages are not developed and empowered enough to be able to operate in public and official domains. It is important to note that no language can be of any value to its users/speakers, if it does not gain them an access to valuable things in life, more especially in being used as a language of business.

As mentioned earlier, these languages (issues regarding research research, academic activities, etc.) have been managed by people who speak ex-colonial languages. At an academic level, there are very few authentically qualified language planning and policy scholars that come from the speakers of these languages. Even a few that may be

gleaned do not seem to be passionate about and committed to developing and empowering them. It seems the academics who are plying their trade in this field have failed, or are not keen to produce a cadre of scholars who can engage with them, and also follow in their footsteps. The researcher has a strong feeling that much genuine work in this regard has been undertaken by people whose first languages are not these indigenous languages. Scholars of Neville Alexander's, Kathleen Heugh's calibre, and many others, have worked at various levels of these languages with passion, commitment, and vision. This researcher is not critical of their contribution, but the only gripe he has, is that this kind of attitude has not been detectable from the first language speakers. He also believes that it takes the speakers of the language to engage in these activities to register some visible success. One of the scholars mentioned above agreed with this sentiment when it was suggested to him at a colloquium in Cape Town in 2011 (XHOSAFRIKA CONFERENCE, organized by Western Cape Regional PanSALB).

1.2 Problem statement

The previous section outlined the background to the study and alluded to the state of the languages' development or under-development. The stakeholders are facing the challenges of reversing the status quo and engage aggressively in developing and empowering these languages so that they can be used in various public and official domains. Not much strides have been taken in the direction towards the development and empowerment of the South African indigenous languages. The evidence to this will be ratified by the pronouncements made by people in executive positions. For instance, in a media statement of 27 August 2014 the Minister of Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa, issued a statement where he "called upon all national departments, public entities and enterprises to establish indigenous language units for the public to obtain information in the language of their choice." He emphasizes: "I wish to remind and call upon all government across all tiers to speed up the establishment of language units as there are less than 60 days left towards the deadline." Unfortunately, the Minister forgot to highlight the important role language plays in education. Many scholars such as

Alexander, Heugh, Beukes, Wright, etc. have raised their voices on language issues. Recently, we have heard a strong voice from a world-renowned scholar, Dr Molefi Kete Asante, stressing that the South African indigenous languages should be "elevated" above all other languages in South Africa. This renowned scholar attended an open session of the Thabo @ 70 Colloquium on 14 March 2013 at UNISA's ZK Matthews Hall.

Given the fact that various democratic efforts had been made available to the stakeholders, why is it that we are faced with the situation where the diminishing use and status of these languages is even worse than it was before the advent of freedom and democracy? In addition, there seems to be no possible mechanisms and/or strategies in sight to reverse the situation. Could it be because of the culture of redeployment: where skills are not of paramount importance as long as you belong to a certain powerful political group? Could it be because of vision deficiency on the part of those given the mandate to deliver on the directives of the country's constitution? There might be a legion of questions and conspiracies.

Given the fact that our Constitution lays a good ground for raising the status and use of these languages, and the favourable conditions laid down by the language policies (DAC and DHET) of the country, why are we not seeing any improvement in the development and empowerment of these languages, specifically isiXhosa?

The next logical question would be how can the situation be turned around, that is, to organise and mobilize forces to start working on the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages?

To answer these questions, we need to look closely and analyse the situation pertaining the work involved in the whole enterprise. There is no question about whether the languages should be developed and empowered, since they had been granted official status and qualify to work in various important domains. Alexander (1997:85) is confident that, "It is possible to increase the number of quotations by African social scientists who have come round to understanding the importance of developing the indigenous languages of the continent…"

It was not a mistake that our ancestors started speaking these languages. And these languages served the purposes they were required to serve. Now we cannot just dump them because they do not fit in the current educational, technological developments. It is our responsibility as the current generation to develop and empower them. Haugen (1968), quoted in Deumert (2009:396) agrees:

> The right native tongue in this country is the one that the people of the country have inherited from their ancestors, from one generation to the next, and which nowadays, in spite of all displacement and contempt, still has the basis and material for a written language just as good as any of the neighbours' languages.

In the above statement, Haugen is referring to Norwegian languages, and we would like to argue that isiXhosa is no different from what Haugen has articulated in the above excerpt about a living language. As we will see in the following section, at the central focus of the study will be to try to come into grips with potential impediments, real or imaginary, that contribute to the failure on the part of government and people to carry out the work that needs to be done to promote the status and use of these languages, including isiXhosa, especially their ability to function in important domains. In trying to do so an attempt will be made to assess very briefly what efforts have been undertaken to improve their status and use.

1.3 Research questions

When going about discussing and analysing the challenges in developing and empowering the indigenous languages of South Africa after 1994, certain questions have to be asked, among others, the following:

- What were the status and the conditions of these languages during the colonial and apartheid eras?
- What did the post-1994 government do to improve the status and conditions of these languages?
- Did the post-1994 government succeed in ending the dehumanisation, oppression and marginalisation of these languages?

- If it did, how did it go about it, and if not, why? And what needs to be done to overcome the situation?
- Ultimately, we have to ask the crucial question about human beings in general: why is it so difficult to do the right thing?

The last question cannot be addressed fully in this study, but it will be discussed briefly in the last section on Recommendations, as it involves deeper, broader and bigger issues of vision, commitment, passion, political will, and, more importantly, the common good.

1.4 Aim and objectives

The aim of the study is to review the challenges in the development of the previously, and still, marginalised South African languages [PMLs], especially isiXhosa. Preliminary activities were undertaken with the appointment of the Language Plan Task Group (1995) which finally culminated in the establishment of the Language Research and Development Centres of South Africa for nine PMLs in different provinces. After these centres were discontinued at the end of 2008, no activities seem to be taking place and this study intends to examine the challenges that bring about the delay in the development and empowerment of these languages. Language development and empowerment processes require the commitment and active participation of all interested stakeholders, including academics/language practitioners, speaker communities, the government, business communities (Chabata, 2008:17). Ouane (1991:3) emphasizes that:

> A realistic language building cannot be grounded on an impressionistic view of the linguistic situation, nor can it be a construct of ideas. It should rather stem from an understanding of what is beyond this situation, namely; people, community of people living in given conditions and expressing in particular situation in particular languages.

If the government was willing to encourage meaningful work on these indigenous languages, the questions we should ask ourselves as stakeholders are:

- Do the stakeholders, including the government, believe that it is necessary and important to develop and empower these languages?
- Why was a very important programme such as Language Research and Development Centres of South Africa abandoned?
- What could be the missing link between intention, on the part of the stakeholders, and achieving the intended goal?

It is very common to hear comments that in South Africa we produce very relevant and ambitious, but viable policies that never reach their intended goals. And also in this instance we are forced to visit questions such as:

- Is there a lack of human resources/intellectual capacity?
- Is there a crucial lack of vision, passion, and commitment in those who are tasked to carry out the mandate?
- Is there a lack of resources and infrastructure?

Although we will not be trying to respond directly to all these questions, the validation of their presence will be revealed as the study unfolds. Since these languages had, and still have, to be developed and empowered, our objectives are as follows:

- To find out how these languages found themselves in conditions of being undeveloped and disempowered;
- To assess the attempts that have been, and are being, made to correct the situation;
- To analyse and discuss the successes and/or failures of these attempts; and
- To offer recommendations for the way forward.

1.5 Justification of the research

In South Africa the language question has been in the spotlight for a long time. For isiXhosa we could mention, among others, S.E.K. Mqhayi, who complained about the

plight of the language in his classic work, *Ityala Lamawele,* first published in 1914. Many others after him highlighted the issue, not only for isiXhosa, but for all the indigenous languages of South Africa. The names of Nhlapo, Jordan, Ramoroka, Alexander, and many others, come to mind.

After the introduction of the 1994 government and the publication of the Constitution of the country, many activities took place, arousing admiration from many corners of the society. But with all these efforts in attempting to bring the situation better having aborted, the condition is even worse than before freedom and democracy. Many scholars have voiced their dissatisfaction with the appalling conditions of our languages and the laxity with which the government has responded to the problem. It would not be wise to stop highlighting these issues just because everything or much has been said.

Therefore, this study is meant to contribute to the clamour for action, not only by the powers that be, but by all the stakeholders. By this we mean the speakers of isiXhosa from all spheres of life, including the people on the ground. We believe certain activities should not have been discontinued, for example, the Language Research and Development Centres. It is important to understand the damage done by colonisation and the importance of languages to its speakers, and all these should be examined in relation to the development and empowerment of the language.

In the study we also make an invitation to language scholars and activists to join the Modernity/Coloniality-Decoloniality Project, which seeks to dig the dirt done by colonisation to the colonised and, at the same time, outlines programmes to be undertaken to mobilise the community and galvanise support for the decolonisation of the lives of the people of colour all over the world. This study sees the importance of such activities, not only to fight the coloniality of power, but also the coloniality of language.

The value of this study also lies in its attempt to bring to the fore the importance of having a deeper understanding of the indigenous languages, particularly regarding the causes and consequences of the plight of the indigenous languages of South Africa.

This is needed to give impetus to the value of working to improve the conditions and status of these languages.

1.6 Significance of the research

It is hoped the study will give fresh look at the plight of isiXhosa and other South African indigenous languages, as well as acting as a supporting material for people engaged in language development and empowerment projects. In fact, this attempt was motivated by the hope of initiating a project or a centre where activities would be coordinated from a conveniently centralised position with a hope of collaborating with various interested parties and structures. We recognise the fact that, although June 16, 1976 erupted into a revolution, instigated by language issues, the current generation of young people do not seem to be enamoured by such issues. The importance of language highlighted in the study could help revive that spirit. This will be strengthened by the introduction of a brief discussion on decoloniality of power and decoloniality of language and its relevance to linguistic emancipation.

1.7 Theoretical framework

Although we will not be advancing a particular framework, it is important to understand that the foundation of success in any activity depends on, among others, strong leadership. Language issues are matters of national concern, and whether policies pertaining to them are top down or bottom up, responsible, accountable, relevant and ethical [RARE] leadership is of utmost importance. This kind of background will, in part, help us understand the shortcomings of the agencies involved in language policy implementation and their impact on the business of our study.

In order to build a theory of development and empowerment, we must have a comprehensible understanding of the relevant concept, "development", and how it works in empowering the indigenous languages. We also need to locate 'indigenous

languages' in the context of our engagement in this study. These are South African languages that have suffered oppression and marginalisation under various regimes (colonial and apartheid). When they were granted official status by the 1994 democratic government, they were found wanting in their capacity to operate in public domains as required by their newly acquired status.

The understanding here is that any development and empowerment of a language will be preceded by language policy and planning.

1.7.1 Language policy and planning

Language policy and planning has to do with efforts to change the way language functions. "The term 'language planning'...refers to all conscious efforts that aim at changing the linguistic behaviour of a speech community" (Deumert, 2009:371). Although the term 'language policy' is usually used synonymously with 'language planning', "... [it] refers to the more general linguistic, political and social goals underlying the actual language planning process" (ibid 371). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:3) further elaborate:

> Language planning is a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop a change from happening) in the language use.

Such processes will culminate, among others, in activities that could lead to the development and empowerment of language(s) that will be targeted by resultant decisions.

1.7.2 Development

It will be very difficult to discuss 'development' without referring also to 'empowerment'. The former must of necessity influence the latter, especially when they are associated with language. According to Stiglitz (1998:3):

> Development represents a *transformation* of society, a movement from traditional relations, traditional ways of thinking, traditional ways of dealing with health and education, traditional methods of production, to more 'modern' ways...Approaching development from the perspective of transforming society has profound implications not only for what Governments and aid agencies do, but also for the way they proceed ...how they engage, for instance, in participation and partnership (emphasis in the original).

A general approach to development, as Stiglitz intimates, is a prerequisite to language development. And literature tells us that there will be no national development without language development (Chumbow, 1987:22). This brings us to the relationship between development and participation. True development will be communal in nature and this can be looked at in the context of empowerment. Cullen (1993:96-97) points out that development will be:

> ...primarily concerned with building collective organisations and evolving structures that are capable of increasing people's capacity to control their lives and handle community problems...However, the achievement of such outcomes is reliant on the participation of individuals , many of whom, given their economic circumstances, can ill afford an extensive involvement in community development on a purely altruistic basis.

Moreover, the inability of community members to participate in development projects is detrimental to sustainable development. According to Kenny (1997:5), "Organisations that are not participatory or do not enjoy the support of the wider community are not sustainable in terms of greater good". This is also true of the success of language policy implementation process. In this study, language development and empowerment is closely associated with community development, as language is regarded as a resource (Wright, etc.). Nikkhah and Redzuan (2009:172) referring to Cohen and Uphoff (1977) agrees that:

> ...participation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes. The real meaning of popular participation is the collective effort by the people concerned to pool their efforts and whatever other resources they decide to pool together, to attain objectives they set for themselves. In this regard, participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are stimulated by their own thinking and by deliberations over which they exert effective control.

Language policy implementation process which is at the core of this study, involves language development leading to language empowerment, demands the participation of languages communities/stakeholders in order to have sustainable development. Therefore, sustainable development models are helpful for achieving meaningful implementation of language policy. Harris (2000:5) defines this new paradigm, quoting the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987):

> Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

A more social definition resonates better with what development means for a language:

> A social sustainable system must achieve distributional equity, adequate provision for social services including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation (ibid 6).

Any discussion about language has human element central to it, and reference to human development will be relevant. And human development is a process of enlarging people's choices, the essential ones being able to "lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living" (Google 2013/02/10). Additional choices which are also highly valued by people will range from "political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive, and enjoying personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights" (Google, 2013:10).

Among other things, language is a means of communication and provides access to education, knowledge and participation in important debates in the society. Where a people's language has not been developed and empowered, they will be denied such privileges and the principles of social justice are violated. Amartys Sen's (1999) "Development as Freedom" and Martha Nussbaum's (2000) "Capabilities Approach" speak broadly on human development and social justice. This would include language issues and how they affect the speakers.

1.7.3 Empowerment

This term is of increasing interest to researchers, practitioners and citizens who are concerned about socio-political issues. Whitmore (1988), cited in Lord and Hutchison (1993:3), elaborates on this argument and defines empowerment as:

> ...an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organizations and institutions which affect their lives and communities in which they live.

We believe that people need this kind of confidence injection in order to take control of their lives, especially when they have to do something about their heritage (developing and raising the status of their languages). This applies directly to the communities we are concerned about in this study, that is, AmaXhosa.

1.8 Methodology

Generally, methodology is regarded as a research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted, and the principles, procedures, and practices that govern research (Tuli, 2010:102). Our approach follows a "qualitative methodology [that] is underpinned by interpretivist epistemology and constructionalist ontology. This assumes that meaning is embedded in the participants' experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's own perception" (Tuli, 2010:102, cf Merrian, 1998). In our situation, the 'participants' represent speakers of South African indigenous languages on whose language the research material constituting the focus of study, is based. The activities of the scholars, policy makers, etc. who contributed to the work that resulted in the success and/or failure of language development and empowerment, will be examined.

To be responsive to the sentiments of the people affected by research, a shift in the research paradigm is required (Porsanger, 2011). Tuli (2010:102) defines paradigm, "as a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations shared by members of a research community". This shift takes the form of the use of indigenous approaches and the

development of indigenous methodologies that are suitable for both indigenous and non-indigenous researchers. These research methodologies should , "take seriously the notion of accountability which is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility, as well as the notion of respect, and…*the notion of a thorough knowledge of indigenous traditions and languages*. Indigenous methodologies require scholars to think critically about their research processes and outcomes, bearing in mind that indigenous peoples' interests, experiences and knowledge must be at the centre of research methodologies and the construction of knowledge..."(Porsanger, 2011:109) (emphasis added).

Emphasising the relationship between worldview and methodology, Dixon (1971:120) explains that:

> …there are certain philosophical characteristics in any given world view which determine the choice of assumptions in particular, and research methodology in general. Research methodology has world view specificity, which results from respective differences in axiology, epistemology and logic. If the model is valid, then it will be possible to set forth different approaches to research, each with its respective world view.

At the core of the work will be the examination of the challenges that hampered development . This will be done mainly by using secondary material such as published books, articles and speeches, and pronouncements. This will be supplemented by limited primary material in the form of conversations with experts in the field of language policy and planning and government officials in the Department of Arts and Culture and Department of Higher Education and Training.

Since we acknowledge the extensive and intensive work that has been done by experts in the field of language policy and planning, and also some groundwork by government and various organizations, groups, individuals, etc., our task will be to bring together the information and interpret and analyse it.

1.9 Background information about the colonisation of the indigenous languages of South Africa

In South Africa, colonisation and apartheid had, and still have, a disastrous effect on people of colour and their language as we will learn later.

To a greater extent, what triggered the author to embark on this study was the plight in which we find the indigenous languages of South Africa, including isiXhosa. This included the lack of development and empowerment, diminishing status and use and general belief that English is more important than local languages. And the very fact that there are continuing and rigorous debates about the plight of these languages, testifies to their pathetic condition. We witnessed their default rising to official status through constitutional provisions; pronouncements by senior officials somewhat encouraging the stakeholders to promote their use; and lacklustre activities by various stakeholders in certain government departments.

Another source of concern has been the fact that people do not talk candidly about deliberate killing of these languages by colonisation, which introduced the hierarchisation and dehumanisation of people and their languages, religions and cultures. There is an underlying assumption that it is natural and in order to adopt the ex-colonial languages, as we have seen earlier when a friend confronted the researcher. This can be subsumed under what Veronelli theorised as "coloniality of language." Veronelli (2012:6) argues that "one of the aspects of coloniality, the linguistic aspect, [is used] to explain how it was possible and continues to be possible for colonised people and their descendants to be treated as if they were not really human" (Veronelli, 2012:6).

One may admit that this dissertation emanated from a frustration that even without tangible excuses, nothing is being done. Our country has enough requisite resources, including human and capital resources. It has been endowed with a Constitution which is the envy of the world, with policies that could be implemented with success if there is enough good will by politicians, academics (including decision makers) and ordinary citizens alike. More importantly, it is very devastating to see going to waste enormous

work that had been done by various scholars and very positive attempts during the terms of office of Dr Ben Ngubane as Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

The re-entry to employment in 2008 saw the researcher working at the isiXhosa Language Development Centre at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. This opportunity re-ignited the concern about the plight of isiXhosa. Here was an opportunity for working on the language, and not just working on it, but involving the full participation of all the stakeholders who speak isiXhosa. Unfortunately, all Language Research and Development Centres were closed down at the end of 2008, without a single word of explanation. A few years later, from 2010, futile attempts were initiated by the researcher to persuade people in executive positions at various universities. A more detailed discussion will be given in later chapters.

An excruciating pain in one's heart is to find oneself teaching something that they would not be very comfortable to teach under normal circumstances. Sometimes it becomes apparent that the environment is never meant to be conducive to do the right thing!

In academia and among people in general, one finds pockets of outbursts out of anguish and dissatisfaction with the status quo. But there is no collective effort to face the situation head on. Among academics, there is latently this attitude that things must take their own course, and concentrate on point scoring and climbing the academic ladder. The irony is that their source of prestige, the language, has nothing to show in terms of acquiring status and regaining dignity. This situation can be compared to what Veronelli characterises as "colonisation of imagination". According to her, this:

> …resulted in an impoverishment of alternatives, or what has been termed 'coloniality of knowledge.' The logic of the coloniality of knowledge keeps a Euro-centred focus. It reduces all social practices and experiences to a manifestation of European experience and knowledge. So the impoverishment of possibilities is hidden by Western conviction that theirs is the only way, the only possibility (Veronelli, 2012:13).

In this situation, the ideal would be to embark on what the intellectuals of the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality network are engaged in, namely; the 'decoloniality programme'. Only an attempt will be made to look at the situation, analyse it and suggest alternatives to face the challenges.

However, the present study does not aim to deliberate on decoloniality discourse. We are concerned with understanding and exploring factors that contribute to a lack of visible development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of South Africa, including isiXhosa. Although the focus is on isiXhosa, (the first language or mother tongue of the researcher is isiXhosa), it is important to understand that the conditions of all indigenous languages are the same, perhaps with varying degrees. Sometimes it will be noticed that statements and discussions may tend to generalise and it will be because of this fact.

It must be stressed that this is not a study that deals with the decolonisation of isiXhosa or any South African indigenous language. The point we want to draw our attention to is that there is a history that points to the situation in which we find ourselves and our languages. This started in 1492 with the conquest of the Americas: the genesis of the hierarchisation of the populations of the world. The colonisers were regarded as superior and the colonised, inferior and subhuman with no language, religion and culture. As a result, they were doomed to supply cheap or non-paid labour, and as capitalism intensified production over people became the norm, racism was invented so that it became natural for colonised people of colour to do menial jobs. The whole colonial enterprise spread all over the world and affected many countries. Africa and South Africa in particular, was not spared, starting with Dutch occupation, followed by British colonisation and later Afrikaner apartheid. Unfortunately, the post-apartheid freedom and democracy has not brought much relief to the lives of the people and no improvement to the status and use of our languages has been achieved.

1.10 Scope and chapter delimitation

The study will attempt to examine the efforts that have been made to reverse the diminishing status and use of the South African indigenous languages with special reference to isiXhosa. This will be done by mainly interpreting and analysing the literature that has been produced in the field of language policy and planning and will be supplemented by the experiences of the researcher as an active citizen of the country.

Informal conversations with experts in the field will be included and also with the officials in the line departments that have been mandated with the task of carrying out the work, namely; the Department of Arts and Culture, PanSALB, DHET, etc.

This is not an in depth study and its scope will be limited to examining what has already been said and done. Most importantly, an analysis of what happened after 1994 to date (2016) will assist into getting into grips with what is the missing link between policy making and implementation. It is hoped that this will help us to be in a position to point out the shortcomings. When these have been identified, possible ways of solving the impasse will be suggested.

The current chapter has provided the background and an introduction. In order to arrive at a rationale for understanding the current policies which are intended for language development and empowerment, we must first have an idea of the colonial and apartheid history and its impact on the indigenous languages, and perhaps the people's struggles to be free from oppression, subjugation and marginalisation.

Chapter Two will concentrate on the general theoretical issues of language policy and planning. This will be done with the aim of using them as a basis for discussing language policy and planning in South Africa after 1994.

This will be taken up in Chapter Three, in which we briefly discuss the post-1994 language policy and planning activities in South Africa. This will be followed by a close analysis of language policy implementation in Chapter Four.

The general conclusion and way forward including recommendations will wind off the study. The underlying idea in the whole process will be that research activities are a means of accessing knowledge and that knowledge should be used to benefit the affected people.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ISSUES OF LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING

2.1 Introduction

Introducing his Language planning model for Africa, Chumbow (1987:15) declares that, "Language planning activities in Africa differ substantially from language planning activities in the developed countries of Europe and America in a number of ways." He goes on to identify "the absence of a recognized, uniform and clearly defined model for the enterprise of language planning in most countries of Africa" (ibid). One would wonder if Africa would not require a specific African model, in recognition of the history of the continent's colonisation by the west.

The focus of the present chapter is a brief discussion of the theoretical issues of language policy and planning. This is intended to form a background to the discussion of the language policy and planning activities in South Africa since the dawn of freedom and democracy from 1994 to date. It was envisaged that this will afford us a glimpse at the challenges in developing and empowering indigenous languages of South Africa.

The following sections will look at various issues pertaining to language policy and planning. Section 2.2 will tackle the definition and how various scholars conceptualise language policy and planning, followed by sections on early policy and planning scholarship in section 2.3; expanded frameworks in the 1970s and 1980s are discussed in section 2.4; critical language policy is discussed in section 2.5; the ethnographic approach to language policy is described in section 2.6; important questions: can language policies succeed and under what conditions?, are explored in section 2.7; an extended concept of language policy will be dealt with in section 2.8, followed by concluding remarks in section 2.9.

2.2 Definition of Language Policy and Planning

Many scholars have contributed to the discussions relating to the field of language policy and planning ever since it emerged in the 1960s. Language policy and planning is about "deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocations of their language codes (Cooper, 1989:45). And the first person to mention planning in relation to language activities was Haugen (1959:8):

> By language planning I understand the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community. In this practical application of linguistic knowledge, we are proceeding beyond descriptive linguistics into an area where judgment must be exercised in the form of choices among available linguistic forms.

Over the years, the scope of language planning has broadened from being limited to corpus planning to include various activities as we learn from Kaplan and Bauldaf (1997:3):

> Language planning is a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop a change from taking place) in the language use in one or more communities.

According to Hornberger (2006), a variety of works in language planning and language policy began to 'coalesce' in a more substantial way in the 1990s. And Fettes (1997:14) articulates this clearly:

> Language planning…must be linked to the critical evaluation of the language policy: the former providing standards of rationality and effectiveness, the latter testing these ideas against actual practice in order to promote the development of better…language planning models. Such a field would be better described as "language policy and planning", LPP.

In these debates there seems to be no consensus about an acceptable definition of language policy and planning. Hornberger (2006:25) admits:

> The truth is that the LPP [language policy and planning] designation is useful, not just as a reminder of how inextricably related language planning and language policy are (and in recognition of the important role of each), but also a way around the lack of agreement on the exact nature of the relationship.

This has resulted in some subsuming planning under policy and vice versa. This controversy has been alluded to by Ball (1993:10):

> One of the conceptual problems currently lurking within much policy research and policy sociology is that more often than not analysts fail to define conceptually what they mean by policy.

But he states his position (ibid: 10):

> …I actually inhabit two very different conceptualisations of policy. For the time being I will call these: **policy as text and policy as discourse** (emphasis in the original).

The argument that language policy is conceptualised as 'text' refers to the understanding that what influences language choice is a text, to be understood as "authoritative statement, either verbal or written, of what should be done, for example, a constitution" (Bonacina, 2012:13). And the notion of conceptualising language policy as "discourse"' means that what influences language choice is "a set of beliefs and ideologies about what should be done" (ibid: 13).

It often comes out very clearly that there is no definite designation for the concept and we find various associations, such as language policy being related to language planning. Sometimes, the two concepts are used interchangeably, used together, or one being used as super-ordinate term subsuming the other, as in, for example Ricento (2000:209), where language policy subsumes language planning.

While the debate continues to develop in the field, we also recognize that some scholars conceptualise language policy as comprising three elements. For example, Spolsky (2007:4) states that:

> The theory I am exploring will hold that each of these components [i.e. language management, language beliefs and language practices] within (and, as we shall see, others outside) the domain produces forces that account for language choices by participants.

This derives from the understanding that language policy regulates speakers' language choice and alternation acts (Bonacina, 2010:13). Spolsky (2005:2154-5) elaborates:

> Language policy does in fact go further than this, [study of irregularities in choices among varieties of language] for it includes not just the regular patterns of choice, but also beliefs about choices and the values of varieties and of variants, and also, most saliently, the efforts made by some to change the choices and beliefs of others.

In attempting to define language policy, we may approach our task by looking at language use by "differentiat[ing] between linguistic and metalinguistic activities", that is, language practices (people producing utterances), or people paying attention to these utterances and thinking about altering them and even taking action on those thoughts (Nekpavil, 2011:871). We may conclude that in a particular community or society, a language problem is identified and action is taken by making decision to tackle it. Then a process is started by discussions and writing down rules, laws to be followed, and the activities to be engaged in are put in place in order to act on the problem with the intention of bringing about change. It may be safe to assume that in the case of South Africa, the National Language Policy Framework (2003) and the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012) have their genesis from the recognition of the plight of the previously marginalised South African indigenous languages, and "intended to achieve a planned change…in language use" in the affected communities. And this derives from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), aiming to reverse the diminishing use and status of indigenous languages.

2.3 Early language planning scholarship

As a discipline, language planning came to life in the 1960s when language scholars were mainly interested in solving language problems of new developing, postcolonial nations. Scholars were called upon to develop grammars, dictionaries and writing systems. The person who is credited with the introduction of the concept "language planning" is Haugen (1959), which he defined as, "the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community" (Haugen, 1959:8). This is what was later known as *corpus planning.* And other scholars were focused on allocating functions and uses for particular languages known as *status planning* (introduced by Kloss, 1969). In the case of the South African situation, the focus goes beyond these stages: nine languages have been selected and their status has already been determined in the Constitution, and what is required is, among others, a strong commitment to work on the languages and empower them.

This stage was characterised by the tendency of divorcing language planning from ideological and socio-political realities of language. This approach was championed by Tauli (1974). To him the inefficient languages include "ethnic languages" that he described as primitive, archaic, and not constructed "methodologically according to plan" (Tauli, 1974:51, cited in Johnson and Ricento, 2013:8-9). Tauli's formulation was out of step with linguistic theory which claimed that languages were created equal. Cobarrubias (1983) was among linguists who continuously resisted the notion that included ideological dimensions in analysing language planning. Cited in Johnson and Ricento (2013:9), Cobarrubias (1983:6) argues that:

> Language–status decisions are affected by ideological considerations of powerful groups and counteracting forces. However, we should not saddle theory with ideological considerations.

The neglect of ideology and politics which characterised this period has invited criticism that became very central to the following era.

2.4 Expanding frameworks 1970s and 1980s

During this period, interests became more diffuse and scholars were beginning to question the viability of earlier models. Fowler et al. (1979), in his work on critical linguistics, and sociolinguist Hymes (1972), questioned the work that divorced linguistic data from socio-cultural contexts. According to Johnson and Ricento (2013:10):

> The focus on the social is primary in critical linguistics and language is viewed as a way to understand and critique the relationship between language and power, especially how power motivates, or is embedded in, language use.

Tollefson's (1991) book marked the period when critical language policy began to take off. But also ideas integral to this theoretical orientation can be found in Ruiz' (1984:2) article, who argues that:

> Orientations are basic to language planning in that they delimit the ways we talk about language and language issues … they help to delimit the range of acceptable attitudes toward language, and to make certain attitudes legitimate. In short orientations determine what is thinkable about language in society.

Cooper (1989) was concerned about the socio-political aspect of language planning. He intimated that by its nature as an activity that deals with the management of change, [language] is "itself is an instance of change" (Cooper, 1989:164). According to him, language planning should involve activities that move upwards and downwards (Johnson and Ricento, 2013:11). Cooper (1989:38) elaborates:

> Micro-level, face-to-face interactional circles can both implement decisions initiated from above and initiate language planning which snowballs to societal or governmental level. In short, I believe it an error to define language planning in terms of macro-sociological activities alone.

The following section highlights the critical approach that was adopted to language policy and planning, where issues of power dynamics began to attract focus, and how they influenced the discussions around LPP.

2.5 Critical language policy

This period and its activities emerged as a response to earlier language planning work, and as a natural product of critical trends in linguistics field. And this is articulated in Tollefson's conceptualization of the underlying assumption of language policy as serving the interests of the dominant groups. He suggests that:

> Language policy is viewed as one mechanism by which the interests of dominant socio-political groups are maintained and the seeds of transformation are developed…The historical-structural model presumes that plans that are successfully implemented will serve dominant class interests (Tollefson, 1991: 32, 35).

Tollefson (2006:42) outlines the following aims of Critical Language Policy (CLP):

- It refers to the work that is critical to traditional, mainstream approaches to language policy research;
- It includes research that is aimed at social change; and
- It refers to research that is influenced by critical theory.

According to Ricento, the idea that language policies are influenced by power is central to examinations of ideology in language policy. He explains:

> …language policies can never be properly understood or analysed as free-standing documents or practices; to ignore the role of ideology, or to relegate it to a bin of 'extraneous' variables, too fraught with ambiguity to be useful in empirical research, is to engage in an ideological subterfuge of the worst sort (Ricento, 2000:7).

Critical language policy debates helped in highlighting the ideologies embedded in language policies and the fact that language policy development could be one aspect among many socio-political processes which may perpetuate social inequality. But it was criticized by other scholars (such as Ricento and Hornberger, 1996) for being too deterministic, undermining the power of human agency. What seems to be lacking in these approaches, so far, is the link between macro- and micro-levels of language

policy activities, and the role of agency in the processes of implementing, interpreting and appropriating these policies.

2.6 Ethnographic approach to language policy

Comparing ethnography to language policy and planning, Canagarajah (2006:153) conceptualises it as follows:

> While LPP largely works in a top-down fashion to shape the linguistic behavior of the community according to the imperatives of policy-makers, ethnography develops grounded theories about language as it is practiced in the localized contexts. While LPP is largely concerned with activities of specialists and policy-makers in defining language relationships from outside the community, ethnography is concerned with the community's own point of view about such matters. While LPP operates from the macro-social level of state and international institutions, ethnography focuses on the micro-level of interpersonal relationships, conversation, and everyday life. While LPP is deliberate and programmatic, ethnography unravels the largely unconscious "lived culture" of a community. In short, while LPP is about how things "ought to be", ethnography is about what "is".

Therefore, ethnography comes in as criticising traditional language policy research for dichotomising language policy creation and implementation, and for ignoring the agentive role of implementers. It is also committed to resisting dominant and linguistically discriminative policy discourses, and includes critical analysis of local, institutional and national policy texts (Johnson, 2009). As a method that acts as a link between micro-level educational practices and macro-level language policies and discourse, it reconceptualises language policy as an interconnected process. It is a policy that is seen as a dynamic process that stretches across time and that implementation is not just what happens after policy is made, but as a link in the chain of policy process in which all actors potentially have input. Therefore, rather than being a linear top-down policy, it consists of "different layers of what Ricento and Hornberger, (1996) metaphorically refer to as the language policy onion, highlighting the opening up and closing down of implementational and ideological spaces in educational LPP" (Hornberger and Johnson, 2011:275).

Hornberger and Johnson (2007) introduced ethnography of language policy as a method of examining the agents, contexts and processes across multiple layers of what Ricento and Hornberger (1996) metaphorically referred to as language policy onion. Hornberger and Johnson (2011), quoted in Johnson and Ricento 2013:14) argue that ethnographies of language policy can:

- illuminate and inform various types of language planning, and language policy
- illuminate and inform language policy processes, and appropriation
- examine the links between the LPP layers, from the macro to the micro, from policy to practice; and
- open up ideological spaces for creating multilingual language policies that promote social justice and sound educational practice.

The empirical findings from ethnographies of language policy have proved to be an essential part of our understanding of policy processes; providing theoretical and conceptual orientation that combines the macro and micro; offering a balance between power and interpretative agency; and are committed to issues of justice especially to the rights of indigenous and minority language speakers (Johnson and Ricento, 2013:15). Therefore, this is very relevant and absolutely important in the context of the South African situation because of colonial and apartheid past, which affected value and dignity of the indigenous languages and their speakers.

2.7 Important questions: Can language policies succeed? And under what conditions can they succeed?

These are important questions raised by Siiner (2012:10). In trying to figure out an approach to tackling her task, she invokes the legal theory which distinguishes between two levels of a legal phenomenon, i.e. the logical surface of statutes (or judicial decisions or laws); and the deeper "competing legislative bases" (or policies), which are the ideological underpinnings of the law (Siiner, 2012:10). Referring to Spolsky (2012:5), Siiner poses that "the ideological bases for the development of language laws are seen as inseparable parts of the process of language policy (making), and the term

'policy' thus covers both ideological underpinnings and laws" (Siiner, 2012:10, footnote 1). Attempting to address the questions posed above, Siiner (2012) picks up the dilemma that national language policies face, being torn between their symbolic (Garcia, 2012) and problem-solving functions and language management (Nekpavil 2006; Jernudd and Nekpavil, 2012; Siiner, 2012:11). This, according to Siiner (2012:11), is puzzling:

> …since the tendency in the development of modern national language policies has been that the greater the complexity in language practices and the less the consensus that exists on language matters in a state, the more likely the dominant ideologies in the state are to develop thick policies in order to modify practices in the desired direction (also Spolsky, 2002).

Spolsky (2004) indicates that there are relatively fewer cases where language management has produced the desired outcomes. And this leads to the question about what language problems language policies try to solve. This is because sometimes the reasons for developing certain language policies have nothing to do with how languages are used and acquired as outlined in sociolinguistic and ethnographic studies (Jorgensen, 2010; McCarty, 2011). The manipulation of language for various hegemonic, oppressive purposes are also highlighted in Shohamy's (2006) analysis of hidden agendas in language policies.

Many scholars have alluded to the alarming gap between the results from studies using ethnographic methods language's functions for the people, and the ideologically constructed concept of language that is present in language policy (Siiner, 2012). This brings us to the understanding that the interdisciplinary nature of language policy aiming to solve problems and deal with language use, calls for an expanded theoretical approach, combining inspiration from sociolinguistics, ethnographic studies, sociology and political science. While macro sociolinguistics increases our understanding of the influence language ideology and language practice have on language development policy, the ethnographic approach to language policy conceptualises language policy as dynamic process stretching over time, involving agents in different layers of society (Shohamy, 2006) and as activity (languaging) (Becker, 1991; Maturana, 1978).

2.8 An extended concept of language policy

2.8.1 The concept

This conception of language policy is based on its interdisciplinary nature which necessarily calls for interdisciplinary approach in language policy studies. Siiner (2012:29) admits:

> As Jernudd and Nekpavil stress, concerning both policy formulation and implementation, language policy is clearly socio-political, extending beyond the margin of linguistics and thus calling for a combination of tools and approaches from a wide range of disciplines besides sociolinguistics, including economics, sociology, law and political science (Jernudd and Nekpavil 2012:17).

Furthermore, this conception of language policy is based on the understanding of language as an activity through which individuals interact to meet their needs. Hornberger and Johnson (2011:282) suggest that:

> …the ethnography of language policy offers the possibility of illuminating and informing the development of LPP in particular contexts, in its various types - status, corpus and acquisition planning – and across various processes of the LPP cycle – creation, interpretation, and appropriation.

It further sheds light on the interactions between bottom-up and top-down layers that are involved in the processes of creating, interpreting and appropriating the language policy

2.8.2 The analysis of the genesis of language policy:

Central to understanding the creation of language policy is the understanding of the context in which it is created. According to Siiner (2012:29):

> …language policy is usually designed to solve a local problem that has arisen in a certain historical, political and cultural context. In order to examine context, the

analysis of language policy has to start with the contextual determinants behind the genesis of language policy, i.e. mainly the political and ideological factors, but also broader historical, cultural and global aspects…

The multi-layered nature of the language policy also constitutes another angle from which it can be analysed. For instance, besides what is traditionally referred to as macro level, there exists meta level, which includes international and global confederations, e.g. WTO, EU; a meso level which includes institutions, companies and corporations, schools, universities; local municipalities and local governments. Individual language users constitute the micro level (Siiner, 2012).

Alexander (2008:6-7) has no doubt that "at the beginning of the 21st century, language planning is not only relevant, but inescapable". He elaborates further:

> In my view, the question that has to be answered is not whether language policy and planning can or do "cause" social change. In reality, the question has to be formulated more carefully: "under which conditions can language policy and planning influence decisively the direction and depth of social change?" Also, and as a corollary to this proposition, to those who explicitly claim that language planning is a futile waste of time and resources, we have once again to say clearly that *laissez-faire* policy notoriously reinforces the agendas of dominant groups. To continue to believe in the 21st century that language planning is illusory at best and tantamount to evil social engineering at worst is, ultimately, to deny the possibility of social justice. As long as language planning proceeds in democratic consultation with the users of the respective languages, the "danger" of social engineering can be avoided. All states, even the most "democratic", pursue social engineering to one degree or another.

2.9 Conclusion

The current chapter has introduced the concepts of "language policy and planning". These concepts were defined, and the various debates by scholars during the process of their development stages in academic discourses, were presented. This was done with the aim of laying a solid foundation for discussing the development and empowerment of the marginalised languages of South Africa.

We may conclude by noting that in conceptualizing "an extended concept of language policy", Siiner (2012) is working "towards a more flexible language policy" (the title of her thesis). She goes on to stress:

> The main hypothesis of the present thesis is that this aspect [i.e. not all aspect of social structures are knowable, as they, too, are ever changing] requires a certain amount of flexibility in language policy, in order to meet the changing needs of language users (Siiner, 2012:31).

Being aware of the danger and potentially disillusioning qualities of the naiveté and hubris among language planning professionals, Alexander (2008:7) warns that:

> If we are to proceed, our original conceptualisation of what is desirable, our planning approaches and the   flexibility of our implementation strategies are essential for the feasibility of language planning projects…

In our next chapter, the discussion will revolve around the language policy and planning activities in South Africa since the advent of freedom and democracy in 1994. And our focus will be how these activities contributed towards understanding challenges in developing and empowering the indigenous languages of South Africa in the new democracy.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REVIEW OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT AFTER 1994

3.1 Introduction

The chapter looks at the state of affairs of the indigenous languages of South Africa, especially isiXhosa, focusing mainly on the development and empowerment, (or the lack of it). The previous chapters gave brief overviews of the background to the study (Chapter One), and the literature review of the language policy and planning (Chapter Two) respectively. The current chapter examines the language development and empowerment of these languages after the advent of democracy in 1994. Although our main focus is on development and empowerment, as we have mentioned above, it is the view of the researcher that language policy and planning provides an environment that is conducive for this to take place, and to some extent, determines the degree to which it will fail or succeed. As the previous chapter has reviewed literature on language policy and planning in general, the current one will give an overview of language policy and planning in South Africa, and its outcomes as they manifest themselves in the successes and failures of development and empowerment.

The following section will deal briefly with the concepts which are fundamental to this study, namely; development and empowerment with regards to language and the communities; followed by the general overview of activities immediately after 1994; the levelling of the playing ground; this will be done by, among other things, exploring the belief of the stakeholders, including the government, that it is necessary and important to develop and empower indigenous languages of South Africa, and what has been done in this regard; to assess the abandonment of a programme such as the language research and development (Language Research and Development Centres, 2004 –

2008); and to assess the missing link between intention on the part of the stakeholders and achieving the intended goal in order to achieve the stated aim.

3.2 Development and empowerment

Development theorists and practitioners have come to agree overwhelmingly that empowerment is a necessary component of development (Keheler, 2007:2). But the assumptions underpinning this notion are that in the case of language, development and empowerment flow directly or indirectly from language policy and planning stipulations, assuming that there are policies in place. We shall first look briefly at planning and assert that planning is not merely a catalogue of resources and the organisation and the mobilisation of these resources to reach a certain goal. In most cases, the technocrat is not always part of the decision making. Therefore, it is important that the planner provides alternatives and options are given, the goal stated and the strategies are spelled out and the politician-decision maker can take a decision. Language planning does not merely entail drawing a list of mother tongues spoken in a defined area, nor does it merely mean listing of their actual or desired domains of use. Whether in a unilingual or a multilingual society, language planning is essential to deal with problems such as dialect and language standard, all aspects of language development and contexts of language use, are areas of concern for a language planner. Therefore, language planning agencies, endowed with sufficient technical expertise and executive power, certainly do a great deal to influence language development, and through planning, help reduce conflict and tension. (Language planning and language development, doc accessed 22/09/2013). In South Africa, this was very crucial if we take into consideration the history of the country's language question (Alexander, 1989).

3.2.1 Development

Various scholars view development from the point of view of the fields in which they operate. For instance, Sen (1999:3) points out that "[d]evelopment can be seen…as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy." This view "directs attention to the ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means that play prominent part in the process"(ibid). Developing a language will also accelerate achieving these goals of freedom [social and economic arrangements, political and civil rights] , by the "removal of the major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states" (ibid:3). On the other hand, Djite (2008:3) maintains that "[d]evelopment is today perceived as the transformation of the world through the innovations of new information and communication technologies." And according to Makuwira (2006:193), "development is about enhancing individual and collective quality of life in an empowering and sustainable way." He further suggests that for development to be effective, beneficiaries should not only participate in decision making process, but that they must be part of the process with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainability (ibid:194). There is also a criticism that development policies become mechanisms of control and tools for re-colonisation. Taking up Escobar's (1995) position, Makuwira points out that "Escobar's point of departure is his wariness of development as an insidious bedfellow of colonialism and that our struggle should be to resist these hidden structures of domination by empowering ordinary people and their grassroots organizations to determine their future" (ibid:194).

It is the strongest belief of this researcher that isiXhosa, or any African language for that matter, can be genuinely developed and empowered by actively involving all the stakeholders in finding what needs to be done, conceptualising and executing projects. In that way, they will own the work and the activities will be surely sustainable.

3.2.2 Empowerment

There is a general understanding among development and empowerment theorists that the idea of empowering assumes some absence or lack of power. The context of empowerment can be understood by examining the concepts of power and powerlessness; where power is defined as the "capacity of some persons and organizations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others" (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989:2 cited in Lord and Hutchison, 1993:2). Our society is characterised by class domination where those in the minority have tremendous economic and political power while the majority have very little or nothing.

It should be common knowledge that any normal human being knows and understands his/her needs better than anyone else, and the aim of empowerment "should be to enhance the possibilities for [people] to control their own lives" (Rappaport, 1987:19, cited in Lord and Hutchison, 1993;19). Empowerment is a "process whereby individuals achieve increasing control of various aspects of their lives with dignity" (Lord and Hutchison, 1993:4).

As a process, empowerment is taken as a transition from the state of powerlessness to a state of more control of one's life, fate and environment. Sadan (2004:13) argues that the process aims at changing three dimensions of social condition, "i.e. to bring about a change in: person's feelings and capacities; the life of the collective that they belong to; and the professional practice that gets involved in the situation".

Tucker and Ludi (2012) identify two approaches to empowerment and equity, namely: structural and agency. Structural approaches focus on external forces constraining people's actions, aiming to change these forces by tackling unfair privileges in society and reforming laws, policies or institutions that disadvantage certain groups of people. In addition, the focus of agency approaches is enabling the marginalised people to manage change themselves. This includes enhancing their ability to participate in decision making, supporting them to access skills, resources and markets, facilitating

collective action, building confidence and raising their awareness regarding their rights (ibid).

The majority of the people of South Africa, especially those who speak the previously, and still, marginalised languages, do not have access to important and essential resources. Therefore, it is imperative that their languages should be empowered thus enabling them to use them in various important domains, such as politics, economy, education, etc. Moreover, their capabilities should be enhanced to enable them to participate with confidence and dignity in informed decision making regarding anything that affects their wellbeing.

Thus they will be empowered if they are better able to shape their own lives and have gained a number of factors that make this achievable (Drydyk, 2007). To achieve this goal, they must not just be able to exercise enhanced decision making and influence over strategic life-choices, barriers to agency and well-being freedom, but also their capacity for such decision-making and influence should be enhanced (ibid).

The two concepts "Development and Empowerment" discussed above refer to human beings and their conditions. The overall idea that comes out of this, points to the betterment of the lives of human beings with the underlying notion of decolonisation. In the South African situation, this entails addressing the legacies of colonialism and apartheid which brought about dehumanisation, inequality, oppression, subjugation, marginalization of the indigenous people. The end result was disempowerment. In the following sections we will concentrate on the development and empowerment of language. Djite (2008:3) highlights the connection between people and language, stating that, "empowering people to take part in their own destiny begins with language literacy and education, both of which are critical indicators of development."

The whole idea of development implies empowerment which enhances human participation in the activities which are central and fundamental to human life. And Ngugi) (2013b:6) believes that:

If we believe that people are the basis of development, then the language or languages that they speak are the basis of that progress and every language policy and planning should incorporate this premise. African languages must be at the frontline in the discovery and invention of knowledge in the arts, in the sciences and technology.

If we accept what Ngugi says, therefore, there is no question about whether or not the African languages, and, in this case, the previously, and still, marginalised South African languages, should be developed. IsiXhosa is not an exception. In this instance, we concur with Alexander (2013:80) when, responding to the question whether these should be developed, he asserted very strongly:

It would be hard to find any South African intellectual who on the grounds of sentimentality and politics would not immediately answer the question in the affirmative. With a few exceptions, however, most of these ladies and gentlemen would immediately relegate their affirmation to the category of mere rhetoric on the grounds of 'pragmatism' and cost-benefit considerations.

The following section looks briefly at the essence of language development and empowerment.

3.3 Language development and empowerment

Under this sub-heading we will try to briefly explain what we mean by developing and empowering a language. We should also understand that the purpose of developing and empowering a language must not end with the language, but the whole processes should aim to equip human beings to live a more equitable, democratic, egalitarian life – a better life.

In literature, language development has in the main traditionally been used to refer to psycholinguistic concepts. In our context, we are approaching it from a sociolinguistic stance, and it is used to refer, "to the raising of the status of languages in the communities in which they are spoken" (Chabata, 2008:16). This is done through a number of activities, including the creation of standard orthographies, compilation of

dictionaries, writing of grammars, creation of corpora, development of research tools, such as morphological parsers, syntactic analysers (ibid).

We are aware of the fact that no language is undeveloped in the sense that it is less capable of expressing whatever a speaker wants to communicate. The reality is that all languages have about the same level of structural complexity overall and all are capable of allowing their speakers to describe the world in which they live. True as this assertion may be, however, giving a language new uses requires that new concepts be found to suit the new functions. Ngugi (2003:xi-xii) puts this into perspective, "It is not that Black languages are incapable of expressing universe, but there have to be workers in ideas who are expanding the possibilities of those languages in that and other directions." Elaborating further on the alleged incapability of these languages to handle complexities, he points fingers, "…there are those who will argue that African languages are incapable of handling complexities of social thought, that like their speakers, African languages are riddled with poverty" (Ngugi, 2013a:10). Referring to the fact that even the so-called developed languages like English have gone through the same stages as African Languages, and their intellectuals worked on them with passionate commitment to "overcome similar claims of inadequacy…", he suggests strongly:

> African languages need similar commitment from African intellectuals, bearing in mind that no language had a monopoly of cognitive vocabulary, that every language, as Cheikh A Diop once argued, could develop its terms for science and technology (ibid:10).

To take the matter further, as societies become exposed to other groups and to modern, urban life, they will encounter any technologies that are not part of their traditional world. This is true of the indigenous languages of South Africa, and this is in addition to the neglect they suffered under successive oppressive regimes of colonisation and apartheid. Be that as it may, Bamgbose (2011:3) also knows that nothing is impossible with language development:

> While it is true that use of language in newer domains requires language development efforts, the commonly held view that certain languages cannot be

used to express concepts adequately in certain domains is false. The trite linguistic truism that *there is no concept that cannot be expressed in any language provided the need to do so arises* holds good today as before (emphasis in the original).

There is no doubt that marginalised languages need to be empowered (Alexander, 2013:80). According to Alexander (2013:94-95), languages have two fundamental sources from which they derive their power. Firstly, language "is the main instrument of communication at the disposal of human beings; consequently, the specific language(s) in which the production processes take place become(s) the language(s) of power". If we apply this to the situation of the marginalised South African languages, we will realise that they are disempowered as they are not used in the production of goods which all consume. And by the same token the speakers of these languages are also disempowered because they consume goods through the languages in which they lack proficiency. Secondly, according to Alexander (2013:95-96):

> The other source of the power of language is its function as a transmission mechanism of 'culture' or, more particularly, its role in the formation of individual and social identities [and] being able to use the language(s) one has the best command of in any situation is an empowering factor, conversely, not being able to do so is necessarily disempowering.

These unambiguous and indisputable facts militate towards taking action to work on empowering these languages. According to Batibo (2009:197), "Language empowerment is the institution of a set of measures to raise the social status of a language as well as to make it more viable in handling public domains". There are a number of measures that can be undertaken to empower a language, such as language enhancement and terminology development, lexicography, grammar books, and literature. In the case of marginalised languages, empowerment will enable them to be used in important domains such as education, literacy programmes, office and workplace interactions, and media. When a language is regularly used in such public domains, its prestige is raised and its utilitarian value is enhanced. In many instances, a language with high esteem is associated with incentives to the users, including things such as socio-economic opportunities, access to jobs, while at the same time it also

creates jobs through its activities. The importance and centrality of language in human life can never be overemphasised. Mtenje (2002: 3) argues that:

> To the extent that development entails the improvement of people's lives, the vehicle through which such lives and their daily experiences are carried is an unavoidable component of the whole development programe.

The sad thing is that language is always taken for granted. Furthermore, empowering a language implies, among other things, speaking the language, using it as a medium of instruction, intellectualising, and translating into and from it. All these interventions support and are supported by language development. Alexander (2013:96) suggests that "…being able to use the language(s) one has the best command in any situation is an empowering factor…" Ngugi (2013a:12) touches the right nerve about speaking a language when he pronounces:

> If you know all the languages of the world and you don't know your mother tongue or the language of the culture of the community into which you are born, that is enslavement. But if you know your language and add all the languages of the world to it, that is empowerment. The choice for us is between intellectual enslavement and intellectual empowerment and of course I hope we choose the path of empowerment.

The intellectual enslavement referred to above by Ngugi has been doing the rounds for quite some time. This came out of various researches testing language attitudes of different categories of isiXhosa speaking people of South Africa (parents, children, students, etc.) or an African language. These studies involved testing language preferences in speaking and/or learning in isiXhosa/African language or English. They elicited differing responses (whether they preferred isiXhosa or not), ranging from positive, negative and ambivalent (de Klerk, 2000; Conduah, 2003; Dalvit, 2004; Bekker, 2005; Kinzler et al., 2012).

Choosing mother tongue as the medium of instruction has been a very controversial issue in many of the multilingual countries, including South Africa. Despite this, using mother tongue as medium of instruction has been acknowledged as empowering. The

reluctance to accept this truth emanates from its linking with the denial of access to the privileged English, and "Africans in the periphery-English nations seem, with few exceptions, to feel that support for African languages is intended to confine them to an inferior position" (Phillipson, 1992:127). Scholars have stressed the benefits of using mother tongue as language of learning and teaching in various spheres of life. Pasensie (2012:3) directly takes mother tongue to the learning and teaching environment:

> It is through language that children encounter the world and make sense of the input they receive in the classroom. It is through language that they decode messages from their teachers and written texts; and it is through language that they express their understanding of these inputs. It is when the child experiences these inputs in their own language, the language they use at home, that they are able to better express themselves.

Therefore, the ultimate rationale for promoting mother tongue education is the empowerment of the underprivileged peoples and lending dignity to their marginalised languages. In addition, the use of African languages, including isiXhosa, can also be taken further in attacking the incidence of adult literacy, as current official languages are not accessible to a population with a majority of illiterate people (Bamgbose, 2011:7). Among the most important elements of language empowerment is intellectualisation of language which also involves translation. According to Liddicoat (2002:1), "The intellectualisation of a language involves the development of new linguistic resources for discussing and disseminating conceptual material at high levels of abstraction". For him, "The key component of this is the development of academic discourse in the language at various levels of education" (ibid). In the case of marginalised languages, there is always a need for attempts and measures to effectively accelerate a process and activities of language intellectualisation and this must be seen in the context of national development plan (Finlayson and Madiba, 2002). Translation is regarded as a process of intellectualisation (Sibayan, 1991:73). There is an overwhelming agreement among scholars who deal with issues of intellectualisation and modernisation of marginalised languages that the translation of "major works of literary and scientific creation that exist in the more 'developed' languages is one of the mechanisms for bringing about and driving this process" (Alexander, 2010:14 – 15; Sibayan, 1999:464). Since it has to do

with the written or printed forms of language, it is imperative that scholars, journalists, writers, intellectuals, and language practitioners/activists should ensure that African languages become visible, and "that appropriate texts are available at all levels and there is a constant stream of translations from other languages and between African languages of fiction and non-fiction, popular and scholarly literature" (Alexander, 2003:32). Sibayan (1999) acknowledges that an intellectualised language can be used in education, in any field, and at any level of learning and studying. And it is the view of Ngugi (2013a:12) that:

> …the question of dialogue among African languages through translations directly or via a third language is vital…This can only result in the empowerment of African languages and cultures and make them pillars of a more self-confident Africa ready to engage in an equal give and take with the world.

Post-1994 language policy and planning activities will constitute the focus of discussion in the following section. This is hoped to lay a foundation for understanding the challenges in developing and empowering the indigenous languages of South Africa.

3.4   Language Policy and Planning Post-1994

The following paragraphs will be dealing with the language policy and planning activities after 1994. It is hoped that this will throw some light on the challenges in developing and empowering the indigenous languages of South Africa.

3.4.1 The Essence of Language

Language is central to and touches on all aspects of human life. And various writers view language from different but related angles, all emphasising its fundamental importance to human beings. The most basic function of language is communication. Ngugi (2009:20) emphasises that it "is a communication system and carrier of memory", implying that if you destroy a people's language, you effectively destroy their memory. For Corson (1992:182), "a language is not just an instrumental convenience made available by chance to individuals who acquire it, rather it is the very means by which

individual human beings are socialized and from which they develop consciousness of themselves. This consciousness is a direct and unique reflection of the culture that comprises the many social, ethnic, class or gender groups who share the language". And more importantly, Negash (2005:5) argues that "language is the primary instrument of people's access (or non-access) to education, technological know-how, and scientific and intellectual knowledge, which, in turn, determine the state of economic well-being, identity and culture of nations/communities."

In a democratic polity like South Africa, one would expect policymakers to develop a language policy that embraces the principles of social justice elaborated, for example, in approaches such as Mills' (1863) utilitarian, Rawls' (1971) libertarian and Sen's (1993) capability. Mwaniki (2012:216) observes that "social justice refers to an egalitarian society that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights and that recognises the dignity of every human being." It involves sharing responsibilities as a people and working as individuals to contribute to a just society in which everyone would like to live. Notwithstanding these differing approaches to social justice, "[s]ome principles are common across discourses on the various conceptions of social justice. These include principles of equality, distribution and redistribution, solidarity, subsidiarity, inclusion, fairness, equity, equality and nation building" (Taylor, 2013:17). The importance of the principles mentioned above (Taylor) in relation to language policy and planning can never be overemphasised. Moreover, this brings to the core the observation of social justice principles in language policy issues (decision making), especially with regard to previously marginalised languages of South Africa.

3.4.2 Language policy and Planning - a necessity

The ultimate and most obvious danger that faces the marginalised languages, including the indigenous languages of South Africa, is permanent death (Crystal, 2000; Krauss 1992). The source of language death that is often mentioned is colonialism, and in the case of South African indigenous languages, it is both colonialism and apartheid. The

intervention of language policy makers could be regarded as more crucial because the disappearance of a language means a loss of "whole volumes of encyclopaedia of humanity's intellectual heritage – in the realms of ecology, medicine, religion, geography and more…" (Perry, 2004:15). Ironically, "Language policies are rarely benign in this regard", but they "can either prevent or hasten death, and by extension, language policies have the power to preserve or destroy knowledge" (ibid.15). In the case of South Africa, there are clear indications that what started as a movement in the right direction, taking language from a "segregationist perspective" to language being viewed not as a problem, but as a right in accordance with the 1993 interim constitution and giving effect to official status of eleven languages, to the whole thing being downplayed on the 1996 Constitution, as we shall see later (Heugh, 2002).

In the previous paragraph we alluded to the part played by colonialism in the marginalisation of South African indigenous languages. Apart from the large-scale imminent death the colonial legacy inflicted on these languages, the colonial languages, such as English, imposed on their speakers what Ngugi (1987) referred to as a "colonised mind". Perry (2004:16) refers to this phenomenon as "an abused psychology that undermines the self-confidence, self-reliance, and as a result, the individual and collective achievement of millions." This could be supported by the general feeling among some speakers of the marginalised languages that a foreign language like English can afford them access to good things in life. Moreover, by giving up their languages, these people are giving up their intellectual and artistic heritage.

Therefore, language policy and its study place responsibility on the state to protect the dignity and identity of its human subjects. Hence according to Perry (2004:19), "Leaders of the South African state seeking to build a new national identity on plural foundations cannot ignore language policy, an indispensable means for their unifying ends." Whether these leaders attest to this statement remains to be seen as we develop the study.

After the demise of apartheid, the political leadership needed to address the baleful legacy of colonialism, apartheid and capitalism with respect to the language question. The facilitation of the realisation of a non-racial, liberal democratic dispensation will be done through language policy and practices to address:

- the dominance of English and Afrikaans.
- the underdevelopment of indigenous African languages (IALS).
- decolonising the mind of the speakers of these languages.
- dealing with the apparent coincidence of language, colour, class stereotype and stigmatisation.
- confronting the low levels of literacy (Alexander: 2009).

3.4.2.1 Language Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The 1993 interim Constitution brought some hope to dealing with the language question in South Africa. It moved the language issues from the perspective of segregation (previous regimes) that viewed language as a problem to that of language as a right (Heugh, 2003; Ruiz, 1984). As would be expected, the expectations were high, pertaining to the fact that government should make pronouncements that commit it to multilingualism clear and straight forward, also filtering the issues to various structures in the society. Because of the complexity of handling 11 official languages, it was necessary for the rulers of the state to put together clear guidelines outlining the intention of giving effect to the equal status of these languages (Heugh, 2003).

The constitutional discussions that continued after 1994 elections resulted in the final Constitution which was adopted in 1996. It substantially altered the language clauses of 1993, and scaled down many of the provisions of the 1993 interim constitution. Weakened as these were, there was an admirable outcome, that of establishing the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). This statutory body initially fell under the responsibility of the Senate, but was later taken to the custodianship of National Council of Provinces. PanSALB's mandate will be touched on later.

In short, the dawn of democracy in South Africa brought about a Constitution that included stipulations on language matters. Most importantly, it accorded the importance of developing and empowering the previously marginalised languages of South Africa, prescribing that "practical and positive measures" be put in place to promote the status and use of these languages. The major work in this regard fell under the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) (later Department of Arts and Culture), the government's executive arm in language matters. Subsequently, the Minister appointed the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) to advise the Minister in language matters and develop guidelines for a policy and implementation according to the provisions of the Constitution on language issues.

The LANGTAG went through a process of consultation which involved stakeholders, language experts, resulting in the Final Report of the Language Plan Task Group (DACST, 1996). This was presented to the government on 8 August 1996, detailing an "outline of the country's language needs and a framework for language policy initiatives, reference to a range of policy decisions …, including language in education, literacy, and language as economic resource" (Beukes, 2009:39).

Then a Language Policy Advisory Panel of experts was appointed by the Minister (DACST) to prepare a comprehensive language policy and implementation plan from the LANGTAG Report. The outcome was the Language Policy and Plan for South Africa and the South African Language Draft Bill. These documents were revised and the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF) was approved in 2003. And subsequently, the Implementation Plan, among other documents, was produced. The aim of the National Language Policy Framework, among others, is to "promote the equitable use of the 11 official languages; facilitate access to government services, knowledge and information; and ensure redress for the previously marginalised official indigenous languages" (DAC, 2003:13). All government structures and institutions are targeted by the policy.

The scope or provisions of the policy are wide ranging, including the following, among others:

- Each department designates a working language(s) for communication internally and externally;
- Communication with public via official correspondence must take place in the language chosen by people;
- Official documents at national level must be published in all 11 languages; if use of all official languages is not required, documents must be published, using the principle of selecting languages depending on the intended function or purpose of a document and its target audience (functional multilingualism). A minimum requirement for the government was set and official documents must be published simultaneously in at least six languages, where at least one language from Nguni group and one from the Sotho group must be featured according to rotation; and
- Communication at international level is in English, or the preferred language of the country concerned (DAC, 2003:16 - 19).

The task of carrying out the implementation falls under the National Language Service (NLS) of the Department of Arts and Culture. The purpose of the NLS is, among other things, to take care of the implementation of the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF). Its further mandate includes the following:

- To develop and promote the official languages of South Africa and enhance the linguistic diversity of the country;
- To provide translation and editing services for official documents; and
- To develop and implement the national language policy by engaging language projects and services, for example, Human language Technology, Terminology Coordination Section. Language Planning and Development, Translation and Editing Section.

The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), a government's dedicated statutory body for language development, was established in terms of the PanSALB Act 59 of 1995, amended by Act 10 of 1999. The Board was established according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) in order to:

- promote and create conditions for the development of official languages, the Khoi and San and the South African Sign language;
- promote and ensure respect for all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa. Among its major roles is to develop the 11 official languages and promote multilingualism. Its focus areas are wide-ranging, all having to do with the development and empowerment of the marginalised languages of South Africa.

In order to carry out its mandate the Board established various structures consisting of nine Provincial Language Committees (PLCs), 11 National Lexicographic Units and National Language Bodies for each official language and also for Sign language. A broad range of mechanisms is also envisaged by the NLPF's implementation plan, including: terminology development, translation and editing, human language technology, a language code of conduct, the telephone interpreting service, a directory of language services, language audits and surveys, language awareness campaigns, the telephone interpreting service for South Africa, an information databank, the development of sign language, language learning and budgeting. From what has just been discussed, we can pick up obvious overlapping roles of the two bodies, namely; NLS and PanSALB. This provides a fertile ground for conflict and lack of delivery.

On the legislative side, the South Africa Languages Draft Bill (DAC 2003c) was published for comment in April 2003 and was legislated into law in 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012), "to provide for the regulation and monitoring of the use of official languages [in various spheres of the entire society]".

There is a resounding outcry from all corners of the country about the failure of government and its structures to systematically and effectively implement the language policy. This reflects what Alexander (2009:1) suspected when he argued:

> An essential condition of addressing these issues [language question/language policy] systematically and effectively at the political level was – and is – the understanding that language policy is an integral part of public policy. *With very few exceptions among the initial government decision makers, it has to be noted as a first and fundamental point of criticism that this understanding was – and is – sadly lacking* (Emphasis in the original).

At least two language planning agencies fall under this scathing attack, namely; the Pan South African Language Board and the National Language Service. These important agencies were tasked with the practical work of developing and empowering these languages and this led to the establishment of the Language Research and Development Centres of South Africa for the nine South African indigenous languages. This heralded a promising future for them, guided by the document outlining how they should operate. The following section focuses on this work.

3.4.2.2 The Language Research and Development Centres

Significantly, a document outlining a strategic intervention in the form of establishing Language Research and Development Centres (2004) for the nine previously marginalised official languages was produced. The importance of this document lies in the fact that it was able to cover much of the work that needed to be done, with its emphasis on centralization, coordination and collaboration.

In the Foreword to the Language Research and Development Centres (LRDCs) in South Africa (2004) document, the then NLS Director, Dr. N. Mgijima, emphasised the importance of language in the economic upliftment of the people of the country and the eradication of unemployment and poverty (Mgijima, 2004). Therefore, it is "important that language plays a significant role to address these challenges" (ibid: 1). She goes

on to highlight that, "…we have to recognise that language also has an important role in education, ensuring access to vital services and information, for personal development and cultural artistic expression" (ibid: 1). No one can dispute the sentiments expressed above. The only test of their authenticity will be the energy expended to realise them.

Therefore, the Department of Arts and Culture's view regarding the establishment of the LRDCs as playing a critical role in addressing these issues was outlined. In so doing, particular focus was put on the Previously Disadvantaged Languages (PDLs), thereby assigning them a central role in the implementation of the country's multilingual policy (Mgijima, 2004). Another important recognition that comes out of the document is the fact that the establishment of the centres takes into account that the language communities are distributed across provinces. "For this reason, they will be based where the speakers of the respective languages reside. The location of the LRDCs within the provinces, closer to the custodians of the indigenous languages, is also a strategic move as we foresee partnerships and cooperation on vital language projects being formed to advance multilingualism in our country" (ibid:1). The points that are raised in the document are very important for enhancing the development and empowerment of not only the languages, but, more crucially, the speakers of these languages. Therefore, the fact that there will be stakeholder involvement, partnerships and cooperation, on vital projects, guarantees sustainability.

The centres were established through the directive of Minister Ngubane (1997), as an admission of the fact that the use of languages in workplaces, in education, mass media, commerce, and other domains, is not in line with the Constitution of the country. Furthermore, they will give impetus to the implementation of the National Language Policy Framework, and to benefit the previously marginalised communities. This comes as an evidence of the government's commitment to multilingualism.

The primary objective of the centres is to change the deep-rooted negative attitudes towards indigenous languages. These attitudes "reinforce practices as well as perceptions of inequality" due to lack of or poor economic value attached to these

languages. And by generating language projects that benefit the broader community, they will be contributing directly towards the broader goals of transformation, which include nation-building and the creation of wealth for all citizens (LRDC, 2004).

Among the aims of this endeavour is mainly to effectively develop the indigenous languages, thereby ensuring public usage in important fields. Relevant research is also to be encouraged and supported. Most importantly, there is emphasis on streamlining activities, promotion of synergy and enhancement of coordination across all units and committees "involved in language development work to avoid duplication of efforts and wastage of resources" (ibid: 6). Linkages and collaboration will be established with language units within national and provincial departments and structures such as Hansard, Provincial Language Committees (PLCs), National Lexicography Units (NLUs) and National language Bodies (NLBs).

These centres operated for a few years and were summarily thrown overboard. After the unceremonious demise of these efforts, one cannot help but ponder the slow beginning of the death of our indigenous languages. It should be noted that a language does not, of its own volition, choose to die, but certain people in high places, systematically and deliberately design a route to their death to fulfil their own selfish and corrupt agendas. Now more than 20 years after our liberation, the development and empowerment of our indigenous languages is merely a subject of talk shows, debates often heard in boardrooms and conferences, beyond which nothing happens. The decision to dump these centres deserves unconditional condemnation from the stakeholders.

Each of the nine previously marginalised official languages had an LRDC, and the focus areas are briefly outlined below:

- **Language Enhancement and Terminology Development**: training of practitioners in a range of skills, knowledge, expertise; to emerge with

specialisation in a variety of domains, e.g. terminology, translation, interpreting, editing and human language technologies.

- **Supporting Language-Related Research and Databases:** liaise with relevant institutions in conducting language research initiatives; short-term projects, e.g. terminology in a subject field: specialised dictionaries, etc.

- **Promoting Reading and Writing in African Languages:** change the poor culture of reading, deep-rooted negative attitudes towards indigenous languages; collaborate with writers' associations, NGOs, individual authors; conduct workshops and seminars; encourage journalistic careers.

- **Heritage and Language Museums:** documenting of stories, folktales, legends, idioms, etc. – valuable for transmitting culture, values, tradition and customs from generation to generation; researching the contribution of oral heritage to history, search for elderly people: repositories of oral history, to be studied and developed; oversee copyright issues.

- **Community Outreach:** to promote and encourage the usage of indigenous languages – aiming at reversing marginalisation from public platforms and discourse:

  - *Literacy Training*: collaboration with NGOs and ABET.
  - *Basic Language Courses:* join forces with relevant language departments in offering basic language courses to non-speakers - to accelerate development and usage in South Africa and abroad.
  - *Promoting the Study of African Languages:* stem the reported decrease in number   of students majoring in African languages – encourage study towards a career for example, translation, interpreting, communications studies, performing arts and entertainment; collaborate with relevant departments in sourcing funds for students – internships (LRDC, 2004).

These focus areas constitute an authentic foundation for the genuine development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of South Africa. As mentioned earlier in the discussion, they cover most of the things that should be considered in the work that

needs to be done. And what is even more important, is the admission that there should be central coordination to avoid duplication and wastage of resources which heavily retard progress.

3.4.2.3 IsiXhosa Language Research and Development Centre

This centre was established in 2005 at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). This ran for a year and was closed down in 2006. The current researcher was involved as a coordinator when it was revived in 2008. Some of language practitioners privately questioned the idea of establishing such a centre in Summerstrand, a predominantly white area. As a starting point, this researcher organised an Indaba at Missionvale Campus of NMMU. This was an attempt to bring it closer to the speakers of isiXhosa in the townships. Very few people knew about the centre, let alone its intended work. By organising this Indaba, it was hoped to introduce it to the people.

The Indaba was conceptualised around the involvement of the young people in language issues, taking the example of the 1976 Soweto uprising. It took place on 20 June, 2008. Although it was not a big gathering, it was nevertheless representative: there were speakers from the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders, SABC management and news staff, academics, religious leaders, councillors, stakeholders from the local townships, teachers and learners from local high and primary schools. The idea was to bring various stakeholders to know the centre, to be aware of it, and work together in conceptualising projects so that they can take ownership of the whole enterprise. In that way, the whole work will be meaningful to the people, and be assured of sustainability.

The thinking behind the concept was that, if young people of 1976 could put language at the centre of their activities in fighting the unjust regime, why it is that it is not possible for the current generation to confront the current language issues and get involved in debates around them. Without assuming they are not involved, but the idea was to work closely with them and encourage and lead then in the right direction. Unfortunately, the

centre was shut down at the end of 2008 after some evaluation, without a single word of explanation. We never got the results of the evaluation.

3.5 The Missing Link between Language Policy and Implementation

Despite admirable efforts by the 1994 democratic government to develop and empower the previously marginalised indigenous South African languages, they are still dehumanised, marginalised, neglected, despised and oppressed. Language stakeholders, language activists, and even politicians admit and acknowledge that nothing positive and substantial is happening on the ground to develop and empower these previously marginalised languages. They ascribe this failure to various and, perhaps related factors; and they all seem to emanate from the missing link between policy and implementation. In the following sections, an attempt will be made to explore these factors.

Alexander (2009:1) observes that an essential condition for addressing the language question issues "systematically and effectively at a political level [in South Africa] was – and is – the understanding that language policy is an integral part of social policy". Discussing issues relating to language policy in education, he further emphasises that language policy "cannot be treated in isolation from the social policy" (Alexander, 2007:55; see also Pueyo, 2007). He warns that "any attempt to reduce the grave issues of language policy in education to mere technical questions that can be remedied without reference to the general objectives of state policy is doomed to lead to avoidable frustration and disillusionment" (ibid:55) (see also Wright, 2008). Furthermore, he attributes the failure in language policy implementation in this country as resulting mainly from this lack of understanding. He concludes that "[this] lack of understanding which is both a cause and effect of class interest is one of the main reasons why the language question continues to be a seemingly intractable problem in post-apartheid South Africa" (ibid:55).

In her observation, Beukes (2009) decries the fact that there is misfit between language policy and implementation. She argues that "language policy and planning in South Africa have become trapped in a gap between 'intention' and 'performance'" (Beukes, 2009:35). According to her, criticism lies squarely at the door of the language planning agencies of the government as far as language in education [DoE] is concerned, and also relating to their mandate regarding the promotion of African languages [PanSALB] (Beukes, 2009:38).

Political will has also been blamed for this laissez-faire approach to language development and empowerment. Alexander (2007:58) problematized the issue, saying that:

> This portmanteau term [lack of political will] conceals more than it reveals. If one assumes that most political representatives both reflect and respond to what they perceive as "the will of the people" and that their vision or lack of it is a significant determinant of what "the people" want, it is obvious that at one level, we are dealing with a vicious circle which, in principle, can be turned into a virtuous circle by the simple expedient of informing the relevant politicians properly with respect to the real effects of the policies they are promoting or implementing.

Having said that, Alexander alludes that in many instances such behaviour emanates from excuses which reveal the politicians' "vested interest and proverbial bureaucratic inertia, since the people concerned slip from one 'reason' to another in order to justify their complicity in the retention of the status quo" (Alexander, 2007:59). He suggests that "what is required is leadership with vision [passion and commitment], one that includes the notion of a bilingual educational system based on the mother tongues of the learners and affording optional access to other African and international languages" (ibid:59). We can say that in addition to what Alexander suggests above, responsible, accountable, relevant and ethical leadership (RARE) is desperately needed in South Africa to carry the country forward in general, and the development and empowerment of indigenous languages in particular.

The positive effects of political will can be picked up if we look at the good work that has been done in Ethiopia and Uganda. The governments of both countries took the initiatives of implementing the language policies [mother tongue education] at different times, Ethiopia in 1994, and Uganda in 1996. Reports on the progress have been published in Heugh, Benson, Bogale & Yohannes, (2007) and Heugh, & Mulumba (2014) respectively and also Heugh (2013). Commenting on the situation in Ethiopia, Heugh (2013:6) states that "[the] implications of the Ethiopian [and other studies in this volume] points towards: decentralization of education to regional and local authorities, local skills development and community involvement in schools, provision of multilingual education, and improved rates of achievement".

Another issue which the researcher does not believe has received much attention is the relationship between the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Department of Basic Education (DBE). The DAC is responsible for the development of languages (through NLS and PanSALB) and the actual teaching of language occurs at the institutions under DHET and DBE. There seems to be some incongruence and disjuncture in this situation because there is probably no overt or transparent cooperation between the two departments, and to say the least, this must contribute immensely to this language development and empowerment deficit.

Since these things evolve in front of our eyes, sometimes it is not impossible to pick certain trends. This is also the case in the situation of language policy and planning field in South Africa. It is arguably the researcher's honest observation, and it is subject to challenge, that most authentic and telling research in this field comes from people whose first languages are not the previously marginalised South African languages. There is a dire lack of and/or low contingence of mother tongue relevant scholars and researchers in the field. [The researcher communicated this to late Dr Neville Alexander at a colloquium in Cape Town in 2011, and he admitted.] This must contribute tremendously to this disastrous situation. This may not be the fundamental problem, but

it definitely aggravates the situation. One may only take a leaf from the development and empowerment of Afrikaans and pick up the difference.

3.6 Attempts to establish isiXhosa Centre

Since 2010, the current researcher has been interacting with various professionals and people in executive positions at various universities, including the University of Fort Hare and the University of South Africa (UNISA). The whole exercise was intended to garner support and/or create conducive conditions for a serious work on the development and empowerment of isiXhosa, which, if it becomes successful, could be a forerunner for other languages. The target was the University of Fort Hare, mainly because of its history and its location closer to people who speak isiXhosa.

Preliminary talks with the executive were promising and presentations were made. Everything went well and the concept was accepted. They wanted a concept document and this was prepared from which a Memorandum of Understanding was drawn, and ultimately signed by concerned parties. But everything ended there.

The idea sold to the authorities was to have a basic infrastructure, namely; office, telephone and computer. This would signal a start towards organising the establishment of a small unit, a physical place from where to make contacts with stakeholders who would form the backbone of the prospective centre. The organisers were assured that the required accommodation and infrastructure was available.

Since the prospective coordinator is employed at UNISA, it was very important to talk to the authorities of the university. This was done and the authorities of the respective universities (Fort Hare and UNISA) met on several occasions and everything seemed to be moving towards fruition. The ideal situation was for the present researcher to go and work fulltime on the project at Fort Hare, and for this to happen, the prospective coordinator would have to be seconded to Fort Hare.

Initiation finance was needed and fundraising would be done by designated official(s) from the centre. All finances would be managed by the university. We failed to get initiation finances, negotiations between the universities never materialised. Despite signing the Memorandum of Understanding, nothing happened and the whole thing fizzled out.

3.7 Conclusion

The present chapter focused mainly on language development and empowerment after the country attained freedom. This was done by also examining the language policy and planning post-1994, with the understanding of the impact language policy should have on language issues.

In trying to disentangle the meaning of the concept 'development', we became aware of the controversies surrounding its definition, mainly because of its Eurocentric leanings. Bhavnani, et al (2009:1) ponders that, "After some six decades of circulation, *development* continues to be a contested term, referring both to the ideal of improvement in people's well-being and to a far more dystopian reality on the ground" (emphasis in the original). This means that development is used to benefit the developing countries at the expense of the underdeveloped world. By adopting the 'development refusal' paradigm, the authors (Bhavnani et al., 2009) attempt to rescue the situation and we are told:

> We put our cartography as a way to demonstrate how articulation of labor, cultures, and histories of women and men outside the mainstream frame of development offers more helpful insights to *ameliorate injustice and inequality, the ultimate goal for all forms of development"* (Bhavnani, et al., 2009:6) (emphasis added).

Language development and empowerment is very vital for the development of a nation, because it allows its people to use their languages in important spheres of life.

Conversely, by using their languages, people become empowered and they regain their identity and dignity.

Various units in government departments were assigned various responsibilities, and language development was assigned to the National Language Service (NLS). The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was given its own mandate, but there seemed to be an overlap between what it was supposed to do and what must be carried out at the NLS. We indicated that, this overlap was a recipe for failure to deliver services. One of the duties of the NLS was to implement the NLPF. To realise this goal, LRDCs were established for the nine marginalised languages of South Africa. This was an admirable endeavour, but, unfortunately their lifespan was short-lived, and they were discontinued in a period of between one and five years (depending on when a particular centre was established), from 2004 to 2008. This is very regrettable and unfortunate because the concept was perfect on paper. What was needed to sustain them was commitment, passion and vision, and probably what Alexander (2009:1) alluded to when he contemplated the situation. In other words, in order for people to succeed in carrying out this task properly and efficiently, they should fully understand the connection between language policy and social policy.

As we have seen with the attempts to establish a centre at University of Fort Hare, it is clear that people in executive positions, even at the institutions of higher learning, do not appreciate the importance of working on indigenous languages in order to be developed and empowered. The fact of the matter is that things cannot be left as they are, and alternative avenues need to be followed.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Introduction

The focus of the current chapter will be a close analysis of the language policy developments in South Africa after the country gained freedom in 1994. Positives and negatives will be highlighted in order to have an idea as to what the challenges are that influence the success and/or failure of the language policy implementation. In the ensuing discussion, many topics will be briefly covered, namely; challenges to development and empowerment; government response and responsibilities; Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB); the role of intellectuals, academics and stakeholders; the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). But before going any further, it is important that we discuss briefly what 'public policy' and 'public policy analysis' is all about. The following section will be devoted to this and an attempt will be made to determine how language policy relates to public policy (social policy). Pueyo (2007) talks of language policy as a transverse of public policy, stressing that the whole notion should constitute an important part of the government's public policies. He elaborates:

> ...going beyond symbolic acts, language policy has to be approached and interpreted as a social policy whose aims are fairness and justice, which expresses the commitments to reduce imbalances in the exercise of rights, and which has to be aimed at guaranteeing all citizens an effective equality of opportunities and an increase of their welfare (Pueyo, 2007:10).

In many instances, it becomes apparent that because language is always taken for granted, its importance to humans is hugely neglected or ignored. This may be deliberate (elite closure) or just an indication that those in power have no vision, or are

not even 'qualified' to interpret important concepts. The following section will attempt to briefly shed light on the concepts 'public policy' and 'policy analysis.'

4.2 Public Policy and Policy Analysis

Public policy scholars seem to agree that policies "…are an essential element in modern democracies in that they provide both guidance for government officials and accountability links to citizens" (Pal, 2010:1). They constitute a response by the government to its citizens regarding their problems or interrelated set of problems. The important thing in the whole enterprise is that in organising the policy work, those who are involved should engage in public conversations with the relevant community or communities.

Pal (2010:1-2) feels strongly that as much as "Citizens expect many things from their government, […] at the very least they expect *intelligent decision making.* Perhaps even more importantly, however, they expect those decisions to flow from some general position or *vision.* Unfortunately, governments can be very decisive without being terribly intelligent" *(emphasis added).* It is emphasised that by its very nature, intelligent and accountable governance in a democracy demands more than mere decisions. It demands decision making that is guided by a framework in the form of policies (ibid). The citizens of South Africa are no exception. They also expect good governance that is led by, to use the title of Ngambi's (2011) book, *RARE Total leadership: Leading with the Head, Heart and Hands* (responsible, accountable, relevant and ethical). It is such a government that will be capable of dealing with the baleful language condition in South Africa.

Public policy is defined as "a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems" (Pal, 2010:2). Therefore, the general character of a public policy "...is that it is a guide to action, a plan, a framework, a course of action or inaction designed to deal with problems" (ibid).

As much as public policy is used as a tool for dealing with problems, it has value. This means that in policy making, a right tool must be used to ensure that it is suited to the task at hand and "that it is consistent with morally acceptable range of government behaviour", thus ensuring an "appropriate balance of technical or instrumental analysis and values"(ibid). Briefly, public policy analysis can be regarded as "a discipline application of intellect to public problems" (ibid). Dunn (2014:1) elaborates further that "policy analysis is a process of multidisciplinary inquiry designed to create, critically assess, and communicate information that is useful in understanding and improving policies". However, the present study, by its own limitations, cannot attempt to achieve such ambitious goals. For that matter this is an academic study which is not commissioned or mandated by any authority.

4.3 Challenges of Development and Empowerment

A few issues have been raised in our discussion of public policy analysis. Among them is the responsibility of the state to its citizenry with regards to problems facing its people, and also that the state should make intelligent decisions with vision and commitment. These issues will be briefly hinted on when examining the language policy and planning in South Africa and how they impact on the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of the country. We will also raise some concerns articulated by various prominent scholars. For instance, Bamgbose (2011:12) poses three very vital questions:

> What is the prognosis for a change in existing situation towards an enhancement of the status and roles of African languages?
> Do policy-makers have a proper perception of the changes and possibilities? Are they willing to translate the possibilities into viable language policy, which will be backed by a language plan?

Alexander (2009:1) makes an important observation regarding important requirements for a successful language policy and its implementation. He argues that those mandated to take transformation in language issues forward, must understand that

language policy cannot be divorced from social policy. Regrettably, he admits that the current leadership completely lacks this element in its capacity.

These and many other issues will be looked at as we try and make a critical assessment of the challenges facing the success or failure of the language policy implementation in South Africa.

Countries on the African continent, South Africa included, face various challenges in developing language policies and chief among these, according to Bamgbose (2003:45) are "ethnicity and national cohesion, bridging the gap between the elite and the masses, language of education, and multilingualism and development". In the case of South Africa, most, if not all, of these issues emanate from the history of the country's successive oppressive regimes of colonialism and apartheid. These could be attributed to the problems of inequality, language marginalisation, divide-and-rule systems based on ethnic backgrounds, monolingual language policy and later bilingual policies of the previous colonial and apartheid rulers. What follows is a brief discussion of these challenges.

4.3.1 Ethnicity and national cohesion

Because of its history of separate development based on ethnicity, after gaining its freedom, South Africa, like many of its counter parts on the continent, had to face the unenviable task of nation building. Alexander (2006:2 concurs:

> Building a nation or promoting national unity, which is one of the historic objectives of post-apartheid South Africa as we set out to the new historical community that is evolving here, raises a whole range of issues such as the class leadership and class content of such a national(ist) movement, the nature and feasibility of social cohesion, our understanding of a multicultural polity, intercultural communication, among other things.

In this excerpt, Alexander paints a comprehensive picture of the social, political and cultural landscape of South Africa which poses a huge challenge to national unity. Various approaches are open to those involved in this endeavour, and Bamgbose

(2003:45) proposes three, namely "the status quo, the gradualist and radical approaches". With the status quo, things are left as they were before independence and this is the one that is immediately adopted by most countries after independence, thereby inheriting the ex-colonial language as official language. This is obvious because there is no effort exerted on taking this route. Alexander (2007:32-33) captures the situation:

> The elites who inherited the political kingdom from the ostensibly departing overlords … continued to govern within the parameters set by the *ancien regime,* largely because they had no option, and because it suited their immediate interests. The colonial state was not fundamentally altered even if the colour (religion, language, etc.) of those who now seemed to make the decisions differed from those who had passed on the baton of rule.

Then the direct opposite will be the radical approach which goes straight and do away with the colonial language policy and adopt an indigenous language as an official language. Very few, if any, countries on the continent followed this line of action. Even with Tanzania which adopted Kiswahili as official language, English had to play some visible role (Hanafi, 2009). Then, there is the gradualist approach which is a half way journey between the two. This approach tries reluctantly to do away with the colonial language(s) and does not go for a sudden change in language policy being aware of the inadequate preparations for such a giant leap.

Without doubt South Africa needed to have a close examination of its specific circumstances and take a decisive action based on the assessment. Instead, the negotiating parties were bulldozed into the decision to go for 11 official languages because of those who were lobbying for the survival of Afrikaans. Alexander (2004:7, ft. 14) elaborates:

> I have pointed out in numerous articles that the real reason why the new South Africa has a policy promoting multilingualism and recognising 11 official languages is the passionate commitment of most white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans to their language. The black elite would have found it impossible to negotiate for Afrikaans what they were not prepared to give to the other African languages, that is, continued equality of status with English.

What Alexander says confirms what we see on the ground as far as language policy/implementation situation in the country, that is, the *laissez-faire* approach to language policy. Having said this, it is very difficult to put South Africa in any of the categories mentioned above. The bottom line here is that the country needed to break away from the past as far as dealing with language is concerned. This is important for various reasons namely; to emancipate its citizen by allowing people to access vital resources through their languages; and more importantly, restoring their identity and dignity. Instead they destroyed the vital materials that were developed during the Bantu Education era (Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh, 2002).

But if we look closely at these approaches, we can observe that what South Africa only managed to do, is to come up with a liberal approach which tries to protect the indigenous languages without giving them strength to stand their own against the powerful colonial and apartheid languages. It has to be acknowledged that the Constitution of the country went a long way to move from the segregationist position of the colonial and apartheid policies by granting official status to the nine previously (and still) marginalised languages of the country. There are serious loopholes (escape clauses) in the provisions of the Constitution that render equitable treatment of these languages rather difficult, if not impossible.

4.3.2 Bridging the gap between the elite and the masses

The language policies which adopt a monolingual habitus stance and marginalise the indigenous languages will always privilege the elite who have the advantage of educated status. They have acquired the colonial education and are proficient in colonial languages, such as English and Afrikaans, in the case of South Africa. Bridging the gap by way of literacy programmes, establishing translation and interpreting facilities does not seem to come any closer to solving the problem (Fuentes-Calle, 2014). According to Bamgbose (2003:47), "a progression to certificated status of the elite is neither possible nor desirable. A reciprocal accommodation will be required in which the major role will be played by the languages of the masses, which are African languages".

(see also Mbeki, 2000). In our country, the languages of the majority are dehumanised. Ironically, in many universities, if not all, which offer these languages, they are invariably lumped together in an African languages basket dominated by English. And close by, in the same college or school, you will find independent English and Afrikaans departments, respectively. This can never be a positive way of bridging the gap between the masses and the elite who are 'comfortable' in operating in the colonial languages such as English. Meaningful literacy work can be achieved through the languages people speak, that is, the indigenous languages. Mbeki (2000: xiii) asks as to how the situation could be corrected and suggests that "it would appear that the task must fall firstly on the education system. The fastest way to reach out to the illiterates is through use of the home language. Before we can seriously talk of development, we should first wipe out illiteracy". And these languages have to be worked on by way of development and empowerment. This can be successfully done if the responsible agents are skilled, visionary, passionate and committed, and above all, if the activities are centralised, coordinated with elaborate collaboration. There is a dire lack or absence of centralised coordination and collaboration in South Africa. In this country, there is no authentic body which looks after the welfare of the indigenous language of South Africa, for example, in the form of a Centre, Institute, or Forum. These could centralise and coordinate activities and avoid a situation where institutions find themselves engaging in same activities without talking to each other.

4.3.3 Language and education

On the African continent various regimes have adopted language policies that favoured colonial languages as languages of learning and teaching. In South Africa, the dominant languages have been (and still are) English and Afrikaans. This has adversely affected the indigenous people. In our country, we continue to experience this linguistic enslavement despite the fact that we both possess a democratic Constitution which prescribes for language equality (nine indigenous languages had been granted official status) and there is the strong evidence that learning is meaningful and facile in the language which one understands and communicates in. As we shall see later (section

4.7) many promising policies have been produced, but have not borne the desired outcomes. Some education policies on language are discussed under the section mentioned above. However, they have not impacted on raising the status and improving the use of isiXhosa and other indigenous languages. In actual fact, we observe the deterioration of the standard of the teaching and learning, and use of the language. During the 1970s, for example, all basic aspects of a language were offered at undergraduate level. We are referring here to: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and various genres of literature, namely; modern and oral. Although these were presented in English, a student had a chance of examining these studies in isiXhosa. At various universities such as Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu, Rhodes, etc., teaching takes place in the medium of isiXhosa and the content alluded to above is still adhered to. But unfortunately there is no attempt at 'standardising' terminology where universities can at least share 'same' terms. One can only hope this will not result in a situation identified by Lesoro (1956:433) as "a Babel of terminologies". After 1994, teaching in indigenous language, including isiXhosa, declined. Currently, at UNISA the situation is such that the teaching of the structure and the literature referred to about is not considered, and students do not have the privilege of studying isiXhosa literature (or any other indigenous language structure and literature for that matter).

As it is repeatedly alluded to throughout the study, isiXhosa is not an isolated case: at UNISA modules are currently conceptualised and written in English, and then translated into various indigenous languages, including isiXhosa. Suffice it to say that a student who goes through the undergraguate progamme cannot be comfortably confident to work on isiXhosa as a language practitioner. The whole situation demands urgent attention and in-depth investigation and complete overhaul.

The Constitution stipulates that people should access education in the language(s) of their choice. This is not happening with isiXhosa. Even where an attempt is made, it is haphazard and hands-on. As speakers of the language we do not need that. IsiXhosa is a language spoken in various provinces of the republic. What is happening in the Eastern Cape cannot be drastically different from activities taking place in other

provinces, such as Western Cape, Free State, Gauteng, etc. as far as the teaching of isiXhosa, including the medium of instruction. This calls for an effort to coordinate activities to strengthen the democratisation of language teaching and learning of isiXhosa.

4.3.4 Acknowledgement of multilingualism relevance to development

A notion that monolingualism is good for development is often adopted by ex-colonial governments when they gain independence. They take cue from developed countries, believing that multilingualism is a problem rather than a resource. This short sightedness often emanates from the false conclusion that since these ex-colonial languages have long been used in important domains, they will be useful for technical terminology. This myth fails to take into cognisance the fact that knowledge of/proficiency in these colonial languages is linked to formal education to which the majority of people in a country like South Africa have little or no access to it. In addition, people being the basis of development, it stands to reason that, the language(s) they understand and use should be central to development, and such languages are African languages. (Ngugi 2013b:6) agrees:

> If we believe that people are the basis of development, then the language or languages that they speak are the basis of that progress and every language policy and planning should incorporate this premise. African languages must be at the frontline in the discovery and invention of knowledge in the arts, in the sciences and technology.

This is an undiluted truth! It is a well-established truth in academic, professional and other circles that the vast majority of the population of South Africa are not proficient in colonial and apartheid languages, and the speakers of isiXhosa are no different. By couching development activities in English, you are already, by default, excluding the masses and that goes against the spirit of the so-called development.

Ironically, a research conducted by the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA), has shown that during the 20 years of Bantu Education (1955-1975) mother tongue education was practised with great success. IsiXhosa terminology

was developed and textbooks were produced in isiXhosa, and other South African indigenous languages. Mahlalela and Heugh (2002:252) point out:

> The development of African Languages was coupled with a culture of writing and publishing in ALs: literature, grammar books and more textbooks for subjects such as arithmetic, Nature Studies, Health Education, Social Studies etc. which had previously been taught (after the fourth year in some provinces and six years in others) in English…It is, nevertheless, important to say that from the onset these were published in each of the seven ALs [Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Northern Sotho and Southern Sotho] used as media of instruction in South Africa…

In isiXhosa, textbooks for various subjects were published: **Izifundo ngendalo; Izifundo zempilo; Izibalo zabadala; Izibalo zakwaJuta;** grammar books such as Pahl's **IsiXhosa;** readers from Standard I to VI: **Iincwadi zesiXhosa zabafundi.** More than anything, this provides evidence that it is a myth to believe that isiXhosa is incapable of producing terms that can be used in teaching the so-called scientific technical subjects. The researchers, Mahlalela and Heugh (2002:252) mention that "The recommended books and the teachers' guides for all the subjects, from Standards I-VI, were published in the *Bantu Educational Journal* …" This journal was the mouthpiece of the government during the apartheid era.

4.4 Government Response and Responsibilities

Shortly after the first democratic election, a process was set in place to find ways of solving the language situation in South Africa. There was a burning need that:

> ...regulating the use of the languages in the public arena is a condition necessary for the citizens – who are also customers and users – to be able to exercise their linguistic option in a really free way. Otherwise, the freedom of organisations, civil servants and professionals might cancel out, paradoxically, the freedom of the citizens whom they serve (Pueyo, 2007:6).

The activities which started with the 1993 interim Constitution and culminated in the final 1996 Constitution of the Republic, were, without doubt, geared towards expressing "the commitment to reduce imbalances in the exercise of rights, and which has to be aimed

at guaranteeing all citizens an effective equality of opportunities and an increase of their welfare" (ibid:10). And the previous regimes had thoroughly flouted these basic values. The following paragraphs will give an insight into what the new dispensation brought to the people of South Africa regarding their emancipation from several centuries and decades of linguistic enslavement.

After centuries of dehumanisation, oppression, marginalisation, and neglect, the advent of freedom and democracy in South Africa brought hope to the plight of the indigenous languages of this country. Obviously there were positives and negatives. The positives came in the form of the 1993 interim Constitution with substantial clauses addressing the language issues and also the 1996 Constitution. Although the latter version watered down some of the important clauses of 1993, it has its good outcomes. The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) resulted from the stipulations in the Constitution. The then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr Ben Ngubane, initiated a process which started by establishing the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) (1995) to advise the Minister on language matters. With the tabling before Parliament of its report (1996), many activities followed which resulted in the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF) (2003), Language Plan (2003) and the Language Research and Development Centres (LRDCs) of South Africa document (2004). Elaboration on these structures will be done in later sections of the current chapter.

During the early years of its appearance, the Constitution of South Africa drew much admiration from various quarters. Some even said it provided a role model for other countries, especially on the African continent. Speaking of the South African Constitution and its relationship to language, Bamgbose (2003:49) admits that:

> …it is unique in devoting an entire section to 'Languages' as well as additional references under other sections. As far as I know, no other Constitution of an African country has such extensive references to language.

These comments were flowing from hopes that the Constitution promised to bring about a language policy that would encourage the development and empowerment of the

indigenous languages of South Africa. There were lingering negatives as we will see later. According to Bamgbose, this Constitution was unique not only because it brought to prominence language issues, but because in its elaboration it also highlights "respect for multilingualism, legal backing for policy, democratisation of policy-making, and serious attention to language planning" (Bamgbose, 2003:51).

4.4.1 Positives

What follows below will be a brief look at the actions that ignited some hope in the hearts of the citizens of South Africa regarding an improvement in the status and use of the indigenous languages.

4.4.1.1 Respect for multilingualism

The fact that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa granted official status to 11 (including nine disadvantaged indigenous) languages was the recognition of the multilingual nature of the country. This was further reinforced by the pronouncement regarding the promotion and protecting the previously (and still) marginalised indigenous languages. This led to a variety of actions to be discussed below.

4.4.1.2 Legal backing for policy

Constitutional stipulations were followed by discussions resulting in various legislations, among others, The Pan South African Language Board Act of 1995, and amended in 1999; The South African Language Bill of 2003. Commenting on how things were done during those processes of policy making, Alexander (2014:147) says, "Everything had to be done in terms of government laws; none of these things could be set up unless it was proclaimed legally." Consequently, various legislations were enacted during the process. Although it is debatable whether legal backing is enough by itself, there is no doubt that with the right attitude, more can be achieved. In assessing the South African situation, Bamgbose (2003:52) concurs, "...unless there is a change, my view is that a

legal framework helps to give force to policies in a way that exhortation cannot." It is difficult to come up with any tangible and positive thing to say that can be associated with the hurly-burly and noise that often accompany rally utterances, public pronouncements, publications and even conference presentation and debates.

4.4.1.3 Democratisation of policy-making

Many activities involved people on the ground, unlike the usual top down route of doing things. Alexander (2014:143) concurs that "it was a very, very important process, and a very democratic process…we involved just about everybody who had anything to do with language". This has led Bamgbose (2003:52) to wish for a situation where most countries on the continent of Africa would "have an extensive section on language in a manner comparable to Section 6 of the South African Constitution." The unfortunate part is that, people are satisfied with the involvement of the 'educated' section of the population in these activities. But in reality, language belongs to everybody who speaks it, including the less literate. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no attempt is ever made to talk to the less fortunate members of our society about the importance of their languages. However, this is not surprising because even the liberation struggle leaders promoted English as a language of liberation under the false notion that it is a uniting language. For them to promote the individual indigenous languages of the country was – and is – tantamount to promoting tribalism. There is no doubt that many activities could be seen in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences around language issues, especially during the early days of democracy. But these fail to reach the actual people who matter, that is, the speakers on the ground. To make matters worse, the debates are conducted and documents are written in languages in which the majority of the people are not proficient, the ex-colonial and apartheid languages, which are English and Afrikaans. The debates in workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. are not conducted in isiXhosa. Even the present discussion is not conducted in isiXhosa! This is the kind of linguistic slavery entrapment we have to free ourselves from, no matter what!

4.4.1.4 Serious attention to language planning

During the early stages of the language policy debates, there were many activities involving language issues. Panels and commissions were established for collecting information and facts, building towards a final language document, which came as the National Language Policy Framework. From this, a Language Plan was produced, and also a document outlining the establishment of Language Research and Development Centres of South Africa. To strengthen the process and build a solid foundation, various structures were put together, namely; Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), Provincial Language Committees (PLCs), National Language Bodies (NLBs), National Lexicography Units (NLUs), to mention just a few.

In the process of developing a policy, it is crucial to consult extensively with the stakeholders. This is even more important in matters relating to language, because language belongs to the people whether they are literate or illiterate. Pal (2010:3) agrees:

> A more recent trend in the literature has argued that almost everything in policy analysis is affected by values and that consequently the challenge is to develop techniques and processes of tackling public problems that encourage exchanges and ultimately consensus building among citizens, politicians, and experts.

Having said this, we accept that a process of wide consultation took place during the process of LANGTAG. But there is a worrying tendency in South Africa where, if a few elite and educated members of the society are consulted, it is taken for granted that everybody has been reached. Documents are invariably produced in English (and also, in Afrikaans). The majority of the people who speak the indigenous languages have not enjoyed the privilege of having access to formal education. They are not proficient in these colonial languages and, above all, they may not understand the jargon, and consequently, the gist of what is being discussed. But the powers that be are always satisfied to make pronouncements that the public has been consulted. The present researcher does not believe that people out there in the rural areas, amaXhosa included, had been reached when the LANGTAG document was developed and that

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constitute a gap in the building of consensus with citizenry. This goes for many such related activities. The irony is also that even those who claim proficiency in these languages, lack adequate analysis skills in them.

4.4.2 Negatives

As we intimated earlier, this process, (viz. the establishment of LANGTAG and the subsequent processes leading to the production of various language policies) raised tangible hopes. But even before it started to gain momentum, there was a lingering fear that it might not bring the lasting results for which everyone had hoped. The government did not only water down the language clauses of the 1993 interim Constitution, but also removed PanSALB from the Senate to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) [Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology (DACST)]. This dealt a big blow to its independence. One of the drastic manipulations of this democratic process was to change a previously agreed upon resolution to use a minimum of four languages for important government communication, publication and documentation. On a rotational basis, one language from each of four groupings: Nguni (Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Swati); Sotho (South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana); Venda or Tsonga; and English or Afrikaans, would be selected for use (Heugh, 2003:10). This was changed into six, namely; Nguni, Sotho, Venda, Tsonga, English and Afrikaans, in a way weakening the position of indigenous languages and dealing a big blow to multilingualism (Heugh, 2003). Ultimately, the whole arrangement did not help to improve any of the indigenous languages, and the decline in use is even steeper. IsiXhosa is no different, and, generally, even in provinces where it has the majority of speakers (Eastern Cape and Western Cape) its visibility is limited. To make things even worse, there were parallel activities by both the Education Department and DACST, working on language separately. Alexander (2014:144) captures this beautifully:

> The National Language Plan was supposed to be an outline of a plan, not a plan itself – it would have been impossible in eight months. In education the same thing. But with education – I was the head of the education committee – a very interesting thing happened, because simultaneously – this was the beginning of a

new South Africa – simultaneously with this initiative of the Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Department, the Education Department had also launched a process of formulating a language-in-education policy which had little to do with LANGTAG directly.

There was an overlap between the responsibilities of PanSALB and those of the National Language Service (NLS) (Alexander, 2014); not to mention the poultry funding of PanSALB (Perry, 2004). This was recipe for conflict and service delivery failure. We may add that the process was further weakened by the resignation in March 1998 of one of the architects of language policy in South Africa, Neville Alexander. He was totally against the way things were done by current principals of DACST, under Minister Mtshali and his Director-General, Xulu (Alexander, 2014).

Commenting on the perspectives of the language policy of South Africa, Bamgbose (2003:54) points out the issues that worked against the progress:

> The negative features of South Africa's language policy are similar to those of other African countries. These include introduction of escape clauses, absence of plan of action, lack of coordination between agencies and lack of political will to enforce agreed policies.

Below we briefly discuss some of the weaknesses in the Constitution that made a tremendous contribution to the laxity with which the implementation of the language policy was approached.

4.4.2.1 Weakening of constitution/ qualifying clauses

Although the Constitution has many positives as far as language issues are concerned, implementation has been considerably weakened because of the 'escape clauses' that were introduced. This will be glaring if we look at the requirements stated in Section 6 (3) (a) where national and provincial governments are required to "use any particular official languages for the purpose of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned..." (South African Constitution,

1996).This has influenced many people who have executive powers with regards to implementing the language policy, to hide behind excuses that the process will be expensive. Mahlalela and Heugh (2002:241) argue that the:

> …stumbling blocks preventing the reimplementation, now, of the mother tongues of 75% of our pupils, as the following three arguments: that the costs would be too high; that there is no or insufficient terminology in ALs; that publishers will not/cannot produce textbooks in African Languages because of the reasons cited above.

Although these were arguments put forward with regards to education, these are myths touted to support flimsy excuses delaying and/ or preventing the development and empowerment of indigenous languages, including isiXhosa.

It is common to hear people opposing the publication of documents in 11 languages on the grounds that this will cost too much money. They even turn a blind eye to the idea of rotating among language groups. This ends up strengthening the easy route to English and Afrikaans.

4.4.2.2 Competition: DAC vs. DoE; PanSALB vs. NLS

The government can be accused of not being in control of the situation as far as planning and implementation of policies are concerned. While the activities of working on languages were assigned to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, the Department of Education was also busy interpreting the Constitution for purposes of education. There is no doubt that such a conflict will always have a negative effect on the delivery of services; in this case, quality education via a developed and empowered language. This affects all languages of the country, including isiXhosa. Alexander (2014:144) mentions that "…a very interesting thing happened, because simultaneously … with this initiative of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Department, the Department of Education had also launched a process of formulating a language policy which had little to do with LANGTAG directly".

There was an overlap between the responsibilities of PanSALB and those of the National Language Service and this led to a fierce competition between these two institutions. The National Language Service (NLS) and Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) vie for the same space in their attempt to fulfil their respective mandates. This becomes clearer when we look at their stated responsibilities. The NLS is supposed, among other things, to contribute to the practical implementation of the provisions of the Constitution; promote the linguistic empowerment of all the people of South Africa; provide translation and editing services; work on terminology development (Mkhulisi, 2000). In contrast, or we may say in competition , PanSALB, among others, has to promote and develop the previously marginalised languages; promote and ensure respect for all languages of the country; promote multilingualism; create conditions for the development and promotion of equal use and enjoyment of all languages in the republic (Marivate, 2000). It will take very special and unique powers of analysis to identify the different areas of operations for these bodies. It becomes fuzzier if we look at the sub-directorates of NLS on the one side, and some of the focus areas of PanSALB.

NLS: Sub-directorates	PanSALB: Focus Areas
• Translation and editing • Language planning • Terminology and Place Names (Mkhulisi, 2000)	• Translation and editing • Status planning • Lexicography, Terminology and Place Names (Marivate, 2000)

This prompted Alexander's unequivocal and scathing condemnation of the whole situation. He elaborates, castigating the way in which DACST was going about doing things:

> …particularly […] the way in which the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology worked and the competition that eventually set up between PanSALB and the National Language Service - which came from the apartheid period and which was very strongly jealous of its own functions – that led to very serious competition, more particularly because of the fact that the money on which the office depended had to come from the ministry. There was all kinds of

interference in that respect, all kinds of attempts to control what PanSALB could actually realise of all things we had discussed, of all the things the board itself decided, what of that could be realised, because of money – the dynamic that was set up, really from the start I would say, began to mess up any serious initiatives (Alexander, 2014:147-8).

The incidents highlighted above were a sure recipe for failure, especially if one were to ponder over the incongruity of assigning the development and empowerment of language to a department which has nothing to do with language learning and teaching. It will be obvious to anyone that the genuine language activities like acquisition, learning, teaching, intellectualisation, etc. take place mainly under education related activities. From what we observe there is no cooperation and collaboration between these departments. This whole thing makes a farce of the entire enterprise of language development and empowerment of all indigenous languages of the country, including isiXhosa.

4.4.2.3 Encroaching Governmentality/political machination/changing resolutions

Many important decisions were reached democratically by all parties involved. But somehow the government surreptitiously found a way of turning them into something that put a spanner on the progress. Heugh (2003:10-11) comments:

> The advisory team working on the draft legislation recommended the use, at any time, of four languages for legislation and important government documentation. On a rotational basis, one language from each of four language groupings: Nguni (Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Swati); Sotho (South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana); Venda or Tsonga; and English or Afrikaans, would be selected for use…It would thus contribute to a bridging of the real or imagined communicative divides between languages and signal a departure from the colonial and apartheid linguistic balkanisation.

This encroaching governmentality can clearly be observed in the case of languages that would be used in the publication of public or official documents. The initial resolution agreed upon was for the use of four languages with an option of rotation. But without warning, the government came up with the idea of using six languages. Heugh (2003:11) elaborates:

Cabinet, backed up by strong behind-the-scene lobbying, came to the view that the four-language formula would unfairly discriminate against the two small minority languages, Venda and Tsonga, and insisted on a six-formula …This six-formula is not workable. Its very design immediately alters the inclusive, flexible logic of the four-language formula.

This effectively dealt a telling blow to the strategy of encouraging multilingualism. The idea of alternating four languages in publishing official and public documents was to encourage proficiency in different language groups. The starting point is the reasonable assumption of mutual intelligibility among groups such as Nguni and Sesotho, and that of fair understanding between Afrikaans and English speakers, and Tshivenḓa and Xitsonga being closer together enough to have some level of mutual intelligibility. In this rotation, "Venda or Tsonga; and English or Afrikaans, will be selected for use" (Heugh, 2003:10). She elaborates:

> The logic here is that South Africans are at least bilingual if not multilingual and most languages are closely related to other languages. Thus, if one speaks any of the Nguni languages one would be able to comprehend the other varieties within that cluster. The same applies to the Sotho cluster. If one speaks either Venda or Tsonga, small minority languages, one inevitably also speaks either N. Sotho or Zulu or both and hence documentation in either Zulu or Sotho would be accessible to these minorities. The official Afrikaans-English bilingual policy since 1910 means that speakers of these two languages ought to find the other comprehensible.

There is no doubt that the model presented above may appear to be very controversial to the public in general. It must be acknowledged that the level of mutual intelligibility between languages may vary: it can be very high between some languages, and very low and even non-existent between other languages. But the important thing to realise is that in Africa there is a seamless continua of languages which characterises multilingualism that…"is a fluid, porous, continuum of language(s) in use across the continent rather than a discrete set of bound parallel linguistic entities" (Heugh, 2013 in Singleton et al, 2013:343). The fact of the matter is that it would require "an equitable amount of linguistic compromise and tolerance from each linguistic community" (Heugh, 2003:10). All in all this points to a demand that the citizen of the country have the will to

see to the delivery of language rights and be prepared to contribute to the country's democracy. Heugh continues:

> Most importantly, this model requires citizens to utilize and develop multilingualism (particularly their ability to communicate across continua of languages). It would thus contribute to a bridging of the real or imagined communicative divides between languages and signal a departure from the colonial and apartheid linguistic balkanisation (ibid).

By going for a six language model, this opportunity was lost and the strengthening of multilingualism, weakened. We may also add that it may have been premature to come up with this proposal since the legacy of the homeland policy was not yet resolved. The policy was notorious for emphasising the differences between languages even where they were minimal. The history of isiXhosa contains a situation when the language had three language boards: one in the Transkei, the other in Ciskei, and still another in South Africa. Although these might have had a way of working together, such a situation does not bode well for the progressive development and empowerment of a language. Obviously, that leads to the stretching of human and capital resources.

4.4.2.4 Curtailment of PanSALB powers (moving it from the Senate to NCOP)

The political machination was also manifested in the manipulation of PanSALB powers. The board was meant to be independent and located under the Senate. It was later removed and put under the National Council of Provinces by the amended Act of 1999. As a result, its powers were curtailed and this had a tremendous influence on the decisions and actions it could take. This had a huge negative impact on its work of promoting multilingualism, as the country was rapidly moving towards English monolingualism. Not only is isiXhosa that is affected by the way in which PanSALB is fulfilling or not fulfilling its mandate, but all the marginalised languages of the republic.

4.4.2.5 Lack of clear, elaborate plan and the discontinuation of LRDCs

One of the major criticisms of the government is that it lacks clear, elaborate implementation plan. It has been repeatedly acknowledged that good policies will bear no fruit if the implementation strategy is lacking. South Africa is no stranger to this phenomenon and tellingly so in language policy implementation. The establishment of Language Research and Development Centres of South Africa (LRDCs) was a good start in the right direction, but they were discontinued without explanation. The nine marginalised indigenous languages of South Africa were each allocated a research centre to look after development and empowerment issues of the languages. To anyone with a vision, commitment and passion, this endeavour could have taken the development and empowerment of these languages to greater heights. It is difficult to understand why they were closed down. Up until now no explanation was given as the reason(s) for their discontinuity. One wonders if those mandated to carry on these tasks are capable of grasping and interpreting the concepts in these documents. A more detailed discussion of the LRDCs has been given in the previous chapter.

4.5. The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB)

The Board was established as a statutory body by an Act of Parliament (1995) to promote multilingualism. To perform its duties effectively and efficiently, it had to be an independent institution. Therefore, at its inception it was going to be answerable to the Senate.

When the amended Act of 1999 removed the Board from the Senate to the National Council of Provinces, it was stripped of its independence. It became a government body under the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (later Arts and Culture). It could no longer freely make and execute its own decisions. To make matters worse, funding to carry out its projects was very poor. And as we have mentioned earlier, fertile grounds for its competition with NLS were well orchestrated. It was bound to be the lame duck it is today.

During the early years of its inception, PanSALB was very active in establishing structures that were meant to carry out the implementation activities of language policy in the country as a whole. Provincial Language Committees (PLCs) were established for various provinces for each PLC "to see to it, among other things, that the relevant provincial government is carrying out the constitutional provisions relating to the official languages in the province" (Alexander, 2014: 251); National Languages Bodies (NLBs) for all official languages, "each of which has the responsibility of inspiring the speakers/users of the language concerned to write and develop the language in all domains" (ibid); National Lexicography Units for all 11official languages with "a priority of developing monolingual explanatory dictionaries" (ibid). It is very difficult to pick up what these structures are doing and their interaction with the isiXhosa speaker communities is almost non-existent. IsiXhosa National Lexicography Unit continued with the work on The Greater Dictionary of Xhosa and published the last two volumes of a series of three volumes (The Greater Dictionary of Xhosa, HW Pahl et al, 1989-2008), and also Isichazi-magama SesiXhosa, (Tshabe et al., 2008). According to Nkomo and Wababa (2013:348):

> …there still exists a need for dictionaries that serve the language-speaking community as practical tools for addressing diverse communication and learning centred needs in the current language policy dispensation. The IsiXhosa Lexicography Unit (XNLU) is currently working on dictionary projects that attempt to address this situation while at the same time not losing sight of the mandate that Pan South African Language Board placed on all National Lexicography Units (NLUs)

Whether or not the "attempt to address this situation" will be achieved, time will tell. This structure, like many others under the Board, is suffering from lack of comprehensive interaction with the community it is supposed to serve. Sometimes one wonders if certain statements highlighting some progress and at the same time subtly alluding to a need for action, are not just meant to keep the incumbents in job.

4.6 The Response of the People: Intellectuals/Academics/Stakeholders

There is a subtle interdependence between people and the language(s) they speak, and even those with which they are in consistent contact. As a result, they will react to the issues that affect the languages. If a language is oppressed or marginalised, those who speak it are affected adversely; worse still it will ultimately die if totally neglected. The consequences are dire: loss of human dignity and valuable knowledge preserved in that language.

There is an expectation that people will respond to issues affecting their language(s) or language(s) with which they are in contact. Governments make decisions that affect language(s) and people may react for or against, depending on the nature of the decision that has been taken. In the case of South Africa, post-1994 democracy brought a Constitution which is rated high among the most democratic approaches to language issues. This encouraged a language policy that treats all languages equitably. But this did not translate into positive implementation. That state of affairs draws too much reaction from the stakeholders.

Language is a very vital resource which is central to all human activities. Most importantly, its 'life' affects its speakers in tangible ways. In the previous sections, we discussed the involvement of, among others, government and various institutions in the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of South Africa. In this section, we look at the role and/or contribution of intellectuals/academics/ordinary speakers. This is very crucial because they are directly affected by the social, political and economic issues affecting the language(s) they speak.

For the purposes of this discussion, we will refer to all these categories of 'stakeholders' as 'intellectuals' for the simple reason that they are all inherently intelligent, moral, ethical, and responsible. Defining an intellectual, paraphrasing Said (1994), Garman (2009:53) makes this observation, "Said…declared in his lectures that the public

intellectual [is] a persona valuable to a society because of the ability to make human problems and situations universal and to take the risk to step out in public to commit himself to an opinion about them." More importantly, Said (1994: xvi) intimates that this person should be "exile and marginal, as amateur, and as the author of a language that tries to speak truth to power." We are told that "Real intellectuals are never more themselves than when, moved by metaphysical passion and disinterested principles of justice and truth, they denounce corruption, defend the weak, defy imperfect or oppressive authority" (ibid: 6). Like any patriot and activist who fights for the common good in the society, the intellectual faces challenges of making enemies with authorities and even, persecution.

Having said that, Chomsky (1967:2) is unequivocal about the responsibility of intellectuals, saying, "It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose the lies." Roping in the writer into the same category, Chomsky (1996:88) makes the point, "The responsibility of the writer as a *moral agent* is to try to bring the truth about *matters of human significance to an audience that can do something about them*" (emphasis in the original). This is the calibre of a cadre we need to fight and defend our languages from the linguicide (linguistic genocide) that accompanies the dehumanisation, oppression and marginalisation of the indigenous languages of South Africa. And these are the right people to do this because, according to Chomsky (1967:1):

> Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyse actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. In the Western world, at least, they have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression. For a privileged minority, Western democracy provides the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth lying behind the veil of distortion and misrepresentation, ideology and class interest, through which events of current history are presented to us.

To a certain extent the conditions that are provided by Western democracy as outlined by Chomsky, are applicable to our situation in South Africa. Our definition and discussion of intellectual has followed a normative approach. This is what we expect

such an individual to do. We do have glimpses of courageous individuals who made their mark in the fight for the democratisation of language system in our country. To mind comes the name of Neville Edward Alexander, who worked tirelessly all his life for the emancipation of marginalised South African indigenous languages (see, also Alexander, 2014, Interviews with Neville Alexander: The Power of Language and the Language of Power). His contribution to language discourse during and post-apartheid has been outstanding. His discussions and writings were not only limited to the language question and education, but also to the issues of national question, as evidenced, among others, in his book, "One Azania, One Nation", published in 1979. Among organisations he established and helped to guide, mention can be made of Khanya College, SACHED, the National Language Project (NLP), the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA). Together with other scholars, he was the leading figure in language planning activities after 1994.

There are many scholars who conducted research, wrote academic books and articles on language issues; many conferences are organised around language matters; people talk strongly and favourably on various platforms about the plight of these languages, but nothing comes to fruition. There is no lack of highly qualified or certificated and respected scholars in the discipline of language studies, but that does not necessarily translate to the elevation of the status and dignity of the languages. Instead we face the imminent death of the languages.

Ordinary speakers of a language cut across the community of speakers: they can be professionals who had the privilege of attaining education in various fields, or those who were or are not so lucky. But they all share this resource and it is very important to both. The enlightened category can pick up anything that goes wrong in language matters and respond. On the other hand, those who are not so literate may not observe much and they can be manipulated into following any route chosen by the elite. The bottom line is that all speakers of a language have a responsibility to protect and nurture this resource. This must be a collective responsibility. Discussing issues of higher education and the crisis of legitimacy, Giroux (2013:14) comments about illiteracy and suppression

of dissent, and also points to the irrelevance of intellectuals in neoliberal societies. He elaborates:

> But mass illiteracy does more than depoliticize the public; it also becomes complicit with the suppression of dissent. Intellectuals who engage in dissent and "keep the idea and hope of public culture alive," are often dismissed as irrelevant, extremist and anti-American. Moreover, anti-public intellectuals now dominate the larger cultural landscape, all too willing to flaunt co-option and the rewards of venting insults at their assigned opponents while being reduced to the status of paid servants of powerful economic interests. At the same time, there are too few academics willing to defend higher education for its role in providing a supportive and sustainable culture in which a vibrant critical democracy can flourish.

As much as the state of affairs outlined above by Giroux (2013) refers to the United States, and probably Canada, it does apply to the whole world in general, and to South Africa in particular. In the case of post-apartheid South Africa, it has not been the priority of the elite rulers to encourage literacy campaigns, open debates, criticism, and dissent among the citizens of the country. The situation has been exacerbated by the traumatic decline in education standards and the fact that the languages of the majority of the people have been neglected. This has contributed strongly to the maintenance of elite closure. Referring to education, which is also relevant in our case here, Mbeki (2016:103) has this to say, "Because of its hostility toward the welfare of the worker, the ruling elite is anti-education as it sees this as a threat." In the South African discourse, we often hear reference to "clever blacks", implying those who are somewhat enlightened and have a bad influence to loyal citizens.

Since debates, discussions, communication on matters affecting the nation are conducted in ex-colonial language(s), the majority of the people of South Africa are excluded. Ultimately, these languages become prestigious. As a result, everybody aspires to learn them. This results in indigenous languages, including isiXhosa, being looked down upon. Their diminishing status and use drives them down that slippery road to linguifam and ultimately, linguicide.

4.7 The Department of Education: its role in language development and empowerment

Language learning and teaching activities will always be associated, in the main, with the Department of Education, whether it caters for basic or tertiary levels of education. The language development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of post-apartheid South Africa would work well if linked to the learning and teaching of the language(s) concerned. But it appears very strange to find issues relating to language development and empowerment being taken care of under the wing of a government department which has no direct mandate to conduct any learning and teaching of language, or whatever discipline, for that matter. This is what is actually happening in our democracy. Language development and empowerment falls under the Department of Arts and Culture. It does not matter what sober considerations that might have led to this decision. Something is very clear by now: this has resulted in further diminishing the status and reducing the use of these languages. For example, the word 'language', does not feature in the title: 'Department of Arts and Culture', and in some provinces it will be secretly subsumed under something like 'sport' and 'recreation'. No wonder why we only hear 'passionate' rhetoric from representatives of both departments (Arts & Culture and Education) where language issues are concerned. No tangible and sustainable activities come out of those platitudes. This incongruity in planning and implementing language policies should be blamed for the lack of accountability, commitment and responsibility on the part of the departments that seem to be misplaced and inappropriate to handle this invaluable heritage.

When apartheid gave way to democracy in 1994 and the country's Constitution was finalised in 1996, eleven languages were granted official status (section 6(1) by the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) (which recognises 11 official languages – Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenḓa and Xitsonga). The list includes the nine previously, and still, marginalised indigenous languages of South Africa. Section 6 of the Constitution mandated the Department of Culture, Arts, Science and Technology to promote and develop these indigenous languages. Thereafter followed a strange situation where parallel activities

relating to language matters taking place in both of them. Alexander (2014:144) observes that while the National Language Plan (under DACST) was working on a language plan, "…the Education Department had also launched a process of formulating a language-in-education policy which had little to do with LANGTAG directly. And there was also a higher education committee at the same time".

These processes culminated in various legislations being drawn. In the Department of Education, two important policies were produced during the first decade of democracy, namely: the Language-in-Education Policy of 1997 and the Language Policy for Higher Education of 2002. They all alluded to the radical transformation of education in the country. A process of change followed and saw the restructuring of institutions of higher learning taking place, reducing them from 36 to 23. And this was informed by socio-political and economic goals prescribed by the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001). And among many important things that came out of these activities were the requirements that:

> … all higher education institutions should participate in facilitating and promoting the goal of the National Language Policy to develop all the South African languages in such a manner that they can *be* used in all high status functions, especially as formal academic languages at higher education level (Alexander, 2007:38).

And the work on the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages:

> … will be concentrated in centres for language development which will be located in designated higher education institutions. The basic idea is that a university or a group of universities would be given the task of developing specific languages such as isiZulu, or isiXhosa, or Sesotho, or Setswana and; over a period of 10 to 15 years steps would be taken to ensure that each of the languages concerned is developed in that particular manner (Alexander, 2007:39).

This was a very commendable plan, and as it has been indicated elsewhere the whole process fell apart. No one really knows what actually happened. Universities were required also to formulate and publish their language policies as a matter of transparency. Furthermore, orthography standardisation was to be given high priority.

Our hopes were raised when we saw African languages coming to secure a central position in debates around language issues. Many panels were established to deal with the language question. But despite all the hype and many activities purporting to do something positive about the plight of the indigenous languages of South Africa, the situation regarding their use and status has not changed. It is saddening to see that out of all these good intentions, very little progress can be observed. Instead we are faced with the deterioration of the languages in the way they are taught, spoken and learned. In fact, they have become even worse than they were before 1994. All the instances alluded to above, which hinder the progress of implementation, affect the development and empowerment of isiXhosa and all the other indigenous languages of South Africa.

In conclusion, as we have repeatedly mentioned, Alexander has been an outstanding scholar in bringing into sharp focus language related issues in South Africa. He would work hard, put forward ideas, implement them, but at the same time point out deviations unequivocally without fear or favour. Towards the later years in his life, he was very optimistic regarding the way the leadership in education was handling language issues. Because he always advocated for the centrality of the language question in the South African universities and social sciences, among others, he was jolted to some kind of optimism about the attention the government placed lately on it, especially in three documents, namely; *The Green Paper on Post-school Education and Training (2012),* the *Report on the Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences (June 2011)* and the *Consensus Study of the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, Prospects and Strategies* (August 2011). He comments:

> Because of strong leadership coming from the Ministry of Higher Education, for the first time in decades, important policy and strategy documents are being seen to move the language question closer to the centre of academic scrutiny, where it belongs. It has always been strange to me that in spite of the linguistic diversity that characterises human social formation, most scholars, by ignoring the language question, have merely swum along with the tide of unthinking humanity, unable to see the rocks towards which their blind spot was propelling them (Alexander, 2014:53-54).

Whether the cataract has been moved in the eyes of people in executive positions, the ophthalmologist will be in a better position to tell. Against all the negativity in which Alexander viewed the government, his optimism is expressed without reservation. We quote him at length:

> While there's a slip between the cup of policy and the lip of implementation, my inveterate optimism wants me to say clearly that both of the diagnostic and strategic essays referred to above promise exciting and forward-looking perspectives with regard to acknowledging and integrating in significant ways the foundational importance of language in general and African languages in particular to an appropriate, modern (South) African social science and humanities theory and practice. Since their publication the Ministry of Higher Education has initiated other processes in this direction, all of which augur well for the transformation of South African universities (ibid:55).

These free words of honest admiration and genuine optimism were published two years after his passing on, in August 2012. If he will ever be proved correct, time will tell. But as we have intimated throughout this work, nothing close to their fulfilment has been seen.

4.8 The role of universities in the development and empowerment of indigenous languages of South Africa

Even before the advent of democracy (1994), the language question in South Africa had always been at the centre of academic, political, social (and even among ordinary speaker communities/stakeholders) debates (Nhlapo, 1953; Doyle, 1953; Roboroka, 1953; Lockwood, 1955; Jordan, 1958; Alexander, 1989) to mention just a few. It is not very rare that you hear someone in executive position (in various platforms), be it government, academia or any profession for that matter, speaking knowledgeable and even passionately about the plight of the previously, and still, marginalised South African indigenous languages. What is very annoying and even disgusting is the reality of finding these very 'advocates' being instrumental in destroying these languages. In our country, there is no scarcity of associations, societies, or organisations that are supposedly concerned about language issues. Every year without exception, academics

go out on an academic pilgrimage, attending conferences, reading papers on language matters, but nothing much trickles out of these exercises that contribute to improving the condition of these languages. Instead people get rewarded with promotions and awards while the languages lose status and dignity.

This section deals briefly with the responses (or lack of them) of higher education institutions to the language provisions in the country's Constitution (Act 108 of 1996, section 6) and section 29(2), and various government legislations and policy stipulations (NPHESA, 2001; LPHE, 2002). All these were forms of government intervention to restore the status and revive the use of previously, and still, marginalised indigenous languages of South Africa. However, there is no intention to give an in-depth detail of the study on the role of South African universities in the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of South Africa.

After 1994, the ideology requirements and concomitant policy goals of the South African government were driven by the desire to effect radical redress and transformation in various political, social and economic spheres of life (Beukes, 2010). All these envisaged undertakings had tremendous impact on education in the country. Subsequently, we saw the production of various language policies during the first decade of our freedom and democracy. Important among these were Language-in-Education Policy (1997), National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001) and the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002).

South African universities had an obligation to respond to the stipulations contained in these documents, especially the policy objectives outlined in the LPHE (2002:4-5). These included, among others, creating "a multilingual environment in which all our languages are developed as academic/scientific languages […] minimising barriers to access and success in higher education". We also had to see an end to the segregated and ethnolinguisitc landscape of these institutions of higher learning. As a result, there began a process of change from 2002 to 2005, where the institutional restructuring that

was propelled by the socio-political and economic goals prescribed by the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001) took place.

These activities activated the burning issue of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). All these years the system of education in the country was characterised by the dominance of English and Afrikaans to a lesser extent. But notwithstanding all these policy imperatives, the situation regarding the use of African languages did not see any significant change.

The restructuring process saw these institutions being reduced from 36 to 23, after merging some with technikons and colleges. All universities had to respond to these requirements for change and they all responded by formulating policies that responded to the principles of the Constitution, albeit with emphasis on issues to be tackled. We shall not deal with all the universities, but suffice to say that nothing much has happened regarding the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of this country.

As we have indicated in a previous section that universities were required to formulate and publish policies the respective institutions were to follow and implement, many if not all, responded positively. Many scholars have looked at various institutions (Balfour, 2007; Beukes, 2010; Madiba, 2010) to mention just a few. The reluctance or refusal by some institutions to follow the policies to the letter can be observed when we examine the role played by the UNISA in contributing towards the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of South Africa. It should be mentioned also that this is an institution that is privileged to teach all the nine official indigenous languages of the country, while the other universities do not.

As to be expected, UNISA also formulated and published its language policy in 2006, followed in the same year by the publication of the implementation plan. All in all, the policy showed a positive response to the stipulations of the Constitution and HE policies. Among others, it promised to uphold functional multilingualism, commit to the

promotion of language equal rights and develop the diverse languages of the country. The Department of African Languages appointed a Task Team to advise the Dean on issues relating to the implementation of the policy, including "how to promote and support the teaching and learning of African Languages at UNISA". Sadly, the report that emanated from these activities resulted in the promotion of English instead of working towards the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages. According to Nkuna (Ethics Round Table, April 2, 2015), the "DAL Task Team report violated the UNISA 2006 Language Policy and the UNISA 2007 Code of Ethics and conduct [which] was implemented at the University since 2007." The report also resulted in replacement of the 2006 policy with the 2010 policy that reversed the important gains achieved in the previous one. Nkuna (2015) also indicated that "…using English to design, develop, teach and learn isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenḓa and Xitsonga became the only method accepted by UNISA Senate". This situation has turned the teaching staff into 'translators and assistants'. Like in other languages in the department, isiXhosa modules are mainly conceptualised in English and then translated into isiXhosa. We are warned against relying too much on the translation instead of producing original materials in our indigenous languages:

> When looking at several instances of community-based work, it has been reported that the promotion and revitalisation of endangered languages might eventually amount to no more than the conversion of such languages into mere codes for translating the conceptual system of the languages that generated the dominant cultures ruling economic life, the 'economic peace', where those speakers live (or survive). Such speakers might end up wondering: 'Might not this forced and continual translation of noun-based colonised terms into indigenous terms actually turning our languages into 'codes' to basically think the same thoughts, but to present them as indigenous characters and sounds? Are we paradigm shifting basic-thought patterns of languages when we do this?' (Fuentes-Calle, 2014 in Alexander and Scheliha, 2014:xviii).

The reality we are facing here is a steep slide to English monolingualism and worsening of the plight of the indigenous languages to conditions that prevailed before 1994. Prior to 1994, isiXhosa was taught through the medium of English, and Afrikaans to a lesser extent. The very important and consoling factor was that as a student of the

language you were afforded the opportunity to access literature and grammar in isiXhosa. The structure of the language (isiXhosa), viz. phonetics, phonology, morphology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc., were taught in English (Afrikaans), but the analysis and examples were in isiXhosa. This means concepts were defined in English but the application was in the indigenous language. In that way, you would have a good feeling of studying your first language even though it is not ethical to teach isiXhosa through English. But currently, this is not really happening. Worst of all, there is no transition, as it would be expected, from defining concepts in English to defining them in isiXhosa, or any Indigenous language for that matter. Of all the universities offering isiXhosa, none could claim to be doing justice to the philosophy of mother tongue education.

4.9 Conclusion

The current chapter has attempted to give a brief analysis of the implementation of the language policy in post-apartheid South Africa. Good intentions were shown by adopting a world admired democratic Constitution and subsequently producing legislations and policies which favoured the development and empowerment of the marginalised indigenous languages of South Africa. They joined the ranks of the privileged English and Afrikaans as official languages. Although there were signs of acknowledgement on the part of powers that be, that something drastically needed to be done to improve these languages, there was always this lingering uncertainty, lack of commitment, absence of vision and passion. Consequently, many negative sentiments crept in, for instance, the discontinuity of the Language Research and Development Centres, the incongruity between policy and implementation. The worst things that happened, among others, were the parallel activities undertaken by the Departments of Education and Arts and Culture: all having to do with the language issues. And still ugly is the fact that they never seemed to warm up to working together. Another unforgivable thing is the deliberate weakening of the vital institutions such as PanSALB.

All these abnormalities contributed to the diminishing status and the decline, (or total disappearance) in the use of the languages that are spoken and used by the majority of the people of this country.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The study set out to review the challenges facing the development and empowerment of the indigenous languages of South Africa. This was done with the intention of identifying some of the major contributing factors to the success or failure of the whole enterprise. The study found that little progress took place after the promising activities initiated in 1995, culminating in the production of various important documents, including the National Language Policy Framework (2003), and the South African Language Research and Development document (2004).

In the previous chapter many factors were highlighted, among others, the lack of "the understanding that language policy is an integral part of social policy" (Alexander, 2009:1). This implies that language affects every aspect of a human being's life, and therefore, any policy that is produced will have a bearing on human social life, be it labour, education, health, justice, etc. Pueyo (2007:10) articulates the situation succinctly,

> "…language policy has to be approached and interpreted as a social policy whose aims are fairness and justice, which expresses the commitments to reduce imbalances in the exercise of rights, and which has to be aimed at guaranteeing all citizens an effective equality of opportunities and an increase of their welfare.

The general problem which does not only affect South Africa, but also the rest of the postcolonial Africa, is clearly observed by Alexander (1999:1):

> The neo-colonial policy and practice of the overwhelming majority of independent African states is a consequence of technical, resource-related as well as class factors. There is no doubt that under the circumstances of the emergence of

almost all these states, the resources were not to hand for the implementation of a viable democratic language policy. Virtually all the post-colonial African states "received" their independence somewhat as a runner in a relay race receives the baton from his or her forerunner. The race itself did not change, i.e., the state structures and the patterns of governance – in most cases – remained unaltered, since the new governments were simply carrying on the same fundamental economic and political policies which had helped the colonial system to sustain itself.

The only difference is that South Africa had produced the Constitution that was an envy of everybody and, its interpretation in terms of many policies went closer to achieving the goals. But the country faltered when it came to implementation. And also it could be intimated that there were enough human and financial resources to carry out the work. But that was not to be, probably because of what, according to Alexander (1999:3), is the tendency "that the new elites, in practice, are quite comfortable with simply taking over the colonial state, 'reforming' it to the extent that they put 'black faces in white places', but allowing everything in essence to remain the same." The consequences of this dereliction of responsibility on the part of the government agents are very dire to the whole nation. Alexander (1999:5) reminds everybody that "the failure on the part of independent African governments [South Africa included] to develop vigorously the indigenous languages of the people programmes the different countries for failure and stagnation at worst, and for mediocrity at best." Moreover, the fact that learners spend very few years getting education in their language (mother tongue), is also a recipe for disaster. Alexander (1999:6) spells the situation unequivocally:

> The disastrous fact that in most African countries, after two or three years of mother tongue or home language medium, there is an automatic switch to one or other foreign language as the medium of primary-school education is the single most destructive datum on the continent of Africa…this pedagogical framework is the real explanation for the amputation of the creativity of the African people…

The effects of a bad system of education regarding the medium of instruction, alluded to above by Alexander, may not be very obvious to most South Africans. This is because of access to previously predominantly Whites schools (so-called Model C schools), and most dangerously the fact that the ruling elites have access to education and the ex-colonial languages. But it is very vital to heed Alexander's lament:

> There is no other country anywhere in the world where the most important, most prestigious and the most powerful activities of the nation are conducted in what is – for most of the citizens – a foreign language…It is only on the African continent where the dead hand of colonialism continues to have such a stifling grip on the way elites construct or perceive reality that this simple fact remains invisible (ibid: 5).

The picture that is drawn above is not unique to Africa as Alexander perceives it. These are the true workings of coloniality, which:

> …refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our common experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath (sic) coloniality all the time and everyday (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243).

If we take into consideration the effects of coloniality on the minds of former colonial subjects, there will be no surprise as to how people respond to issues of transformation, to which language development and empowerment is very central. The situation is complex and very difficult to unravel. Be that as it may, something has to happen and must happen. No one with conscience will be happy to observe the reality of Citashe's apostrophe in a poem, "Zimkile! Mfo wohlanga" (Your cattle are gone, my countryman! Translated by AC Jordan (1973:88) and Rubusana, (1906/1911, title of the book): "Zemk' iinkomo magwalandini".

5.2 Findings

More than 20 years after 'freedom' and 'democracy,' nothing substantial can be picked up as pointing towards uplifting the status and maximising the use of the indigenous languages of South Africa. Below we will try to pick a few issues that can be attributed to the failure in developing and empowering these languages.

5.2.1 Government dereliction of duties and lack of accountability on the part of certain structures

Under normal circumstances, it is mainly the government which sees to it that citizens enjoy the rights and privileges that are due to them. Among others, people should access good things in life, such as education, health, economy, law, etc. through the language they know well, that is, their first language. The current study has pointed out on many occasions that the languages of the majority of the people of South Africa are marginalised. Not much is being done to promote their use and status, despite the constitutional stipulations which speak favourably in that direction. Most of the failures in implementing good policies, including language policies, point to the government's dereliction of its duties and the absence of accountability on the part of people in executive positions. We may add that even general stakeholders may not be exempted from this indictment.

Besides the fact that the Constitution has serious loopholes, Alexander does highlight certain issues that could be blamed on the ruling elite. Among others, he points to the lack of "understanding that language policy is an integral part of social policy" (Alexander, 2009:1). The fact that language is in the plight it is in can be attributed to what is suggested by Alexander (2007:32-33):

> The elites who inherited the political kingdom from the ostensibly departing overlords…continued to govern within the parameters set by the *ancien regime,* largely because they had no option, and because it suited their immediate interests.

According to him, no change has occurred in the system although the colour of those who hold office has changed. This has resulted in the perilous condition in which we find these languages. His lament is poignant:

> There is no country anywhere in the world where the most important, most prestigious and the most powerful activities of the nation are conducted in what is – for most of the citizens – a foreign language (ibid).

Ironically, what our democratic government failed to implement and achieve in the past 22 years, was accomplished during the Bantu Education era. We are told, "The implementation of apartheid, or the planned segregation of South African society, in education was accompanied by the extended use of the mother-tongue principle" (Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh, 2002:244). This was accompanied by an extensive development of teaching materials and production of textbooks in all the indigenous languages offered at schools from Grade I to VI. This was a great achievement and a tremendous effort in developing and empowering these languages. However, this does not in any way condone the injustices of apartheid.

What is even more painful is the fact that those materials are no longer available for the current people to improve on. Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh (ibid: 252, fn 118) have this to say:

> PRAESA [the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa], after several queries to a range of officials in the Department of Education in Pretoria has been given to understand that textbooks dating back to the days of Bantu Education were 'mopped up' and the department no longer had archival records of these.

This is a terrible indictment on the part of the government. We also indicated earlier that the researcher made several attempts to make it possible to establish a convenient place to do work on isiXhosa. These attempts failed precisely because people in executive positions have no space in their lives for love and commitment to indigenous languages. This is a far cry from what we hear below:

> A language may be likened to a mature tree with beautiful green foliage. Fertile soil and years of faithful and proper care are essential to produce such a tree. A beautiful language is the gift of God to a people and they should cherish it with love and respect by using it and expanding it and proudly transmitting it as a heritage – greater and richer each time – to the next generation (Bantu Education Journal, 1960:387, quoted in Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh, 2002:244).

Again, ironically, this comes from a journal which was published during the apartheid era. We often hear excuses of budget constraints when matters of language

development and empowerment are proposed. But the apartheid regime managed to do more out of shoe-string budget that was allocated to education of the people of colour.

5.2.2 The role of language in colonial/apartheid South Africa

The study has revealed that language has been, and still is, central to South African history and used as a political instrument during the colonial and apartheid eras. This manifested itself in certain languages being regarded as being superior and others, inferior. English and, subsequently, Afrikaans are used as means to access power, and as tools of oppression, dominance, of other racial groups classified as subhuman, namely: the indigenous people of South Africa. Used as forms of maintaining racialised inequality, these superior languages are used to determine the distribution of wealth as the preserve of the whites, hence the unequal distribution of economic resources. The other languages on the other side of linguistic divide are marginalised, oppressed, dehumanised, despite the fact that they have been granted official status. Moreover, very crucially is the denial of access to education, economy, politics, etc. through using one's first language.

The plight in which the indigenous languages find themselves today has a long history, dating back to the so-called "discovery" of the Americas by Columbus in 1492. These were the beginnings of the racial hierarchisation of populations into inferior and superior. The colonisers (whites) were regarded as normal human beings, and the colonised (indigenous people), as subhuman. The former had language and the latter had no language. This state of affairs, which started in America in the 15th century, was duplicated in Africa and South Africa in the 19th century. We are confronted with the coloniality of language, which is "an aspect of the process of dehumanizing colonized people through racialization" (Veronelli, 2015:119). In South Africa, this persisted in various forms until the present moment, leaving the indigenous languages diminished and without status.

5.2.3 Understanding the importance of language to human beings

The important starting point for taking a radical action towards realising the reality of developing and empowering the indigenous languages of South Africa will be understanding language and its role in the colonial and apartheid society. This will help understand the impact it has had to such a society. Referring to writers and poets, Philip (1993:77) writes, "[o]nly when we understand language and its role in a colonial [and apartheid] society can we understand the role of writing and the writer in such a society…" In the case of South Africa, it would also be essential to impress upon the people's mind how important language is to humans.

In our analysis of the development and empowerment of the marginalised languages of South Africa in the previous chapter, it became clear that language is always taken for granted, probably because people who have acquired a natural language and speak effortlessly do not appreciate its importance. It is when the speakers of a language take it seriously that they will take action and strive to see their languages developed and empowered to be valuable resources. It is fundamentally this lack of understanding by the powers that be, which resulted in the absence of commitment and vision to interpret and implement the provisions of the Constitution of South Africa.

Fanon (1967: 8-9) agrees that language is part of our lives:

> To speak means to be in a position to use syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization…A man who has language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied in that language… Mastery of language affords remarkable power.

This is true of using one's first language, but also the mastery of a second or third language. Culture and identity are embedded in one's language. Maturana, et al. (1995:9) sum up very beautifully language as human endowment, emphasising that, "[w]e human beings are 'languaging' beings and our humanness takes place in language." Keating (2015:628) views language "rationally (as a partner in knowledge-

creation), ontologically (as alive), and non-anthropocentrically (as more-than-human)." She elaborates further, "[l]anguage does not simply convey already existing meaning but instead co-creates meaning with us" (ibid:632). This strengthens the notion that language is more than just utterances of meaningful words/sounds in an activity of communication. It means a lot to our ancestors and non-human living organisms. Abram (1997:171), quoted in Keating (2015:633, fn 2), explains:

> To our ancestors, and to the many aboriginal peoples that still hold fast to their oral traditions, language is less a human possession than it is a property of the human earth itself, an expressive, telluric power in which we, along with the coyotes and the crickets, all participate.

As intimated earlier, language is always taken for granted, and as a result, its importance and centrality to our lives is ignored, especially by the westernised post-apartheid elite rulers. Referring to indigenous sciences [philosophies, and aesthetics], Peat (2006) quoted in Keating (2015:630), asserts that,

> Language…is not simply a medium, or a vehicle for communication; rather it is a living thing, an actual physical power within the universe. The vibrations of its swords are energies that act within the process we call reality.

In certain communities and nations, language has performative and materialising nature in rituals. This power of language helped to convince Turner, an anthropologist, when she observed a ritual involving a sick woman in Zambia. Turner "saw with [her] own eyes a large gray blob of something like plasma emerge from the sick woman's back. Then I knew the Africans were right, there *is* spirit stuff, there *is* spirit affliction: it isn't a matter of metaphor, or even psychology" (Turner, 1993:9). This was after she observed words concretising the negative spirit, in the woman's body, into a visible form that could be expunged (Keating, 2015). These incidents highlight the importance of indigenous languages to our societies. Without romanticising issues, language is the most valuable heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors and the only means of communicating with them. As an African/umXhosa, I can never communicate with and propitiate my ancestors through the medium of English or Afrikaans. Most importantly,

we should bear in mind that our ancestors never passed on to us deficient languages. To be sure, these (indigenous languages) were fully fledged, efficient languages they could use and used in all the situations of their lives. If they are now found wanting because of subsequent developments, it is incumbent on us, the current speakers/users, to work on them to fit in all domains of life.

5.3 Recommendations

The key to moving forward and doing something to pull our languages from their dehumanisation, oppression and marginalisation is, among other things, to acknowledge the role they played during the successive eras of colonisation and apartheid. This can help to diagnose the disease that impaired them to be the invalids they are to this day. Also, it is vital to value their importance and centrality to day-to-day living and knowing.

The reality that must dawn to speakers of the indigenous languages of South Africa is that no change of attitude can be expected from the westernised post-apartheid elite rulers with regards to implementing language development and empowerment policies, or any genuine transformation for that matter. This takes us back to Alexander's (2007:33) observation, cited in a previous chapter, and repeated here for emphasis:

> The elites who inherited the political kingdom from the ostensibly departing overlords …continued to govern within the parameters set by the *ancien regime,* largely because they had no option, and because it suited their immediate interests. The colonial state was not fundamentally altered even if the colour (religion, language, etc.) of those who seemed to make decisions from those who had passed on the baton of rule.

Alexander (1999:1) further illustrates the absence of vision, passion and commitment on the part of the ruling elite by invoking a metaphor of a 'race runner'. He explains this by referring not only to South Africa, but to the African continent at large:

> Virtually all the post-colonial African states "received" their independence somewhat as a runner in a relay race receives the baton from his or her

forerunner. The race itself did not change, i.e., the state structures and the patterns of governance – in most cases – remained unaltered, since the new governments were simply carrying on the same fundamental economic and political policies which had helped the colonial system to sustain itself.

That the citizens of the country are faced with this impasse, one wonders if there can be a way around this brick wall. It is encouraging in life to adopt an attitude that there can never be a problem which cannot be solved. The trick is to find a way of getting there.

If the powers that be cannot be lured into joining the party, that is, taking serious the importance of working on these languages and doing something towards alleviating the situation, they should be by-passed and left out. This is not the easiest of the things to do because any attempt at working on these languages will need large sums of money, and the government can come up handy on this score. On the other hand, one would turn the attention to the private sector, but the latter always support and/or invest, in many instances, in enterprises that bring about 'instant' returns. Unfortunately, investment in language development and empowerment is a long-term undertaking. It is not very easy to entice them. But there is no way that the dedicated speakers should give up trying to get a breakthrough.

Reinforcing the idea of never giving up, Fanon, quoted in McKittrick (2015:53) states that "Man is what brings society into being." And Wynter, in McKittrick (ibid: 53), interprets the statement:

> What Fanon meant by this is that "*the sociodiagnostic* prognosis" for the black man's/the black human's collective alienation will – as distinct from an individual psychoanalytic one – have to be instead "in the hands of those who are [themselves] willing to get rid of the structure of the worm-eaten roots of the structure.

Fanon is referring to the colonised people of Martinique, who find themselves destitute, 'damned', without identity, and all they wish for is to be like whites and speak French. To break away from this cycle of dehumanisation, he urges them "to tear off with all

[our] strength, the shameful livery put together by centuries of *incomprehension"* (ibid: 54).

At an intellectual level, one needs to explore and thoroughly understand one's environment in order to be able to deal with it effectively. This is what the Modernity/Coloniality-Decoloniality Collective Project is attempting to do. Whatever attempt is done to turn around the situation, we strongly recommend that it must be anchored on the work similar to the MCD project. This project is associated with a group of U.S Latino/a, Latin American, and Caribbean scholars, who felt there was a need for a new understanding of modernity. Briefly, according to Mignolo (2011:2-3), "The basic thesis … is the following: 'modernity' is a complex narrative whose point of origin is Europe; a narrative that builds Western civilization by celebrating its achievements while hiding its darker side, 'coloniality.'" In other words, coloniality is constitutive of modernity, implying that there is no modernity without coloniality. Modernity presents itself as a gift of salvation and newness from the West, where the people of colour (the colonised) are saved from themselves through some civilising mission, and offered the gift of progress and development. The rhetoric of modernity shows a brighter side of salvation, newness, progress, development, economy and all this goes hand in hand with "the logic of coloniality". Crimes of violence, cheap labour, inequality, land dispossession, culture denunciation, racial hierarchisation/racism, domination, language dehumanisation, are justified under the name of modernity. " 'Coloniality' in other words is one of the most tragic 'consequences of modernity'…" (ibid: 44).

The MCD collective referred to above takes two simultaneously and closely related directions. It has the analytic side, which is articulated along the notion of "coloniality of power", which:

> …looks to understand the past in order to excavate the darker side of domination, where racialization of the inter-subjective social relations, and the control of knowledge, labor, land, and nature are revealed as the operations of power over colonized-colonialized peoples and over which Europe has built itself as modernity (Veronelli, 2015:109).

This is very important because, in order to deal intelligently with the iniquities of the past and which have found their way to our current existence, we need to know exactly what had happened. This sentiment is echoed by Cooper (2011: xiii in Dussel, 2011), saying that: "[f]or Dussel, the key to politics of liberation is first to read history with a 'global' and 'decolonized' lens. Only then can the task of political liberation begin." The other direction, which is programmatic, is articulated along the notion of "decoloniality" and is a long term project "to decolonize all areas of the colonial matrix of power to release the fullness of human relationships" (Mignolo, 2013, para. 2). Importantly, according to Veronelli (2015:109-110):

> …this programmatic direction is not a counter-hegemonic global design, nor about denying the contributions the Western civilization and Eurocentered modernity to the history of mankind, but about opening up the option for other logics of thinking, doing, and living that emanate from the various subjects disenfranchised by modern/colonial racism.

The activities outlined above are recommended so as to ameliorate, not only the plight of the indigenous languages of this country, but also to deal with the inter-subjectivities of the neo-colonised-colonialised, oppressed peoples of South Africa. To be able to even begin this momentous task, there should be a radical shift in the people's mind-set and an embrace of the decolonial option "which does not simply protest the contents of imperial coloniality, [but] demands a delinking of oneself from the knowledge systems we take for granted (and can profit from) and practicing epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2015 in McKittrick, 2015:107).

In a previous chapter, it has been strongly argued that the Language Research and Development Centres idea was an excellent move on the part of the Department of Arts and Culture, to do something admirable towards improving the conditions of the indigenous languages of South Africa. Our strong recommendation to bring them back is based on the fact that, the document that guides their activities covers the basic things that need to be done to restore the status of the indigenous languages of South Africa and also for their diminishing use to be a thing of the past. Furthermore, with these centres, it will be easy to centralise and coordinate activities, thereby avoiding the

duplication of activities and over-stretching of the human resources. Collaboration with various stakeholders and institutions could enhance this noble work.

We know that the restoration of the dignity of our languages can be a reality. We have 'living' example of the development of Afrikaans, which within the space of 50 years was declared an official language that could be used in various important domains. However, we are not condoning the fact that the Afrikaners, in the process of doing something commendable for their entire nation, oppressed, marginalised, dehumanised the indigenous languages spoken by the majority of the people of South Africa.

By way of conclusion, we may need to revisit the pending question: "Why is it difficult to do the right thing?" in other words, we believe that every normal, mentally abled human being with standard common sense, will know what is right or wrong. Furthermore, we go along with the truism that as humans, we would like to do to others as it would be done to us. Basically the principles of Ubuntu are embedded in our human nature and this has to be explored vigorously in order to effect transformation. According to Smith [1759] (2005):

> How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it.

Chomsky (2013:685) goes much further that, besides being cognitive beings, "humans are social beings", crucially dependent "on the social, cultural and institutional circumstances of [their] lives." They respond to, and at the same time, influence "social arrangements that are conducive to the rights and welfare of people, to fulfilling their just aspirations – in brief, the common good." He goes on:

> Concern for the common good should impel us to find ways to overcome the devilish impact of these disastrous policies, from the educational system to the conditions of work, providing opportunities to exert the understanding and cultivate human development in its richest diversity (ibid).

It is imperative that we all strive to work towards upholding the principles of the common good, and hopefully, this will help instil in the mind of everybody that it is not only possible, but essential that we must do the right thing: develop and empower South African indigenous languages, including isiXhosa.

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