

EDUCATORS AND LEARNER'S PERCEPTIONS ON ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE SPEAKER'S USE OF ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

This study investigates Educators' and learners' perceptions on English first additional language speakers' use of English as medium of instruction in the East London district. The perceptions are uncovered from the interviews and analysis of the learners' books. The data is analyzed against the background of the socio-economic and historical factors that led to this medium of instruction. The theoretical and conceptual framework for the study is provided by studies on language policy and planning, English as an international language, and Language as a mediating tool. The study makes use of a qualitative research method which includes interviews, observation and analysis of learners' books. This data is analyzed using content analysis (CA).

KEYWORDSLanguage Policy. Medium of Instruction. Educators. Learners. Perceptions. English First Additional Language

Introduction

In South Africa, after the downfall of *apartheid* in 1994, a new government was formed and in 1996 the South African Constitution declared 11 languages official (English, Afrikaans, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, Tshivenda, IsiNdebele, Seswati and Xitsonga). This was done in an attempt to encourage multilingualism in this country, and to bolster pride in the indigenous languages. It was in complete contrast to the country having had only two official languages (English and Afrikaans) prior to 1996. All the nine provinces of the country are required to have provincial language policies. The Eastern Cape provincial language policy recognizes isiXhosa, English, and Afrikaans as the official languages of the province, with English as the medium of instruction especially at the intermediate phase (Language in Education Policy 1997).

Language is a principal tool for learning (Tsui and Tollefson 2004) despite the growing awareness that mother tongue (MT) education is more effective than bilingual or second language medium of instruction (Heugh 2002; Rademeyer 2005). When the language of teaching and learning is not the mother tongue, the language becomes a barrier to teaching and learning (Benson 2009; Brock-Utne 2010). In other words the role of the teacher as facilitator of such learning demands that the teacher possesses a specific second language teaching competencies, skills and a very high sense of personal linguistic proficiency in the language of instruction.

A majority of schools in Southern Africa (Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) use English as medium of instruction (Brock-Utne 2000; Horne 2005; Kgosana 2006). The National Education Policy (Act A 27 of 1996) and the South African School's Act (84 of 1996) opted for English as medium of instruction (DinYan 2003). In South Africa therefore, English first additional language (EFAL) has become the dominant medium of instruction (De Klerk 2002; De Wet 2002; Abongdia 2013). It is a lingua franca as it is used as a means of communicating between speakers with different first languages (Crystal 2003).

Moreover when teachers are not native speakers of English, the barrier becomes more difficult when they are not adequately proficient in the language of instruction, thus making their input even more difficult to understand. In such situations, teachers often resort to code switching, using the pupils' mother tongue (which they have in common with the pupils) in spoken communication in order to make themselves understood. However, all written communication and formal assessment in such contexts is expected to be in the 'unfamiliar language'- English. The responsibility is placed on Language Teacher Education (LTE) programmes (workshops, teacher training) to transform the process of language teacher preparation into a never-ending quest for quality.

In teaching learners who are classified as African or Coloured where the language of instruction is not a mother tongue, two issues of concern have emerged. The first relates to pupils' inadequate content knowledge and conceptual development whilst the second involves learner's poor grasp of English. Hence, Mohany (2009) states that second language learners may have experience English as a medium of instruction (MOI) since lower grades but will still have some difficulties in higher grades (Mohany 2009). Therefore language of instruction plays a crucial role in learning as it develops ideas or concepts of the world around them. It enables learners to make sense of the input they receive in the classroom from the teacher, written texts and also express their understanding of what they have learnt from the input (Cummins 2000). Having observed this problem, the researchers thought it necessary to shed light on the use of English as the medium of instruction and learners perspective on both comprehension and the level of teacher's English skills and whether there is a connection between these two aspects. In view of the above the study investigated the effect of using English as medium of instruction on non English speaking learners. It focused on isiXhosa and Afrikaans - speaking learners (Grade 7) in a Coloured and isiXhosa Primary Schools in large township of East London. In the isiXhosa Primary school, the medium of instruction is English in all the grades except for the foundation phase since the Department of Education (DoE 2007) stipulated that learners should be taught in mother tongue from grade 1-3 and from grade 4 onwards all learners should be offered language of teaching and learning (LOLT) and at least one additional approved language as a subject (LiEP 1997).

Due to community background, the isiXhosa learners are not familiar with English since they use it mostly at school. Teachers that are teaching in both of these schools are English First Additional Language (FAL) speakers. In addition to this, these schools are disadvantaged in the sense that they have decent building structures but do not have libraries, computer laboratory and science laboratory. The schools are located in informal settlements with high rates of unemployment and illiteracy.

Moreover the Afrikaans school is a multilingual school since it has both Afrikaans and isiXhosa learners. Beard (2005) explains multilingual school as a school that has learners from more

than one home language group. Learners from this school are able to speak three languages which are Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to establish the impact of using English as medium of instruction on English second language speakers. Below are some of the perceived factors that might negatively contribute to learner's acquisition of English and subject content.

Importance of Using Mother Tongue (MT) as Medium of Instruction

Language policy for schools is guided by principles derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and South Africans Schools Act (SASA) (RSA 1996). South African Department Education adopted the language in Education Policy (LiEP) in 1997 and the policy was further clarified in Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) of 2000 (RSA 1996). Since South Africa is a multilingual country, LiEP was used to promote its multilingualism in the sense that it prioritizes the importance of additive multilingualism and the need for African languages to be taught at schools. It attempts to promote both the use of home language in schools as well as ensure that learners acquire an additional language of communication to facilitate the bridging of race while encouraging respect for other languages. It also stipulates that all learners shall study in home language and at least one additional language as language subject from Grade 1-3. From grade 4 onwards all learners shall be offered language of teaching and learning (LOLT) and at least one additional approved language as a subject (LiEP 1997).

In view of the above, Phillistine (2005) emphasizes the importance of using mother tongue as LOLT. He further explains the term 'mother tongue' as a language originates from a notion that linguistic skills of a child are honed by mother therefore the language spoken by the mother would be the primary language a child would learn. Cambridge (2013) defines mother tongue as the first language learnt as a child, rather than a language learnt at school or as an adult. Skutnabb-Kanga (2000) sees mother tongue as the original language one learned first. This shows that the person becomes competent in the language and uses it the most. Skutnabb-Kanga (2000) further points out that mother tongue(s)' is not only an academic exercise but also necessary for practical purposes such as census, right to

services which are given on the basis of mother tongue, assessment of linguistic qualifications for education and jobs. In other words it is a privilege to be taught in such a language as it is easy to voice your views as you understand perfectly.

Moreover Mackey (2005) suggests that when a language lacks a well-established written form, it cannot be empowered which in turn jeopardizes the potential status of such language. This suggests that the non-availability of the developed written forms of the MT languages militates against the language being the medium of instruction. Though it can be used effectively between a learner and a teacher, it can however not be functional if undeveloped in an academic or scholarly context.

English as Medium of Instruction

South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven official languages. The presences of these official languages have made it very difficult to choose one language as the medium of instruction in schools (Banda 2000). However English has become the medium of all relevant social interactions and the ability to use English effectively is considered an absolute essential honorable existence (De Klerk 2002; Thompson 2009). The South African National Curriculum Statement (South African Department of Education (SADoE 2002) declares that, since the first additional language (FAL) may also be used as language of teaching and learning (LOLT), its teaching and learning should achieve levels of proficiency that meet the threshold level necessary for effective learning across the curriculum. This proficiency includes 'the abstract cognitive academic language skills required for thinking and learning (SADoE 2002).

In many newly independent countries, a tiny English-speaking elite controls state policy-making organ while the masses of the people remain excluded (Gibson 2005). In this regard many Black and Coloured parents take their children to ex-model C schools in Eastern Cape around East London, where the medium of instruction is English. They do so because they want their children to learn English since it is viewed as lingua franca between people from different language groups. Parents therefore hope that their children will be empowered in English. They will be proficient in English not only in conversation but in academic subjects and be able to face with confidence the outside world in future.

Culture of Learning

Learners coming from non-White neighborhood usually do not know English well enough to cope with academic demands of their schooling since their English language proficiency is limited. This negatively affects their academic development and progress since they will struggle to do written or verbal tasks. Some learners come from families where English does not play a significant role. Parents use their languages to explain homework and in conducting conversation. They use English only at school and do not have resources such as English magazines or books at home. Holmarsdottir (2005) suggests that learners raised in families where members are not interested in reading, learners from those families tend to perceive reading as punishment. This simply means lack of reading culture from the family members can discourage the child as it will be hard to see a point of doing his school work.

Context of Language and Content Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to the subconscious or conscious process by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or a tutored setting (Mitchell 1998). It covers the development of oral communication, lexis, grammar and pragmatic knowledge, but has been largely confined to morph syntax (Ellis 1985). It has always been obvious that comprehensible and appropriately contextualized second language data is necessary for learning to take place (Mitchell and Myles 1998).

Aim of the Paper

This paper sought to investigate on how the use of English as medium of instruction impacted on second languages learners. It further looked at the teaching strategies used by the teachers to ease teaching in the FAL. It provides recommendations based on findings to help policy makers, second language teachers especially in bilingual schools and learners in bilingual classes to reach their expected academic potential.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretically, the paper examines the concepts of medium of instruction and language policy. Benson (2002) and Alidou (2006) claim that instructions in a home language eases the transition between home and school. This

argument is increasingly bolstered by empirical evidence from a range of countries such as Mozambique (Benson 2000), Burkina Faso (Brock Utne 2006), Nigeria (Fafunwa 1989), Botswana (Prophet and Dow 1994), and Zambia (Bus 2011), all of which point to the conclusion that learners perform better academically when the language of instruction is a familiar language (home language). Countries like China, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union have practiced the communist ideal of providing local language instruction to promote comradeship and equality between groups, and while this has not necessarily resulted in equal distribution of educational resources it has supported a great deal of enabling legislation (Kosonen 2004). The Six-Year Yoruba Medium Primary Project, in the findings of North American studies (Thomas and Collier 2002) and the experience of many European countries, suggest that a language foreign to the learner should be taught as a subject for five to seven years prior to being used to teach academic content. This would mean focusing on the mother tongue throughout primary schooling and using appropriate methodology to teach other languages as subjects, a model that is not yet being practiced in multilingual countries. Alidou (2006) supports this with evidence from countries like Tanzania and Zambia which highlights that educational progress can be impeded by English medium of instruction on EFAL learners and that skills may be insufficiently developed to serve as an effective educational medium. Baker (2006) and Benson (2011) both suggest that medium of instruction is the most powerful means of maintaining and revitalizing a language and a culture as it is also the most important form of intergenerational transmission. Chumbow (2012) agrees with both researchers as he sees it as the most direct agent of linguistic genocide. Medium of instruction policy determines which social and linguistic groups have access to political and economic opportunities, and which groups are disenfranchised (Chumbow 2012). He therefore sees this as a key means of power (re)distribution and social (re)construction, as well as a key arena in which political conflicts among countries and ethno linguistic, social and political groups are realized.

Medium of instruction policies are the key vehicle for civilizing and assimilating indigenous peoples. There are many issues involved in the formulation of language in

education policy. The selection of a medium of instruction is possibly the most critical, but also emotional and contentious, because it relates directly to political choices (Fergusson 2004). Most researchers investigate literature on the educational dimensions of the medium of instruction which reveals that there is a substantial body of academic opinion asserting the view that primary education, particularly early primary education and early literacy is most effectively conducted in a language familiar to the learner and improves the quality and quantity of interaction between an educator and a learner (Fergusson 2004; Hardman 2008). Heugh (2006) and Brock-Utne (2010) suggest that the problem might be created by the shift from the so-called 'early exit' policies, under which learners transition to English as medium of instruction (MOI) after three or four years of using mother tongue as MOI in primary schools. This is argued that it will enhance the quality of education and foster greater respect for other languages. Despite adjustments in the language policy, there is little sign in Africa of many major changes of educational policy as only one language is still seen as a major language.

Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction

Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2006) have defined the concept of mother tongue on the basis of four criteria. The first criterion is origin and refers to the language one learned first. The second criterion is identification which is defined at two levels. Internal identification is the language one identifies with, and external identification is the language by which one is identified as a native speaker by others. Competence is the third criterion, and relates to the language one knows best. Function is the last criterion and refers to the language one uses the most (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2006).

The 2007 census of Ethiopia identified over 80 different ethnic groups with distinct languages. According to Duo (2002), despite the presence of such extensive linguistic diversity in the country, Amharic, a language that originated from the Amhara region, served as the sole medium of instruction in primary schools throughout much of the country's modern education history. English was used as a language of instruction in higher grades (Duo 2002). Mkwizu (2003) also highlights that in Tanzania Kiswahili is defined as the mother tongue for a lot of Tanzanians, because it is the

peoples' first language, the language that they use the most, and the languages that Tanzanians know best.

The value of the language of a nation as a spiritual inheritance lies in the fact that it is transmitted from generation to generation as the basis of thought and action (Mkwizu 2003). Roy-Campbell (2001) suggests that the language helps to shape the intellectual insight, to broaden and deepen the feelings and that the importance of using mother tongue as medium of instruction cannot be overestimated. If learners are to master cognitively complex concepts, they can do this most easily by learning them in languages with which they are familiar. The mother tongue educator has a responsibility to clearly bring to the learner the possibilities and demands of the language, to help the learner through exercises to gain command over the language, be it through the spoken word or the written word (Davids 1998). Learners who learn through their mother tongue (L1) are at an advantage compared to those who learn through the first additional language (FAL) (Macnamara 2003). Emphasis on mother tongue dictates an education which relates it to languages of intercommunication at various levels and thus imparts education relevant to the societal needs. Replacement of mother tongue by another language such as a foreign language deprives many learners of their subsistence (Pattanayak 2004). Chaudron (1998) holds that in a situation where the learner learns through a language other than the mother tongue, he faces problems because his task is three-fold:

- Firstly, the learner has to make sense of the instructional tasks, which are presented in the first additional language.
- Secondly, he has to attain linguistic competence that is required for effective learning to take place.
- And finally, he has to master the content itself.

A poor grasp of FAL results in a feeling of incompetence and loss of confidence on the part of the learner (Roy-Campbell 1996). In the context of benefits of mother tongue as the medium of education, Cummins' (1974) views on cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is relevant. CALP requires sound literacy skills and a broad vocabulary in mother tongue in order to facilitate subject-matter mastery, concept development and skills in formal oral and written expression in the FAL. In fact, first language acquisition must develop

strongly in the early years to achieve success in cognitive functioning.

On the other hand, Varkuti (2009) and Mackey (2005) highlight that the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary school can lead to lower proficiency in national and/or international languages which are often the language of instruction in higher education. This suggests that the non-availability of the developed written forms of the MT languages militates against the language being the medium of instruction. Though mother tongue can be used effectively between a learner and a teacher, it can however not be functional if undeveloped in an academic or scholarly context. This therefore suggests that when a language lacks a well-established written form, it cannot be empowered which in turn jeopardizes the potential status of such language.

In view of this, mother tongue instruction does not guarantee ongoing academic success beyond primary school and can reduce attainment in higher education. In such cases, Peal and Lambert (1962) promote bilingual education as they claimed that a bilingual learner has the mental flexibility and superiority in concept formation and a more diversified set of mental abilities. They are better able to dissociate concepts from the words with which they are verbalized. Since they have already developed a syntactic orientation to language, they are more aware of the dichotomy between form and meaning in language. Surian (2009) has discovered that using both mother tongue and FAL (bilingual) in education is a great asset to the learner. She has also noted that the bilingual learner has a better awareness of language differences, and is better at learning new languages and possesses important advantages in intelligence and cognitive growth. It has also been discovered that the cognitive systems of bilingually educated learners differ from monolingual educated learners (i.e., educated through mother tongue) in some remarkable ways. This means learning, speaking and using two languages may affect fundamental aspects of cognitive and neural development, potentially influencing the way those systems learn and represent information (Klein and Viswanathan 2004, Yoshida 2008). Recent studies also show bilingual advantage in working memory (Diamond 2009) and executive functions. Yoshida (2008) suggests that bilingualism's demand on executive

functions for constantly switching languages and exerting inhibitory control to suppress the mother tongue in class room context might be contributing to cognitive flexibilities. Learners are able to dissociate concepts from the words with which they are verbalized. They develop a syntactic orientation to languages; they are more aware of the dichotomy between form and meaning in languages (Diamond 2009). The next section provides more information on language policies.

Language Education Policies

Spolsky and Shohamy (2000: 17) define language policy as “an effort by someone with or claiming authority to change the language practice (or ideology) of someone else”. Within the language policy, the policy maker has some level of authority over those expected to follow its requirements. Shohamy (2006: 40) further defines it as a “mechanism used to create de fact language practices in educational institutes, especially in centralized educational system”. Shohamy (2006) also emphasizes that in most cases, educational staff of a given institution work according to, and as agents of implementing these policies without questioning its quality, appropriateness and relevance to the successful learning for learners. It is these policies, especially in a centralized system that represent language manipulation, meaning which language or languages should be used as a medium of instruction and to what degree that usage is acceptable (Shamony 2006).

In the apartheid South Africa (SA), a number of policies aimed at addressing the imbalances of the past were promulgated after democratic elections in 1994. One of them was the 1997 multilingual language education policy which was designed to usher equality and equity in education system, to promote and develop all the eleven official languages, to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners, to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages (SASA Act 84 of 1996; LiEP 1997, Curriculum 2005). SA is a multilingual and multicultural country with an extraordinary diversity of races, groupings, languages and landscapes that characterize this country. It has the most diverse and accommodating language policy in the world (Bamgbose 2003).

Despite the large number of official languages in SA, English still remains the dominant

language (Dyers 2008) and as a result, many parents do their best to ensure that their children are educated in English since it has an influenced on social class, level of education, career and region. In the South African language policy, the Department of Education (DoE 2007) stipulated that learners should be taught in mother tongue in the foundation phase (grade 1-3) and one official language can be done as subject to promote additive approach. In the intermediate or senior phases the medium of instruction (MOI) provided by a school depends on the choices made by school governing body (SGB) and learners in selecting their language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The language in education policy (LieP 1997) together with SASA (84 of 1996), which conferred certain rights on SGBs in determining the language policy of a school and the right to choose their LOLT.

This is based on the fact that in South African National Curriculum Statement (South African Department of Education (SADoE 2002) declares that, since the first additional language (FAL) may also be used as language of teaching and learning (LOLT), its teaching and learning should achieve levels of proficiency that meet the threshold level necessary for effective learning across the curriculum. This proficiency includes 'the abstract cognitive academic language skills required for thinking and learning (SADoE 2002). Hence many schools in SA opted for English as medium of instruction even in EFAL schools since it is a lingua franca language and a choice made by SGB of the schools.

Despite these good intentions, the main problems facing the national language policy and its implementation plan are the lack of political interest and effort, as well as inadequate resources being made available for effective implementation of the policy (Abongdia 2013). This means that many learners continue to have to shift to English after the first three years of schooling, while many educators are teaching in English without an adequate command of the language. De Kadt (2005) and Abongdia (2013) remind us that language does not only affect education but also hinders communication between the state and its people leading to poor political participation.

Classroom Challenges Faced by First Additional Language Learners

Learning through a foreign language in higher education entails using the foreign language as a vehicle for knowledge production, construction and dissemination. Research findings suggest that this kind of knowledge development does not always enjoy a straight forward relationship. On the African continent, Gerber (2005) found significant differences between the achievement in mathematics of Afrikaans speakers when Afrikaans was used as the instructional language and when the medium of instruction shifted to English. In the Hong Kong context, Yip (2003) found that English medium learners, despite having initially higher grades in science, performed more poorly on tests than their peers who were taught in Chinese. The learners in English medium were found to be particularly weak in problems that assessed understanding of abstract concepts, their ability to discriminate between scientific terms and their application of scientific knowledge in new situations. Similarly, researchers in New Zealand have found negative correlations between first additional language (FAL) learning and performance in undergraduate mathematics, with learners disadvantaged by 10% when taught in FAL (Barton and Neville-Barton 2003, 2004).

Research in the Netherlands has also shown negative effects for Dutch engineering learners' learning when they are taught in English (Vinke 1995; Klaassen 2001). FAL learners could also be referred to as language minority learners. Research shows that language minority learners face many challenges in school and this is supported by Waggoner (2008) who states that second language learners are 1.5 times more likely to drop out of school than native speakers. Slonimsky and Reed (2002) indicate that the specific challenge that is immediately visible in classrooms during the teaching and learning of content subjects is when learners' main language is not the same as the language of instruction in which texts for the different subjects are produced. Learners find it difficult to communicate with each other and with the teacher if the language of instruction is not the main language they share. For English second language learners, clear articulation of their thinking is not always easy and for that reason, they might be more reluctant in general to voice their thinking (Slonimsky and Reed 2002).

Moss and Puma (2000) indicate that second language learners who attend former model C schools receive lower grades and are judged by their teachers to have lower academic abilities and score below their classmates (who are native speakers of English) on standardized tests. As pointed out by Ashcraft (2006), content-area educators in all subjects are affected by English medium of instruction because they face the challenge of teaching their subjects in English to students who are not proficient enough to follow lesson. Some of these educators may feel frustrated because in addition to their academic fields, they have to cope with language issues in their classrooms which demands extra knowledge and skills regarding second language acquisition processes (Westergaard 2003). Some researchers (Hellekjaer 2003) suggest that EMI in non-English speaking countries constrains content area teaching methods. Since English is a second language for some educators, some may not be confident or qualified enough to teach in English. Administrative staff is also affected by the English-medium instruction because some of them may not have a good command of English to carry out their jobs (Ashcraft 2006). If the staff have problems to communicate in English, it is difficult for the school to create an ideal inclusive and conducive working climate.

Methodology

This paper forms part of Nqoma's masters thesis where a qualitative methodology was used to analyse educators and learner's perceptions on English First Additional Language speaker's use of English as medium of instruction. Being a case study, the sample consisted of 8 grade 7 teachers and 10 learners in two grade 7 classes in one primary school purposively selected in the East London District in the Eastern Cape Province, in South Africa. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observations. The school and participants were carefully chosen to reflect the general educators and learner's perceptions on the use of English as medium of instruction. Since we used the qualitative research design, we decided to use teachers and learners from the different linguistic backgrounds: isiXhosa and Afrikaans with the same socio-economic backgrounds to find out their perceptions on the use of English as MOI.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the interviews and observations conducted with the grade 7 educators and learners, the following findings came up: schools environment and location, lack of parental support, the culture of teaching and learning (code switching) and availability of the resources.

School Environment

Both schools were located in areas where there was high rate of poverty, unemployment and crime which had an effect on the level of educator's and learner's commitment. When the community is not involved in school matters, they begin to lose a sense of ownership in the school and as a result they tend to harm or destroy it given that they do not see it as an investment or a benefit to them. The Afrikaans school is located in the community where breakages/robbery is very common. This was evident in the fence at the back of the school that was broken hence the school kept losing its limited resources and would struggle to recover them. An environment that is not safe creates a state of anxiety that can have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning. These schools depended entirely on the support from the government since parents could not afford school fees or any financial assistance needed by schools. There were no proper school libraries as they had outdated books and the libraries were being used as the store rooms.

Lack of Parental Support

Collected data showed that most learners in both schools were either not doing or not finishing their homework, projects or any tasks they took home. This showed that parents did not give sufficient support to educators and learners. This might have been caused by the fact that most learners were staying with their grandparents who were either illiterate or not proficient in the language of instruction. Lack of parental support maybe also linked with the social class and age of parents, learners from better backgrounds were given the necessary support in terms of assistance with the school work and provision of resources when necessary. Learners with young parents seemed to have better understanding in their learning. This might have been so because their parents had better understanding of the language of instruction and thus gave the learners the necessary support needed in their academic work. Therefore most learners were underperforming due to this factor.

Language Proficiency

The study revealed that the learners faced different challenges and difficulties in using the newly adopted language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in their everyday school activities. The main problems were related to understanding lessons, note taking, participation in classroom discussions and accessing information from books. Many learners highlighted that they had problems in understanding lessons in English. This was mainly due to the speed and pronunciation of educators coupled with limited domain specific vocabularies. When it comes to taking own notes or discussion from the educators' explanation, some learners mentioned that they got lost and preferred to wait until educators wrote something on the board for them to copy. Learning in English first additional language also affected learner's participation in classroom discussion as it remained low and resulted to participation of few individuals due to limited proficiency of the language, shyness to participate and fear of making mistakes. In this regard, some learning opportunities such as asking and answering questions, asking for and providing clarification or following up any issue arising from classroom discussion were missed out. This was not however limited only to learners' limited command of the instructional language, but some of the educators also struggled to use English and avoided explaining concepts in the classroom. Learners from both schools were EFAL learners with inadequate English proficiency hence the lessons were teacher centered and thus reduced the possibilities of negotiating meaning or providing relevant scaffolding.

Although English is a high-status language in South Africa, it is not likely to be used in EFAL learner's immediate living environment and that limits their exposure to, and use of, English as a medium of communication (Roseberry-Mckibbin 2001). Most ESL learners are only really exposed to English in Grade 1 and do not have a formal pre-school exposure to English at home or at a preprimary school (SA 2002). Many learners learn in their mother tongue in the Foundation Phase and are then only exposed to English as MOI in Grade 4 (Tancred 2006). The participants pointed out that educators should be sensitive to all learners when they teach, and when they talk to learners they should show consideration for everyone's language, background and culture. It is also important to consider the level of English used

when setting assessment or final examinations by both educators and the Education Department to use simple English; this does not imply that the standard should be lowered but that learners should be given the opportunity to get effective feedback to be successful in their examinations.

Code Switching

Having textbooks that were in neither learners' nor educators' mother tongue resulted to unclear teaching and learning process. This resulted in both learners and educators missing out of English concepts or understanding the textbooks. Most educators were of the opinion that they had an important task to fulfill given that the textbooks were in the first additional language of learners. As a result, they had to explain the text in the mother tongue first and then reverted to English (code switching) for further explanation. This appeared to be the case especially in the Black school where learners and educators had the same home language. Code switching was used mostly to explain concepts to learners although educators were adamant that learners must acquire skills and proficiency in the language of instruction. Most of the educators in both schools argued against the use of code switching because it was against their learning areas policies and they had to stick to the learning outcomes and terminology of their learning areas yet some of them admitted that sometimes they felt like they had no choice but to use code switching because learners did not understand and would just sit and look at them. It is important to note that although the teachers justify the use of code switching as to assist learners, it was noticed during observation that some of them struggled teaching in English and would conveniently switch to their L1 (isiXhosa) given that they shared the same language with the learners.

Lack of Resources

The participants highlighted the lack of resource as the major problem in the schools. Their libraries and computer laboratories did not have appropriate resources and as a result they were not used effectively. Another factor was that the schools were not receiving sufficient stationery and textbooks from the government at the appropriate time which negatively affected the whole plan of teaching and learning. The schools entirely depended on the government for resources as they were no schools fee due to lack of financial support from parents. Thus, the researchers are of the view

that when schools lack adequate reading materials other than a textbook; it becomes difficult if not impossible for effective teaching and learning to take place and most importantly implementing the use of English FAL curriculum fully.

CONSLUSION

The study investigates educators and learner's perceptions on English First Additional language speaker's use of English as medium of instruction in two primary schools in the East London district in South Africa. The investigation revealed that educators and learners are faced with many challenges that affect their use of EFAL as a medium of instruction. Among the issues that came up were schools environment and location, lack of parental support, the culture of teaching and learning (code switching) and availability of the resources. As can be seen from the analysis, the use of EFAL could be successful if learners have the necessary support needed both at school and at home. This in turn, implies that the educators need to be well trained and should be steps ahead of the learners in order to scaffold and support them through the use of different teaching methods.

Recommendations

The teaching style is also important and the use of educator's body language can be very useful if he or she uses hands, gestures, body movement or facial expressions to explain things before settling for code switching because learners need practice in responding to questions in English. If they are not given an adequate opportunity to do so, code switching will be pointless. It is worthy of note that whether learners understand concepts in their home language or not, they cannot describe them in English, that may lead to rote learning which may result to poor performance. In many cases EFAL educators with a limited English proficiency teach EFAL learners (Mati 2003), as a result English proficiency inequality and mother-tongue mismatch exists between both EFAL educators and learners, as well as between both EFAL learners and learners.

Furthermore, disadvantaged schools with lack of resources should encourage educators to use handmade teaching resources such as charts, transparencies and any visual aids they can get hold of as it would help learners make a connection between the content knowledge that is being covered and its relevance to everyday

life. As grade 7 learners are expected to explain the content in English and should have better language skill, this would help learners with inadequate EFAL proficiency to gain English vocabulary and understand the meaning of words. It would also be helpful to compile a glossary of concepts in English and the discussion and explanation of the concepts should be in simple English. This would help to build up learner's vocabulary in EFAL in written text, reading, oral/ discussion. However, all the difficult words should be discussed as a class and be added on the glossary of concepts. This exercise would make learners to feel comfortable to ask questions and there would be active in discussions. This would also enable them to pick up vocabulary and language-related skills which could boost their confidence in the use of EFAL.

To provide support for the EFAL learners with inadequate English proficiency, it is more advantageous when educators attend effective training from time to time in addressing barriers of EFAL learners with limited English proficiency, experiences and challenges they face (Cele 2001).

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