

**Athens Institute for Education and Research
ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series
LIT2017-2414**

**The Challenges Faced By the Mother-Tongue Lecturers
at the Tertiary Level**

**Singatwa Mona
Lecturer
Walter Sisulu University
South Africa**

An Introduction to
ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. This paper has been peer reviewed by at least two academic members of ATINER.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

Mona, S., (2018). “The Challenges Faced By the Mother-Tongue Lecturers at the Tertiary Level”, Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: LIT2017-2414.

Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr URL:
www.atiner.gr

URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm

Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research. All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the source is fully acknowledged.

ISSN: 2241-2891

23/03/2018

**The Challenges Faced By the Mother-Tongue Lecturers at the
Tertiary Level**

**Singatwa Mona
Lecturer
Walter Sisulu University
South Africa**

Abstract

It is a well-known fact that the best medium for teaching a child is his/her mother tongue. Implementing mother-tongue education is not, however, a trouble-free task for a country that is multilingual, multi-ethnic and culturally pluralistic. In South Africa, before the year 1994, English and Afrikaans were the federal working languages, served as the only languages of education in a nation where more than nine languages are spoken (Alexander 2003). At present, about eleven languages are involved in the school system across South Africa. However, multidimensional challenges face the endeavour. These include the scarcity of human resources, multiplicity of languages and dialects, inconsistent strategies employed to handle the situation, sceptical attitudes of the society towards mother-tongue education, and pedagogic problems. The problem is especially complex in regions that comprise indigenous languages particularly the area formerly known as the Eastern Cape, which is the main focus in this paper, is an instance of this complexity. This paper discusses the problems and challenges facing mother-tongue education in the sub-region and concludes with some suggested ways to ameliorate or even to avert them.

Keywords: Challenge, language, mother-tongue lecturers, South African learners, tertiary level

Acknowledgments: This paper is about the challenges of mother tongue lecturers in higher learning institutions of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. It discusses the contradictions between language policy and practice in Universities of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The study set out to investigate the challenges which IsiXhosa (mother tongue language) lecturers face in using African languages as a medium of instruction. In the Eastern Cape, this means the application of IsiXhosa, Sesotho, Afrikaans & English as mediums of instruction and learning. The findings pose challenges to those practitioners and agents who are at the forefront of language transformation in higher education institutions of South Africa.

Introduction

This paper discusses the challenges faced by mother tongue lecturers in institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Focusing on universities in the Eastern Cape Province, the paper argues that the challenges of using mother tongue languages are intricately linked to the settler-colonial policies that recognised foreign languages such as English and Afrikaans as a means of domination, subjugation and exclusion. Pahlala (2014) evaluates the post-independence steps taken by the South African government in recognizing the multilingual nature of its people which resulted in the creation of tools for implementing and transforming language policies in institutions of higher learning. Such language policies were designed to correct the universal tendency to practise monolingualism in multilingual societies which tended to disempower mother tongue speakers of a dominant language such as IsiXhosa). The background of this paper thus rests on the contradictions between policy and practice in transforming and implementing language policies in institutions of higher learning. These include the scarcity of human resources to sufficiently implement the new language policies of an independent South Africa; multiplicity of languages and dialects in one province such as IsiXhosa, Sesotho in the Eastern Cape; inconsistent strategies employed to handle the language issues; sceptical attitudes of the society especially students towards mother-tongue education; and pedagogic problems. Alexander (2003) noted that in the Eastern Cape, the official languages are: isiXhosa, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans. While IsiXhosa and English are the official languages in many universities of the Eastern Cape such as Walter Sisulu and Fort Hare, English has been maintained as the medium of instruction. According to Kaschula (2013), the history of language-in-education policy in the country shows that it has been the conquered that have had to learn the languages of their conquerors, and that very few of the latter learned the indigenous languages. Therefore, the challenges of developing and using indigenous languages for teaching purposes in the Eastern Cape are symptomatic of a broader problem in many South African institutions of higher learning.

Post-apartheid South Africa introduced institutions, language policies and constitutional reforms which repealed the racist and discriminatory colonial era forms of domination and exclusion. It is imperative, however, to acknowledge that, while there exist institutions, constitutional reforms and language policies, there continues to be an unequal balance in introducing mother tongue languages for purposes of teaching and communication in higher education institutions. Part of this is compounded by the fact there still remains few teaching materials in African languages to be used for tertiary study. Importantly, mother tongue languages appear to be relegated to areas considered closer to African culture such as agriculture. Mother tongue lecturers grapple with these issues almost always. The commitment for multilingualism in South Africa, which embraces African languages are made in the South African Constitution (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Language Policy for Higher Education (Department Of Education 2002), the Report on the Development of Indigenous

African Languages for Use as Mediums of Instruction at the South African Universities in 2003 and the Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions in 2008, the Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences in 2011 and the White Paper on Post-Secondary School Education and Training. In addition, the departments of basic and higher education pronounced on specific language policies to be applied and effected in the sector. Alexander (2003) claims that language Policy aims to redress the injustices of Apartheid where English and Afrikaans were given a higher status at the expense of other languages and also to facilitate access to good services, knowledge and information in order to meet client expectations and needs (Eastern Cape Language Policy). The demise of apartheid also resulted in the creation of the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities whose main objective is to promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities. The above information attests to deliberate attempts to revamp language policies in universities. It is, however, clear that there are no specific policies that relate to mother tongue lecturers and how they could be aided in discharging their duties.

Language Policies of Selected Eastern Cape Universities: Brief Overview

This brief outlines specific language policies of the four universities in the Eastern Cape Province, namely Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu, Rhodes and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. It should be acknowledged that the existed faculties of African Languages and culture in these universities' whose sole purpose is to introduce, teach and preserve the culture and language of African societies.

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University expressed its formal commitment to the implementation of a trilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa policy in 1997. According to Kaschula (2013), the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University now offers short courses in translation studies and has opened a Translation and Interpretation Office as part of the Department of Applied Language Studies in the Faculty of Arts. However, with the exception of English, mother tongue languages continue to be used for everyday informal communication.

Rhodes University announced its intention to retain English as the main medium of instruction in 2003, while making provisions for speakers of African languages that, in Rhodes policy objectives, the university commits itself to multilingualism and sensitivity to language use and choice, and recognises the academic viability and status of three official languages, namely Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. However, the dominant language of instruction still remains.

At the university of Fort Hare, English and isiXhosa languages have been chosen as the languages of communication and instruction and English has been maintained as the medium of instruction (University of Fort Hare

Language Policy). According to Alexander (2003), at the University of Fort Hare, their policy states that English is the medium of instruction in spite of having 83.8% isiXhosa speakers in the region (UFH Language Policy). Walter Sisulu University currently have a language policy but there is no implementation of it. These various language policies of the Eastern Cape universities show that their intention concerns the development of African languages as a media of teaching, learning and research in the distant future.

Literature Review

There are broadly three overlapping historical epochs in the teaching of, and in mother tongue languages in South Africa. Kaschula (2013) observed that the first linguists to work in this area were missionaries concerned only with creating orthographies for the purposes of publishing the Bible and converting people to Christianity". It is widely acknowledged that it is primarily the Christian missionaries who pioneered the transition of indigenous African languages from oral into written form in the early 1800s. In addition, Alexander (2004) observed that, African languages were utilised as initial media of instruction in the Mission-led schools for 'Africans' as a transition to English. Arguably, this could be regarded as the first formal teaching in mother tongue languages. The second historical epoch is the apartheid period when teaching in mother tongue languages was conducted by white scholars. However, it must be noted that from the first period of mercantilist Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, indigenous Khoi-San groups were expected to learn the language of the Dutch. By contrast, the new Dutch or Afrikaans speaking immigrants did not attempt to learn local languages. Thus, the tendency of using non-indigenous languages in learning institutions had a long period of establishment in South Africa.

It is largely agreeable that the active apartheid period of the 1950s witnessed the gradual rise of black lecturers who taught in mother tongue languages and their challenge was the institutional and political dislike of mother tongue languages. The reason why many higher learning institutions have recently promulgated language policy explains to the widely recognised use of English as an international medium of communication. At the same time, English and Afrikaans were promoted as the language of domination and exclusion during the apartheid era. Mother tongue lecturers were only recognized as teaching assistants which exhibited the political dislike of local indigenous languages. Formal workplaces demanded that one commanded a certain mastery of the colonial languages. Mother tongue lecturers had the dual challenge of lack of interest from their students as well as lack of political and institutional support from authorities. The apartheid era can thus be credited with much of the challenges which mother tongue lecturers face presently in South Africa.

The demise of apartheid saw a shift in language policies in many institutions of higher learning in South Africa as a whole. According Brink (2006), the process of achieving cultural and linguistic supremacy, more or less, continued

uninterrupted until 1976, when African school children in Soweto decisively rejected and revolted against the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools. With the unbanning of apartheid, there was recognition of African languages as academic disciplines and as a medium of instruction and communication. Mother tongue lecturers continue to face the dual challenge of ethnic and racial diversity in universities. For instance, a Sesotho lecturer may not successfully conduct lectures in Sesotho in a class where the majority of students are IsiXhosa or white, such is the case at the University of Fort Hare. This may create tensions because of the challenges of language competency or fluency. Alexander 2004, moreover claims that, there are no books written in these African languages which can be used at tertiary level. That is a huge challenge for mother tongue lecturers. After independence in 1994, Kaschula (2014) noted that,

“the teaching of apartheid-inherited pure linguistics courses continued, contributing to plummeting interest levels among students. The drop in student numbers has been part of a multifaceted process: the curriculum that is being taught and how it is being taught; the shift towards English as a global language; the attitude of students towards studying their mother tongue; and the trivialisation of the teaching of African languages in the schooling system, among other factors”.

At Rhodes University, mother tongue courses were abandoned in the 1990s. Part of the reasons was the plummeting of student numbers and the rationalisation process of South African Universities.

Language policies at higher learning institutions’ have always been a contested area in South Africa, (Kaschula 2014). Colonial and post-colonial South Africa bears a huge imprint of the imposition of Afrikaans and English on African societies, and consequently, higher learning institutions. The continued use of colonial languages in majority Xhosa speaking communities of the Eastern Cape poses many challenges to mother-tongue lecturers. Alexander (2004), argues that the value attached to these languages even by blacks themselves, undermines the survival of African languages. It appears, according to Ngugi (1994) that working on non-European languages may occasionally turn the scholar into somewhat of a demophobe, namely someone who shuns the masses and their language beliefs and practices. The majority of South African communities, especially in the Eastern Cape prefer English as a medium of communication. The desirability of English as the most important global language today has an effect on most Black learners in South Africa as a whole. This poses specific challenges which invariably include the gradual loss of what may be termed the original isiXhosa and linguistic supremacy. More so, the students tend to be more competent in English and not isiXhosa which is a challenge to mother tongue lecturers as it limits academic spaces critical for engagement. Painter (2007) argue that, despite the officialisation of isiXhosa and other African languages following the ushering in of the democratic dispensation in 1994 and the explicit promotion of multilingualism in the

language-in-education policy for public schools, African languages continue to have a Cinderella status in education. There is a growing tendency of many scholars despising isiXhosa and the background to this phenomenon can be traced to primary and secondary education where the language of instruction is English and Afrikaans. According to Paxton (2009), the inadequate use of indigenous African languages as medium of instruction at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions impedes the intellectualisation of African languages.

Conducting lectures at tertiary level in mother-tongue languages of isiXhosa thus becomes a good example of a language discontinuity. Peck (2008) postulates that, this makes prospects for an African language as an alternative medium of instruction at tertiary institutions appear very bleak, at least in the foreseeable future. While there are constitutional provisions for indigenous language policies, the South African government has not yet provided the human resources and physical resources needed to promote multilingualism. (Alexander 2003) Therefore, it is largely agreeable that, African languages appear to be under siege in tertiary institutions in spite of the commitment demonstrated by universities in their language policies. This poses challenges of motivating students by mother tongue lecturers. This is so because, historically, Africans are expected to master English and Afrikaans and the speakers of these languages are not expected to learn or study in African languages.

Kwesi (1998) noted that the language question in South Africa is one of the undigested features of post-Apartheid South Africa. The fact that African culture was more oral compared to the written cultures of the West put the African languages at a disadvantage. There is agreement among scholars, (Sibayan1999) that as a result of Apartheid education policies in South Africa, the Afrikaans language came to be generally identified by Africans as the language of oppression and English as the language of liberation, education and social improvement. Mother-tongue education, on the other hand, acquired negative connotations and was associated with segregation policies and backwardness Alexander (2003) in Kaschula (2013) observed that English remains one of the key barriers to educational success in South Africa. Lack of fluency in mother languages and the huge ethnic and racial divide in South Africa presents a huge challenge on mother tongue lecturers who have to resort to teaching in English. Importantly, the call to learn and teach in mother tongue languages seems to be influenced from outside of South Africa and not by the speakers of the languages themselves. This can be aptly explained by the diminished status of African languages. There is however, a growing awareness among many scholars and students on the need to promote indigenous languages in institutions of higher learning. The Afrikaans must fall movements and protests in many 'universities' of South Africa aptly explains this phenomenon.

Evaluation of Challenges faced by Mother Tongue Lecturers in the Eastern Cape

Mother tongue lecturers face huge challenges in the Eastern Cape Province owing to a number of challenges. These challenges can be traceable from the primary and secondary school phases where students are introduced to English or Afrikaans at the expense of IsiXhosa. Mother tongue lecturers are confronted with the reality of negative attitudes towards IsiXhosa. Although the Constitution of South Africa acknowledges the existence of 11 official languages, it would seem appropriate to argue that it is only a symbolic gesture. According to Alexander (2003):

“the South African government has not yet provided the human resources and physical resources needed to promote multilingualism. Practically speaking, English and Afrikaans still have a higher status than other languages”.

In the Eastern Cape Province, most African parents prefer English as a medium of instruction for their children in primary and secondary levels. The isiXhosa speaking parents who send their children to English-medium schools in the Eastern Cape contend that there are poor conditions of Xhosa schools (a legacy of Apartheid) and the lack of real support for the Xhosa language in education. Benson (2005) observed that little has changed in classroom practice since the end of Apartheid and parents appear to demand increased access to English rather than substitution of the mother tongue with English as a medium of instruction. This extends to tertiary education where students argue that competence in English will increase their chances of getting employment. It can further be argued that introducing IsiXhosa at tertiary level as a language of instruction is contradictory in view of the aforementioned. It has been argued by the ANC government that any student is free to study in the language of their choice. However, the practical implementation of this is not feasible in the foreseeable future since there are no books written in the indigenous languages and there is little enthusiasm among African home language speakers to use indigenous languages as medium of instruction. It seems, as Webb & Kembo-Sure (2000) argued, that English plays a major role in South African society as it is the main language of intra-national and international communication and it works as a sort of “access key” to upward mobility. There is a tendency to consider isiXhosa more appropriate to lower-status domains, such as peer group, family and community life. Mother tongue lecturers argue that it is difficult to teach in the mother-tongue due to the lack of isiXhosa terminology for technical and scientific subjects. Studying isiXhosa appears mainly for integrative reasons. In the different universities of the Eastern Cape, there is no clear definition of the role for isiXhosa as a language of teaching. Importantly, higher learning institutions set English proficiency and competency standards as pre-requisites for admission. This does not apply for IsiXhosa.

Mother tongue lecturers often face the daunting task of teaching indigenous languages using a foreign language, most notably English. Pludderman (1999) states that although the National Department of Education is promoting multi/bilingualism, it has not developed programmes and teaching materials to develop African languages. Teaching in mother languages often face constraints of resources, unavailability of reference materials, poor funding and human resources. Furthermore, the mother tongue lecturers are not trained for working in multilingual classrooms, neither are they competent with all four languages of the Eastern Cape. Universities in the province have a linguistically diverse student population, and there is a challenge of promoting mother tongue languages as a medium of instruction. To compound their challenges, Alexander (2003) argues that, there is no uniformity in measuring academic proficiency as languages are tested as first, second and third languages at higher, standard, and lower grade levels. Indigenous mother tongue languages like IsiXhosa are often ranked lower than English. There is agreement among scholars, (Madiba 2006, Alexander 2004, that, use of English is becoming a norm, with indigenous African languages being marginalised.

Methodology

This research was a concentrated case study on two Eastern Cape universities, Walter Sisulu (Mthatha and East London Campus) and the University of Fort Hare (Alice and East London campuses). The challenges, which these Universities face, is symptomatic in many higher learning institutions in the Eastern Cape. I selected these two universities as a former student of Fort Hare University (Alice campus) and as a current lecturer at Walter Sisulu University (East London campus). The Eastern Cape Province has four universities (Rhodes, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan, Fort Hare and Walter Sisulu).

Several research instruments were used:

- 1) A survey questionnaire submitted to students learning IsiXhosa and Communication studies
- 2) Semi-structured interviews with focus groups of students learning IsiXhosa and those not studying the language
- 3) Key-informant interviews with the mother tongue lecturers of these degree courses.

A total of 102 students and 12 lecturers participated in this study. The total enrolment of students enrolled in the faculty of African Languages in IsiXhosa at Walter Sisulu University (Mthatha and East London) is 139. Fort Hare University has 150 students. It should be noted that not all students enrolled in these institutions were interviewed. Questions were generalised in view of the case study. Certain information is self-reported in view of my involvement at the institutions. Findings, although representative, should be treated with caution.

Questionnaires were sent to respective faculties. All the procedures of the research were fully explained to the lecturers, parents and the students and the consequences thereof. Selected universities (Walter Sisulu and Fort Hare) taking part in the research were handed questionnaires sealed in a box. These boxes were dropped off at each of the faculties where the research was conducted, and the questionnaires were placed in the same boxes after the research was completed. Participants were told that the questionnaires were to be answered individually and that this process should take a month. To following is an example of the number of questionnaires allocated for each university for participation in the research.

Section A

Profile of participants

- a) Background of the lecturers.
- b) Which language does the lecturer (especially one who is Xhosa by birth) use mostly with colleagues?
- c) How long has the lecturer been in the lecturing profession?
- d) What program does the lecturer teach and for how long?
- e) At what level does the lecturer teach?
- f) Challenges which the lecturer encountered in lecturing isiXhosa?
- g) Which components of isiXhosa language are of serious concern in impeding the lecturing of isiXhosa?
- h) Does communication proficiency have any influence on the said challenges?
- i) Are there external factors that contribute to this challenge?
- j) Does the continuous change in the curriculum have any influence on the challenges encountered?
- k) What recommendations are there as regards the efficacy of isiXhosa in education?

Section B

- (a) Which language does the lecturer employ during the isiXhosa lesson?
- (b) What is the lecturer's opinion on isiXhosa as an official language as enshrined by the Constitution of South Africa?
- (c) What is the lecturer's opinion on the use of isiXhosa language in education?

Section C

- (a) Check the interest of lecturers in using isiXhosa language in all institutions including the former modern universities.
- (b) Advise the department of education to incorporate isiXhosa in all institutions of the higher learning.

- (c) Advise the department of education to set question papers in isiXhosa for level one.
- (d) Advise the universal counsellors to appeal to parents to encourage their children to speak isiXhosa at home and beyond.

Section D

- (a) Checking what advice and recommendations do lecturers have that can encourage the use of isiXhosa language by students, other lecturers and parents among themselves, at the university and at home.

Analysis of Each Question in the Questionnaire of the Lecturers

In the final analysis, answers from the lecturers from all the universities involved in the research are explored. To follow, is a table that shows the exact answers to each question in the questionnaire given to the lecturers.

Question 1

Qualifications:

A total of 9 lecturers who responded are Xhosa speaking, and have studied African languages, majoring in IsiXhosa up to Postgraduate level. They use mostly IsiXhosa for informal communication with their colleagues. However, they agreed to be using English for formal communication and academic correspondence. A total of 4 lecturers have been in the field for over 30 years and the remaining 5 have just passed 10 years in the field.

Table below shows profile of lecturers in the Department of African Studies

Question 2

Which language is mostly used in your area?

Table 1.

IsiXhosa	English	Other languages
70%	20%	10%

These results indicate that isiXhosa language is the most used language in their environment probably because the Buffalo City district where the study was conducted has 80% IsiXhosa speakers.

Question 3

Which language do you like best give reasons?

Table 2.

IsiXhosa	English
90%	10%

The above explains fully that most lecturers are proud about their mother-tongue (isiXhosa). They are also aware that for them to be proud of who they are, they need to be proud of their language for it defines them.

Question 4

Which other language other than isiXhosa are you able to speak?

Table 3.

English	Afrikaans	isiZulu	Sesotho Other / specify
80%	10%	10%	??

The above clearly indicates that all the lecturers can basically speak English, only a few of them can also speak Afrikaans because some chose not to study Afrikaans.

Question 5

Which language do you expect your students to be fluent in?

Table 4.

IsiXhosa	English	other/specify
70%	30%	

The above indicates that a number of lecturers would appreciate it if their children could be more fluent in isiXhosa than in English probably because they have fears of their children losing their identity.

Question 6

Which language would you prefer for your children to be educated in? And please support your statement.

Table 5.

IsiXhosa	English
30%	70%

Support your statement.

- a) To be able to communicate with the outside world

- b) It will be easy for them to master other subjects
- c) But isiXhosa has less vocabulary
- d) Not to lose their identity
- e) For them to be easily employed in the job market
- f) Examinations are written in English

This table demonstrates that quite a number of lecturers do feel that isiXhosa is important for their children so as to have value on who they are (identity). Using isiXhosa when setting examinations could also help their children understand clearly what is expected from them.

Section C

Question 6

What is your home language?

Eleven lecturers that took part in the research are indeed AmaXhosa. This, therefore, clearly indicates that the students who took part in the research are indeed isiXhosa language speakers (AmaXhosa).

Question 7

What is your second language?

Table7.

English	Afrikaans	Any other/specify
80%	20	-

This shows that English is the second language of all who took part in the research, which therefore means that it is English that has a great influence on code mixing which affects both lecturers and students alike.

Question 9

Which language or languages are used at home?

Many of the lecturers, as parents at home use isiXhosa when communicating with their families. This shows pride in their home language isiXhosa, though there are a few who used English at home when communicating with their children.

Question 10

Which languages are mostly used at the university where you are lecturing?

Table 8.

English	IsiXhosa	Other languages
70%	30%	-

English is the most used language in the local universities. It is evident that English is a dominant language used in the universities.

Question 11

Do students show much interest in learning isiXhosa or English at your university?

Question 12

Which language do you feel free to use when teaching?

Table 9.

Isixhosa	English	English & Xhosa
35%	25%	40%

This suggests that more lecturers prefer using both languages (isiXhosa and English) when lecturing. In some cases, this happens even when they are lecturing isiXhosa as a language, which also has an influence on the decline of the use of standard isiXhosa by the students.

Summary on Views of the Lecturers.

IsiXhosa is the most widely understood language by the lecturers as it is their mother-tongue, but they occasionally switch to English at times as the lesson progresses. These lecturers claim that this is due to the lack of literature of the isiXhosa language. Some lecturers maintain that some of them were not trained in isiXhosa at their training universities. The majority of lecturers admit that the use of mother-tongue plays a significant role when lecturing any program or subject as the students themselves are isiXhosa first language speakers, so for them to understand clearly what is explained to them, lecturers usually use isiXhosa for explanation.

The restricted role for the use of African languages (isiXhosa as regards this research) implies that it lacks the status of English. Smit (1998) maintains that, learners switch to other languages like English when communicating with other racial groups as they do not understand their mother-tongue. Many of the subjects at school are taught in English, or there is no Xhosa terminology for technical and scientific subjects.

Questionnaires Prepared for Students.

The researcher also prepared questionnaires for the students as explained at the beginning of the chapter. The following was explained to the respondents:

1. The procedure of the research.
2. The scope of the research including the quantitative aspect of the study.
3. Their freedom of asking questions and answering them. To follow are the general questions that guide the respondents.

Section A

(a) Background of the student

1. His/her level of study
2. Language used at home.
3. Medium of instruction.

Section B

1. Which language do they prefer at school for learning, for teaching them and to write examinations?
2. What challenges do they encounter when learning isiXhosa?
3. Reasons as to why they always mix isiXhosa with English when talking.
4. What are their recommendations to the department concerning the use of isiXhosa when learning, across subjects?

Section C

(h) How do they feel about the inclusion of isiXhosa as an official language in the Constitution of South Africa (1994)?

Analysis of Each Question in the Questionnaire of the Students

Included in this analysis are the answers given by the students from the different universities. The total number of questionnaires distributed to the different universities is 60.

The following table explains that.

Section A

Question 1

Home language

Table 11.

Isixhosa	Other/specify
100%	0%

The above table shows that all the respondents are indeed isiXhosa first language speakers.

Question 2

Which language is used for communication at home?

Table 12.

IsiXhosa	Mix isiXhosa and English	Other / specify
80%	20%	

Most of the respondents taking part in the research do speak pure isiXhosa at home, but some mix isiXhosa with English when communicating to each other. The remainder accounts for those who view as a global language that would be ideal at work.

Conclusion

The findings in this paper, though not very conclusive, paint an almost complete picture on the status of African languages in Eastern Cape Universities'. Important conclusions can be drawn from this research. The first one is the huge policy-practice contradictions in effecting transformation with respect to the use of African languages. Secondly, mother tongue lecturers are clearly caught between colonial and post-colonial conflicting historical epochs, socio-political and global trends that affect how languages can be used or are promoted. Pludderman (1999) argues that this is a “dilemma of choice versus compulsion”. In this case, compulsion refers specifically to the constitutional requirements for multi-lingualism, i.e. promote the use of African languages. In addition, ‘choice’ speaks of the right to use a language a student prefers. As the research has shown, most students prefer English. Thirdly, the status of IsiXhosa still remains not clearly defined within the language policies of most universities’. “Simply put, if isiXhosa cannot be used in higher education and the workplace, there are few incentives to learn it at school”.

References

Alexander, N. 2003. The African Renaissance and the use of African languages in tertiary education. PRAESA occasional papers. No. 13. Cape Town: PRAESA/ University of Cape Town.

Alexander, N. 2004. *The role of African universities in the intellectualisation of African Languages*. [Online} Available: <http://www.litnet.co.za/taaldebat/intellectualizationalexander.asp> [2007, 11 October].

Benson, C. 2005. *The importance of mother tongue-based schooling for educational quality*. Commission Study for EFA Global Monitoring Report.

- Brink, C. 2006. *No Lesser Place – The taaldebat at Stellenbosch*. Sun Press: AFRICAN SUN MEDIA. Stellenbosch. Language Policy for Higher Education. 2002. Ministry of Education.
- Department of Education. 2002. *Language Policy for Higher Education*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Kaschula, K, 2013. *Multilingual teaching and learning models at South African Universities: opportunities and challenges* African Language Studies Section, School of Languages, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 6140.
- Kaschula K 2014 Meaningful engagement: Towards a language right paradigm for effective language policy Implementation. South African
- Kwesi Kwaa Prah 1998 *Challenges of the Promotion of Indigenous Languages in South Africa*: The Center of Advanced Studies of African Society, Cape Town
- Madiba, M. 2006. *Mediums of instruction at Higher Education Institutions in South Africa*. Unpublished paper read at the Language Policy and Implementation in HEIs conference, UNISA, 5-6 October
- Phaahla, P, 2014. *Indigenous African Languages as Agents of Change in the Transformation of Higher Education Institutions in South Africa*: University of South Africa, South Africa. Nordic Journal of African Studies 23 (1): 31–56 (2014)
- Painter, D. 2007. *A new linguistic dispensation: language beyond the nation-state*. In JB du Toit & HC Viljoen (Eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Multilingualism in South Africa*. Stellenbosch, 8 March 2007. IMAG & TABEMA. 6-9.
- Paxton, MIJ. 2009. *‘It’s easy to learn when you using your home language but with English you need to start learning language before you get to the concept’*: bilingual concept development in an English medium university in South Africa. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 30(4):345-359.
- PECK, A. 2008. *A discourse analysis of narratives of identities and integration at the University of the Western Cape*. Unpublished MA dissertation, University of the Western Cape.
- Pludder P 1999 Multilingual and Education in South Africa: *One year on International Journal of Education Research*
- Sibayan, B. 1999. *The Intellectualization of Filipino*. Manila: The Linguistic Society of the Philippines. The development of indigenous African languages as mediums of instruction in Higher Education. 2005. Ministerial Committee’s report to the Minister of Education.
- Smit U 1998 “Who speaks like that? Accent recognition and Language Attitudes”. *South African Journal of Linguistic*, 14 (13), 100 -108
- South African Constitution 1996 Act no 108
- Towards a language plan for the University of Cape Town: 2005-2010. Report of the Task Team.
- Webb Vn & Kembo-Sure J (eds) 2000 *African Voices: An introduction to the languages and linguistics of Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press