MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA*

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INTRODUCTION

In his keynote address to the 1994 conference of the Southern African Association of Applied Linguistics, Adegbija (1994a) identified three problems faced by applied linguists in the African multilingual context. First, apart from the vibrant work in South Africa, there is very little focus on applied linguistic research in Africa, and what there is tends to focus on the ex-colonial languages rather than the indigenous languages. Second, applied linguists in African countries other than South Africa tend to have very limited research facilities. In some cases, teachers struggle to acquire the most basic resources such as typewriters and stationery. Third, political, social, and economic instability in many parts of Africa seriously undermines the work of applied linguists: A program of work begun in one political era can be summarily cut off in another.

For these reasons, much of the research that is covered in this chapter on southern Africa is drawn from South Africa. While we have sought to investigate recent applied linguistic research on multilingualism in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, most available research addresses the South African context. This does not point to a particular South African preference for applied linguistic research, but rather gives an indication of the size of the South African project and the daunting challenges currently faced by applied linguists in other parts of southern Africa. It also indicates the difficulty in obtaining material in other parts of southern Africa, particularly in Angola and Mozambique.

Recent research literature on multilingualism in southern Africa focuses on three main areas: education, sociolinguistics, and language policy. Our review will concentrate on these three areas. An initial, brief, overview of the history and demographics of the region will help to contextualize the discussion.

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HISTORY OF MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The current status of multilingualism in southern Africa is as complex as the social, economic, and political history of the region. Before European political and missionary engagement with the people of southern Africa, a richly nuanced linguistic situation prevailed: Political conquest and the advent of literacy suppressed the nuances. Flexible kinship groupings were interpreted as nations in the 19th century European understanding of the term, interpretations which increasingly affected self-understanding. Similarly, languages—from being varieties within a series of linguistic continua—were standardized in orthography and grammar. They became associated with national, and later (as that concept became uncomfortable for imperial ambitions) with tribal identity. As the modern map of southern Africa was drawn in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the European languages of English, Dutch (later Afrikaans), German, and Portuguese achieved a prominence greatly out of proportion to the number of mother-tongue speakers of these languages. Language policies and practices of colonial and neo-colonial governments reflected the priorities of the metropolis and ignored the multilingual realities of the region. Only with the gradual success of struggles for democracy and independence, beginning in the early sixties, did language practices come under careful scrutiny and revision by diverse interest groups.

At the time of independence, most countries in southern Africa inherited disparate ethnic communities—colonial boundaries had paid little heed to the pre-existing political order. Some African national leaders sought to achieve unity in their multilingual, multi-ethnic countries through innovative language policies. However, in all the countries of southern Africa, the ex-colonial language has served as at least one of the official languages of the country. English is an official language in all of the countries under consideration except Angola and Mozambique, where Portuguese has the equivalent status (Colombo 1996, Mesthrie 1995b, Webb 1994). Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, which have small populations (two million or less), with relatively high degrees of linguistic homogeneity, have had little difficulty deciding on a second official language: Tswana, Sotho, and Swati, respectively. In other countries in the region, however, language planning has been much more challenging (Chishimba 1991).

Angola (population 10 million) and Mozambique (population 17 million) both have Portuguese as the sole official language, although it is spoken as a mother tongue by about 1 percent of the population in both countries. [This explains our placing "lusophone"—and similarly "anglophone"—in quotation marks when referring to southern Africa. Portuguese and English are real enough resources, but they are decidedly minority languages.] After independence in Angola, six languages (Kikonga, Kimbundu, Umbundu, Cokwe, Ngangela, and Oshiwambo) were selected beside the official language (Portuguese) as "vehicular" languages of the new nation. In Mozambique, indigenous languages have little formal role (Hyltenstam and Stroud 1993:28).

Namibia (population one and a half million) has chosen English as the official language of the country, but 13 local languages have been given "national" status (Haacke 1994). Malawi (population 10 million), Zambia (population 9 million), and Zimbabwe (population 11 million), treated as a loose administrative unit in colonial days, are what Schmied (1996:307) calls "typical 'ESL' countries." In the absence of alternative language policies after independence from Britain, and despite the negligible number of mother tongue speakers, English has remained dominant in these countries, particularly in the urban areas. Chishimba (1991) argues that English has a particularly important role there because of its central role as a *lingua franca*. It is entrenched as one of two official languages in Malawi (the other being Chichewa) and is the sole official language in Zambia and Zimbabwe. The main mother tongues spoken in this regional entity include Chichewa (Malawi), Bemba and Nyanja (Zambia), and Shona and Ndebele (Zimbabwe). South Africa, with a population of approximately 44 million, has an unprecedented 11 official languages. Apart from Afrikaans and English, the official languages in apartheid South Africa, there are now nine Bantu languages with official status: four in the Nguni cluster (Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele), three in the Sotho cluster (North Sotho, South Sotho, Tswana), and two others, Tsonga and Venda. Webb (1994:272f) provides a more detailed sociolinguistic profile of South Africa.

The picture that emerges is one in which English has a particularly powerful status in the region, with a growing importance in the "lusophone" countries of Mozambique and Angola. Katupha (1994), for example, indicates that both Portuguese and English are used in national and external broadcasting programs in Mozambique, while Swilla (1992:509) notes that Mozambique has introduced the teaching of English in primary and secondary education. Mozambique, with only "anglophone" neighbors, has also joined the (British) Commonwealth. The history and role of English in southern Africa has generated much research and discussion (Lanham 1996, Ndebele 1987). Most recently, Barkhuizen and Gough (1996) urge locating discussion of the place of English in southern Africa within a broader understanding of the role of all languages in the region.

MULTILINGUALISM AND EDUCATION

Current research on multilingualism and education in southern Africa tends to focus on the following four areas: the medium of instruction in schools, teacher education, tertiary education, and adult literacy.

The medium of instruction in schools

The medium of instruction (MOI) in schools has always been a source of controversy in southern Africa (Adegbija 1994b). The 1976 Soweto riots in South Africa, in which thousands of black school children resisted the imposition of Afrikaans as a MOI in their schools, is a telling instance. At that time, English was the preferred MOI (Janks 1990). This trend continues today, not only in South Africa, but in other countries in the region. In "anglophone" southern Africa, English is the MOI in almost all secondary schools, and it is gradually introduced in

the primary phase. (The exceptions are Afrikaans medium schools in South Africa for black and white mother-tongue speakers of Afrikaans.) In Namibia, which also resisted the imposition of Afrikaans before independence (Cluver 1992:125), the Ministry of Education (quoted in Haacke 1994) has set the following goals:

> The 7 year primary cycle should enable learners to acquire reasonable competence in English, the official language, and be prepared for English medium instruction throughout the secondary cycle.
> Education should promote the language and cultural identity of learners through the use of Home Language medium at least in Grades 1 - 3, and the teaching of the Home Language (as subject) throughout formal education, provided the necessary resources are available (1994:241).

Harlech-Jones (1990) offers an unusually full account of planning considerations for the implementation of English as the MOI in Namibia.

This trend towards English as medium of instuction in southern Africa is reinforced by English being needed for university entrance. For example, in Zambia and Zimbabwe, every student entering the university must have a pass in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate in English (Schmied 1996), notwithstanding the conservative influence this form of assessment has had on school curricula (Allen 1994). In Swaziland, pupils need credit in English in order to pass from elementary to secondary school and from secondary school to the university (Kamwangamalu and Chisanga 1996). In South Africa, students need to pass a school-leaving examination in English as first or second language for entrance to the university (Peirce and Stein 1995).

Although there is a strong trend towards maintaining the power of English in the school systems in southern Africa, pedagogical and ethical questions are being raised about the efficacy of using English as a MOI in schools in which the vast majority of children have had little exposure to the language. Kashina (1994), for example, argues that from a pedagogical point of view, the use of English as MOI in Zambian schools is counter-productive. In his words, "A non-workable language in education naturally produces a bad educational system which, in its turn, produces bad administrators, technicians, teachers and so on" (1994:26).

The situation in Zambia reflects to a large extent the experience of other African countries in which stratification on linguistic lines is taking place (Akinnaso 1991, Emenyonu 1989, Rubagumya 1990). Furthermore, there is growing evidence in most countries in the region that government policy, which typically ignores or underestimates multilingual realities, is at a great remove from classroom practices which negotiate the situation. For example, Kamwangamalu and Chisanga (1996) record that, although the official MOI in schools in Swaziland after the first two years is English, Swati is used extensively along with English throughout the primary level, and to some extent in secondary school. The shortage of qualified English teachers is a complicating factor. Arthur (1994) documents classrooms in Botswana in which issues of pupils' abilities are greatly outweighed by those of

teacher competence because of inadequate command of the MOI. She argues that a bilingual model of education is preferable for learning and teaching as it allows both teachers and pupils to contribute fully. Hyltenstam and Stroud (1993) draw similar conclusions for Mozambique.

It is for these reasons that two interesting trends have emerged in the education system in South Africa, the last country in the region to gain independence. First, given the challenges that young black learners of English experience in the classroom (Macdonald 1990), there is increasing interest in the possibilities offered by taking seriously the multilingual repertoires that diverse students bring to the classroom. Research undertaken in Cape Town by Schlebusch (1994) documents the complexity of the school language situation in racially and linguistically mixed schools and sets out some of the issues to be considered by schools in establishing their own language policies. The collection of articles edited by Heugh, Siegruhn and Plüddemann (1995) could be described as a blueprint for multilingual education in South African schools. It provides examples of successful teaching/learning in multilingual classrooms and offers a coherent framework for the implementation of multilingual education in South Africa. Second, in the spirit of Ndebele's (1987) reservations about the dominance of English, there has also been an innovative trend to appropriate English in the interests of equality and democracy (Gardiner 1987, Janks 1990, Peirce 1989). In the same spirit, the influence of the Molteno Project in providing a "breakthrough" to English while enhancing mother-tongue proficiency is of particular note (Nuttall and Langhan in press, Walters 1996).

Teacher education

With change in the politics of countries, the demographics of communities and schools, and the resources available for schooling, classroom practices and teacher education in southern Africa have had to adapt. This is particularly true in South Africa, where the pace of change has been rapid. Ridge (1995) explores some of the reorientations teachers will have to make if they are to do justice to the democratic ideals of the country. Others report the effects of change on teacher-training courses, with teachers in training being prepared to manage large classes in multilingual, multicultural classrooms (Barkhuizen 1993, Murray and van der Mescht 1996, Young 1995).

Linguistic diversity in the classroom is increasingly seen as a strength rather than a weakness. In this spirit, Adendorff (1993) challenges the view that tolerance of codeswitching in classrooms implies a lowering of standards and demonstrates that it can enhance the learning and teaching process. Teachers, he suggests, can be guided to explore and appreciate the functions of the strategy, drawing on data sources that are readily available to them. With a view to efficient development of multilingualism, Baai (1992) argues that teachers must adapt a more communicative approach to the teaching of African languages, and teachers must be given more training in innovative second language teaching methods (see also Ridge 1994). Drawing on Canadian experience, Carey (1993) discusses the implications of transitional and immersion programs for a post-apartheid South Africa. From

another perspective, Janks (1991) introduces teachers to critical language awareness and its application to the classroom.

3. Tertiary education

Most tertiary educational institutions in southern Africa have a diverse, multilingual student population, but have English as the MOI. Portuguese is the medium in Angola and Mozambique, and Afrikaans is the medium in five of South Africa's 21 universities. Having a second or third language as MOI presents many challenges to educators who wish to promote students' critical engagement with the learning process (Morrison 1994).

In recent years, much research on multilingualism in tertiary education has addressed the dramatic changes in South Africa. During the apartheid era, universities were ethnically and racially divided, simplifying the complexity of language issues. The University of the Western Cape was originally intended to serve the so-called "colored" part of the black population, with both Afrikaans and English as media of instruction. This university defied state permit requirements and admitted all races from the mid-1980s, leading to increased linguistic diversity on the campus and a shift in practice to English, the common language, as MOI. Appropriate language policies are still being developed for this diverse student body (Volbrecht 1993).

At present, the historically white, English-medium universities in South Africa are experiencing significant challenges as their enrollment patterns change. The challenges also represent possibilities that are being investigated by both black and white scholars. Four black female scholars (Sebakwane, Lolwana, Ngqakayi and Mkhize 1993) examine the politics of exclusion and inclusion in such institutions. Chick (1995), from the University of Natal, explores the desegregation process ethnographically. Starfield (1994) describes how the University of Witwatersrand's academic support program has been transformed from a small, add-on program to a large one, integrated with students' content courses. Peirce and Stein (1995), working within the same institution, examine the challenges of developing alternative admissions procedures to increase access for students from language backgrounds other than English. Increased-access procedures are also a trend in other tertiary institutions such as the University of Cape Town (Yeld and Haeck 1993).

While much research in tertiary institutions in South Africa has focused on the challenges students face with English as MOI, there is also a growing interest in the teaching of African languages in the university context. Dowling and Maseko (1995) argue that up to the present time African Language Departments have taken only an academic view of the language debate in South Africa. They also argue that once schools are fully racially mixed, each child will be able to learn his or her first language as well as a recognized regional language. This means that university-trained teachers will be required to answer questions and manage classroom dynamics in at least two languages. In this spirit, multimedia African language-

learning materials developed by Nxumalo and Cioran (1997) are both innovative and timely.

4. Adult literacy

Bamgboṣe (1991:39) argues convincingly that literacy is essential to national development in Africa and suggests that educators in Africa should pay more attention to indigenous languages as an effective means of eradicating illiteracy. However, it is difficult to determine exact literacy levels in different countries of southern Africa: Data is limited and definitions of literacy vary greatly (see, for example, Lyster 1992). As a broad indication of the troublingly low levels of literacy in this region, we have constructed the following table from the *1996 Canadian Global Almanac* (Colombo 1996).

Table 1. Country and Percentage of Literate People in southern Africa

Angola:	43%	Namibia:	38%
Botswana:	72%	South Africa:	76%
Lesotho:	59%	Swaziland:	52%
Malawi:	22%	Zambia:	73%
Mozambique:	33%	Zimbabwe:	67%

Outside of South Africa, research on adult literacy has been limited (cf. Bhola 1992). In South Africa, the volume edited by Hutton (1992) reflects the diversity and complexity of this developing field: In this collection, French (1992) provides a comprehensive overview of the history of adult literacy in South Africa, highlighting the work of grassroots organizations, and Clifford and Kerfoot (1992) examine the central role of English literacy in South Africa. Apart from this academic collection, there are many research-based grassroots publications that address the adult literacy learner directly. The numerous publications produced by the South African Council of Higher Education (SACHED), ELP, USWE, and Learn and Teach are innovative and learner-centered. Furthermore, attempts are being made to develop national curricula for adult basic education, complete with assessment modules and teacher training (Kerfoot 1993).

MULTILINGUALISM AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH

There are many interesting articles that address the relationship between multilingualism and sociolinguistic research in southern Africa. (See the select bibliography in Cluver 1996 and the articles in Herbert 1992 and Mesthrie 1995b.) In this paper, we limit our discussion to the following three areas: languages in contact, gender and linguistic change, and language decline.

1. Languages in contact

When languages coexist in the same area, they are sometimes sealed off from one another, creating a cluster of unilingual situations. But when patterns of

life bring the speakers of different languages unavoidably together, as in "areas of linguistic confluence" (Gough 1994:11) and urban work environments, multilingualism can flourish. Mutasa (1993) explores general aspects of language contact in Zimbabwe, while Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995) describe the awareness of complex patterns of languages and values which is necessary for communicating across cultures in multilingual South African situations. When linguistic diversity is a real enough factor, and individuals must use two or more languages, speakers draw on the linguistic resources available to them, resulting in phenomena such as code-switching and the emergence or development of new forms of speech.

Pursuing the significance of codeswitching, Siatchitema (1991) examines language choice and language use in three neighborhoods in Lusaka, Zambia. She argues that the use of the mother tongue maintains the traditional status among members of the family, while switching to English signifies status that is independent of age, potentially undermining traditional relationships between children and parents. McCormick's (1995) research on codeswitching between varieties of English and Afrikaans in the District Six speech community in Cape Town highlights some of the theoretical challenges of determining criteria for classifying codeswitching, particularly if the boundaries between local dialects are unclear. Adendorff (1993) explores code-switching among Zulu-speaking teachers and pupils, and Peires (1994) among Xhosa-speaking students, showing the value it has for affective engagement, social contextualization, and learning. (See Kieswetter 1995 for further exploration of this theme.)

Multilingual situations sometimes also give birth to new forms of speech and even to fully fledged new languages. The development of Afrikaans is a well-researched example of the latter (Roberge 1995). Fanagalo, a basic language with Nguni foundations, also has a long history and has been expanded to written form, with its grammar described (Adendorff 1995). Its origins are disputed, but it seems to have emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a pidgin in domestic interaction between whites and blacks. In this century, it has achieved a higher status in the Witwatersrand gold mines in South Africa as an in-house means of transactional communication with and among migrant mineworkers brought together from a variety of language groups. Makoni (1995) argues for its official recognition, at least alongside the heritage languages. More recent language practices in the huge "township" city of Soweto in South Africa are explored by Ntshangase (1996). He contrasts Iscamtho and Tsotsitaal, new "languages" that cut across political and ethnic barriers promoted by the apartheid state, but that signal new social divides. Ribeiro (1996) analyzes the changes that Portuguese has undergone in Mozambique under the influence of Bantu languages, and he argues for a Mozambican standard as conducive to developing a richer national identity.

2. Gender and linguistic change

Interesting observations of gender and linguistic change are found in Herbert's (1992) edited collection. Kunene and Mulder (1992) document the extent to which Swazi cultural views about women are codified in the Swati language. The

authors argue that women in Swazi society are accorded a lower status than men and that these values are grammaticized in the Swati language. They point out, however, that increasingly positive cultural attitudes towards women are being reflected in the language, concluding that language can be both a progressive and a conservative force in a society. This latter theme is taken up in Herbert's (1992) research among the Thonga-speaking people in northern Zululand in South Africa. Herbert addresses the contradictory identities evident in this small group, isolated from the main Thonga community in Mozambique: In Kwazulu-Natal, they tend to identify with Zulu speakers, who control access to valued material and symbolic resources. However, Herbert notes (1992:13) that women, particularly older women, have resisted the shift from Thonga to Zulu on the grounds that women have a higher status in Thonga than in Zulu.

In more recent research, Finlayson (1995) documents interesting changes taking place in traditional linguistic practices of respect among Xhosa-speaking Nguni women and other Nguni women in South Africa. These practices are referred to as "isihlonipho sabafazi" ("the language of respect of women"), a term which refers to the custom whereby women are required to avoid using the names of members of their husbands' families. Finlayson argues that lifestyles in urban areas in South Africa today make it virtually impossible for this practice to survive. While the custom is still honored in rural communities, women are not ridiculed if they do not follow it. Finlayson concludes that, as the basis for a tradition changes, so does its linguistic corollary.

3. Language decline

Traill (1995) provides a comprehensive sociolinguistic overview of the Khoesan languages and their demise in southern Africa. Khoesan refers to three unrelated groups of languages spoken by the indigenous Khoe [more commonly spelled Khoi] and San populations. Traill documents the socio-historical conditions that have led to the decline and, in many cases, death of these languages. He notes that while there are remaining speakers of some of the Khoesan languages in Namibia and Botswana, the vitality of the languages is under constant threat. The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, passed by parliament, but not yet approved by the Constitutional Court at the time of writing, requires that the Khoi, Nama, and San languages, along with the official languages, be promoted by the state, and that conditions for their development and use be created.

Mesthrie (1995a) describes the survival and decline of the Indian languages in South Africa. Indian languages have been spoken in the country since the 1860's when colonial planters attracted indentured Indian labor to the sugar, tea, and coffee plantations in Natal. Over 150,000 laborers entered Natal from India between 1860 and 1911, speaking a range of languages including Tamil, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, and Telugu. Mesthrie notes that while Indian languages survived for decades under difficult circumstances, there has been a gradual decline in their use in more recent times. Census figures indicate, for example, that the number of people who identified Tamil as a home language have dropped steadily from 120,181 in 1951 to

4,103 in 1991. Mesthrie points to a significant language shift in which English, once used only in formal domains such as schools, has increasingly entered informal domains such as homes and neighborhoods. New ties with India in the post-apartheid era may be conducive to linguistic renewal.

Afrikaans enjoyed a position of privilege in apartheid South Africa. Its position, however, has changed in more recent times (Ridge 1996, Webb 1992). It is now only one of eleven official languages, with little of the international or commercial attraction and power of English. This situation has led to widely expressed fears for its survival and to aggressive movements for the defence and development of the language. Organizations such as *Vriende van Afrikaans* are pursuing social, political, and legal actions in defense of Afrikaans, and the subject is given ongoing attention in the Afrikaans media. An interesting consequence of the perceived threat has been the rapid acceptance and celebration of the whole Afrikaans speech community after decades when whites effectively eclipsed the black majority of Afrikaans speakers. The survival of Afrikaans is not in doubt. It is the mother tongue of about six million people, more than half of whom are not white. It is also the dominant language in the Western Cape province. A fully developed modern language with so established a position, and with a vigorous literature, a number of widely circulated newspapers and magazines, and a large extended community of second language speakers, cannot be considered significantly under threat at this stage.

More seriously threatened is the position of small indigenous minority languages in southern African countries (Mutasa 1995, Van Binsbergen 1994). Apart from the Khoesan group mentioned above, others such as Venda in South Africa; Tsonga in Mozambique and South Africa; Nyanja, Nampya, and Kalanga in Zimbabwe; and Ngoni in Malawi and Zambia have little institutional support. No matter what the state does to promote them, these languages are likely to decline unless strong movements for affirming them arise in their speech communities. Spolsky (1995) outlines conditions for "revitalization" of languages in decline. These conditions help analyze the position of small indigenous minority languages. Mutasa (1995), in reviewing the situation in Zimbabwe, argues that it is an obligation in multilingual societies to maintain the interests and needs of various cultural groups by providing for the growth of their languages. Apropos of Zaire, Kamwangamalu (1995) points out that mother-tongue education, an important means of affirmation, is often resisted by a speech community. It is more likely to be welcomed "if the material gains derived from the former colonial language…can be matched with visible or potential gains" deriving from using the mother tongue (1995:95).

MULTILINGUALISM, LANGUAGE POLICY, AND LANGUAGE PLANNING

There has been a major growth of interest in language policy and planning in the region, partly marking a new phase of decolonization (Bamgboṣe 1991, Chishimba 1991, Fardon and Furniss 1994), partly marking a new concern with language rights and how they can be exercised (Desai 1994, Katupha 1994, Mutasa 1995, Sachs 1994), and partly reflecting a new sense of multilingualism as a resource

rather than a problem (Alexander 1989, Heugh 1995, LANGTAG 1996, Luckett 1993, Schuring 1991). The *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (1994) included two chapters on language policy and planning in southern Africa: Haacke (1994) on Namibia, and Webb (1994) on South Africa. That pair of reviews is expanded further here with an additional set of references: Kamwangamalu and Chisanga (1996) explore the functions of English in Swaziland. Schmied (1996) examines English in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi. Mutasa (1995) surveys minority languages in Zimbabwe. Kashina (1994) analyzes the dilemma presented by Standard English in Zambia and van Binsbergen (1994) throws light on the plight of two minority languages, Nkoya in Zambia and Kalanga in Botswana. Mvula (1992) argues the case for status planning for Chichewa in Malawi. Finally, Katupha (1994) provides a critical survey of the language situation in Mozambique.

Given the pressing agenda of social and political change in South Africa, it is not surprising that language issues have enjoyed substantial attention from scholars and policy makers. Ridge (1996) offers the fullest recent case study of language policy and planning in South Africa. Events have, however, moved so fast in the two years since the manuscript was submitted that substantial updating is offered here. First, some recent scholarship should be noted: Reagan (1995) and Heugh (1995) review critically the options for policy and planning in South Africa. In regard to African languages, Maake (1994) and Msimang (1994) pick up Alexander's (1989) concern to enhance the status and use of African languages while seeking to reduce the Tower of Babel effect, perhaps by the "harmonisation" of the languages in the Nguni and Sotho groups into standard Nguni and standard Sotho. Msimang (1995) examines language policy in the provinces in South Africa. Benjamin (1994) and Desai (1994) explore language practices and equity concerns against a background of the reconstruction and development of South Africa. Hartshorne (1995) provides a useful review of the history of language policy in African (i.e., black South African) education so that the lessons of history can be learned after apartheid. Finally, Makoni (1993; 1995) critiques the presuppositions in much language planning in South Africa, pointing out the unacknowledged complexities of the language situation and examining the discursive constraints on addressing them.

South Africa has moved decisively away from colonial models and has espoused multilingualism as an asset for a democracy despite the practical difficulties of having eleven official languages. The approach is nonetheless pragmatic. In a full and authoritative account of language rights in the new constitution, Sachs (1994) describes rights and practicality as "mutually interacting concepts. The rights become meaningful to the extent that they are claimed in a reasonable fashion, and to the degree that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure their realization" (112). The South African constitution makers aimed "to construct a set of functional principles around the existing reality, rather than to attempt to subordinate the reality to a simple controlling principle" (Sachs 1994:105).

This inclusive approach and the championing of "additive bilingualism" arise both from academic thinking (for example, Alexander 1989, Heugh 1995, Luckett 1993, Ndebele 1987, NEPI 1992) and from broad consultation in a country

committed to surmounting its apartheid heritage. Since 1990, there have been major open conferences organized by the National Language Project (in 1991), the English Academy (in 1992), and the state-commissioned Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) (in 1996). There have also been extensive multi-party discussions and consultations in drafting the national constitution, as well as two broadly-based research projects involving hundreds of academics and the general public: the private National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), which reported in 1992, and LANGTAG, reporting in August 1996.

As the most recent project, LANGTAG was established in October 1995 to advise the South African Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on a language plan, and specifically to identify needs and priorities in implementing the language provisions of the constitution. The letter appointing the seven members of the main committee (LANGTAG 1996:1) reminds them of the following goals:

1. All South Africans should have access to all spheres of South African society by developing and maintaining a level of spoken and written language which is appropriate for a range of contexts in the official language(s) of their choice.
2. All South Africans should have access to the learning of languages other than their mother tongue.
3. The African languages, which have been disadvantaged by the linguicist policies of the past, should be developed and maintained.
4. Equitable and widespread language services should be established.

The task group was assisted by sub-committees in the following areas: language equity, development of the African languages, language as an economic resource, language in education, literacy, equitable and widespread language services, heritage languages and special language systems, and language in the public service. Each of these areas invited submissions and conducted regional workshops. The findings informed the reports, which, in their own turn, established the agenda for a widely advertized national conference in Pretoria in June 1996. At this conference the draft recommendations were presented and critiqued.

To ensure ongoing attention to the implementation and development of language policy a new statutory body, the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), has been appointed. The LANGTAG report will provide much of its early agenda.

CONCLUSION

Multilingualism is a fact of life in all southern African countries. What is at issue is the degree to which it is thwarted or developed, discounted or used, passed over or understood. Revived concern with the Organization of African Unity's 1986 *Language plan of action for Africa*, and a growing desire in many countries to move beyond the colonial heritage rather than to replace it, jointly favor a new interest in multilingualism and in the policies and practices being developed in the region. Pressing practical considerations also encourage this interest. Language policy

favoring the ex-colonial languages has denied effective political participation to most people in southern Africa. That situation cannot be sustained. Nor can a situation be sustained in which most citizens are unable to work as efficiently as they should because they cannot communicate properly in the workplace in either their own language or the ex-colonial language. From a multilingual perspective, each language available to the people of a country is a resource to be valued for what it offers. In pursuing that ideal, we do well to heed the reminder of Gough (1994) that multilingualism is an exceedingly complex phenomenon, not readily subject to the claims of rhetoric or to state fiat.

NOTES

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This book highlights the need for African indigenous languages to have greater prominence in national life. It provides an insightful analysis of the socio-historical foundations of current language attitudes in sub-Saharan Africa, and it suggests how research on language attitudes can inform language planning.

Bamgbose, A. 1991. *Language and the nation: The language question in sub-Saharan Africa.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

In this influential book, the author addresses a wide variety of linguistic problems related to language and society in sub-Saharan Africa. The author discusses the role of language in communication and national development, problems faced by the educational systems of multilingual countries, and the need for appropriate language policies and planning.

De Klerk, V. (ed.) 1996. *Varieties of English around the world: Focus on South Africa.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

This is a state-of-the-art collection on the history of English in South Africa, the varieties of English that exist, the problems of standardization given this diversity, and the relationship between English and education in the society. The focus on South Africa is complemented by a chapter on English in Swaziland and a chapter on English in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi.

Fardon, R. and G. Furniss. 1994. *African languages, development and the state.* London: Routledge.

The premise of this collection is that African language planning must be based on the researched facts of African life and not on preconceived ideas about the relationship between language, development, and the state. The section on central and southern Africa is of particular interest as it includes insightful papers by van Binsbergen on minority languages in Zambia and Botswana; Katupha on language use in Mozambique; and Benjamin and Maake on racial equality and language planning in South Africa.

Herbert, R. K. (ed.) 1992. *Language and society in Africa: The theory and practice of sociolinguistics.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

This interesting collection of articles addresses five areas pertaining to sociolinguistics in Africa: Language policy, language planning, the analysis of social interaction, applied sociolinguistics, and language and cultural studies. Case studies include the countries of Malawi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, and topics vary from codeswitching in Africa to South African sign language.

Heugh, K., A. Siegruhn, and P. Plüddemann (eds.) 1995. *Multilingual education for South Africa.* Johannesburg: Heinemann.

This collection of articles, firmly grounded in both theory and practice, is an exemplary text on the challenges and possibilities of multilingualism in South African education. Most of the contributors are South African educators who work in diverse sectors of the education system, including early childhood education, formal schooling, adult education, and teacher education.

Hyltenstam, K. and C. Stroud. 1993. *Final report and recommendations from the evaluation of teaching materials for lower primary education in Mozambique: Language issues.* Stockholm: Stockholm Institute of Education.

This report summarizes an investigation of linguistic issues carried out within a project, "Evaluation of Teaching Materials for Lower Primary Education." The project was initiated by the Mozambican Ministry of Education with the support of the Swedish International Development Agency. The studies on language questions were conducted from 1991 to

1992 and they represent an important contribution to understanding current practices in multilingual Mozambican classrooms.

Mesthrie, R. (ed.) 1995b. *Language and social history: Studies in South African sociolinguistics*. Cape Town: David Philip.

This is an excellent collection of articles that addresses a wide range of contemporary sociolinguistic issues in multilingual South Africa. The contributions, written by renowned South African scholars, deal with language contact; language loss; the formation of pidgins, creoles, and social dialects; and language policy and planning.

Schmied, J. 1991. *English in Africa: An introduction*. London: Longman.

This book offers a highly readable introduction to English in Africa within a broad sociolinguistic framework. The book addresses the following topics: The colonial inheritance, the sociolinguistic situation, language forms, English in education, English in African literature, the influence of English on African languages, attitudes towards English, language policy and the future of English in Africa, and problems of and perspectives on empirical research.

Southern African Applied Linguistics Association (ed.) 1995. *Constitutionally enshrined multilingualism: Challenges and responses*. Stellenbosch: SAALA. [Proceedings of the 15th Annual Conference of the Southern African Applied Linguistics Association, Stellenbosch, July 1995.]

This is an invaluable collection of papers that addresses the challenges and possibilities of official multilingualism in a changing South Africa. Papers in this volume address language policy, language teaching, assessment, translation, and academic development. Particularly notable are the papers by Pandor, an academic who is now a Member of Parliament, and Samuel, a senior official in the Department of Education in South Africa.

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