Introduction

Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai and Martha Qorro

This book is the sixth in a series of books from the LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project (Brock-Utne, et al. 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Qorro et al., 2008). This book reflects the project work done in 2008 and 2009 during the second phase of the LOITASA Project. We have decided that for the four books we have planned in this phase, the southern partners will be the first editors: Thus two books will be Qorro et al., and two, Desai et al.

LOITASA is a project which began in January 2002 and is funded by the Norwegian University Fund (NUFU). The first phase continued through 2006. At the end of that phase, we were granted a second round of funding (2007–2011). LOITASA is what, in donor circles, is known as a ‘South-South-North’ cooperation project which, in this case, involves research cooperation between South Africa, Tanzania and Norway.

The first phase of the LOITASA project consisted of two main parts: The first part included a description and analysis of current language policies and the implementation of the policies (see Desai, 2003; Brock-Utne 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Holmarsdottir, 2005) whilst the second part involved an experimental design dealing with the languages of instruction in South Africa and Tanzania. In South Africa, the empirical research involved a longitudinal study from Grades 4 to 6 at two schools in the Western Cape, with one class at each school being taught Science and Geography in isiXhosa and the other in English, the current medium of instruction. 2003 was the first of this longitudinal study and involved Grade 4 pupils. An isiXhosa-speaking staff member at UWC connected to the LOITASA project, Vuyokazi Nomlomo (2007), did research for her PhD on this part of the project. She obtained her PhD in 2007, the first year of
the new phase of the project. Her chapter in this volume interrogates her data more deeply from a conversational analysis perspective.

The Tanzanian part of the project was supposed to take place at secondary school level, since that is when Tanzanian pupils officially start using English as the medium of instruction. This part of the project was supposed to focus on Form 1 and Form 2 students with one class at each school being taught in Kiswahili and the other in English. These students were supposed to be taught through the medium of Kiswahili in Forms 1 and 2. However, the empirical part did not take place as planned since the then Minister of Education was unwilling to grant the necessary permission for the research to take place as originally planned. Instead, we had to conduct smaller experiments which could be done through research clearance from the University of Dar es Salaam. Two Tanzanian doctoral students, Mwajuma Vuzo (2007) and Halima Mwinsheikhe (2007), wrote their doctoral theses on these experiments. These two students also received their doctorates in 2007.

Most of the chapters in this book were first presented as papers at the LOITASA workshop held in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Cape from 4 to 6 May 2009. In the second phase of LOITASA, as in the first, we will have one workshop in Norway and the remaining three in South Africa and Tanzania. In the first phase, we had two workshops in Tanzania and two in South Africa, which resulted in books (Brock-Utne et al., 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006). The fifth workshop was in Norway in 2006 and took the form of a large conference, the LEA (Languages and Education in Africa) conference which involved five NUFU projects at the University of Oslo dealing with the language question in Africa. A book has been published from that conference edited by Brock-Utne and Skattum (2008). No workshop took place in 2007, as it was a year for summing up, for consolidation and for planning the new phase.

The first LOITASA workshop in the new phase was held at Oslo University in Norway from 30 April to 1 May 2008 and was followed by an international conference, IMPLAN (Implications of Language for Peace and Development), from 2 to 3 May 2009. This enabled LOITASA researchers to participate in both events. LOITASA Book 5 (Qorro et al., 2008) is based on this workshop. A collection of the papers presented at the IMPLAN conference has
been published (Brock-Utne and Garbo, 2009).

The chapters in this book are organised slightly differently from previous volumes. We have decided to group the chapters according to topics covered, rather than from a country perspective. Accordingly, the first four chapters deal with macro issues surrounding language in education in multilingual contexts. The first chapter by Fernando Rosa Ribeiro draws on the complexities of language in multilingual contexts such as Brazil, India and South Africa. He problematises the notions of ‘language’ and ‘standard variety’ and the inequalities such concepts lead to. At the same time, he makes the reader aware of the globalising influences which lead to a language like English playing the dominant role it does.

The next chapter by Solveig Maria Lehoczky Gulling is built on her Masters thesis at the UiO which deals with the marketisation of education (Gulling, 2009). Both her thesis and the chapter presented here seek to explain the effects on the education sector of the neo-liberal ideology which has been forced on the developing countries but embraced more willingly by the industrialised countries through the last decades. Gulling opens her chapter by remembering the time when she started her career as a teacher and teacher union activist in Norway at the beginning of the seventies. At that time, the development of the education sector was driven by state-focused, welfare-orientated movements trying to create an educational system based on increased equality and social citizenship. Those who implemented it, were the 1968 generation of teachers who came to think of school as an institution where democracy, cultural recognition and equal opportunity could serve as central principles (Jones et al., 2008). Thirty years later, the ideology driving development in general as well as in the education sector is driven by neo-liberalism. In Europe, these ideas are most clearly articulated by the European Union (EU) through their goal to become “the most competitive economy in the world” by reshaping the education systems in the EU countries to enable them to produce the “right” human capital (Hatcher, 2009). Countries in the south and the former Eastern Europe have been more influenced by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which have led to the weakening of public education. In her chapter, Gulling discusses
the factors that might have contributed to the development of the neo-liberal agenda, among them what she calls “the thought war”, which actively seeks to change our way of thinking, our common sense. One part of this “war” has been to repeat ideologically useful words in order to influence the political discussion in a special direction. Gulling uses a Critical Discourse Analysis approach in looking at this vocabulary. She focuses on words of special interest for the education sector.

Birgit Brock-Utne opens her chapter with a quote from Zubeida Desai who notes that her involvement at language policy level for over a decade and a half has taught her that technical experts can try to influence the process, but their success really depends on the amount of influence they have on the political actors. In the rest of the chapter, Brock-Utne struggles with questions like: What influences policy-makers? Why do Tanzanian policy-makers not change the language of instruction (LoI) policies when research findings show that these policies work to the detriment of the masses of Africans? Why do South-African policy-makers not bother about implementing the LoI policies which have been put in place? In her chapter, Brock-Utne first describes the current language of instruction policies of Tanzania and South Africa. She then analyses the policies as to how progressive and consistent they are. She looks at the implementation of the policies and asks where the two countries are now heading. Are there any signs that a research project like LOITASA, apart from producing books, academic theses and research results, has also had an impact on public opinion, has led to changes in policies, in the implementation of policies or the mindset of influential individuals?

In the last part of the chapter, Brock-Utne notes that the concept “power” seems to be the missing link in the analysis of language of instruction policies. She then uses this concept in an attempt to understand the complexity surrounding language of instruction policies in Tanzania and South Africa. She looks at the power of the donors and the power of the elites. She further uses the analysis of Michel Foucault (1975) of the link between power and knowledge. He claims that belief systems gain momentum (and hence power) as more people come to accept the particular views associated with that belief system as common knowledge. Lastly, Brock-Utne discusses the
Introduction

power of misconceptions and deals with the common misconception among lay people that the best way to learn a foreign language is to have it as a language of instruction.

In her chapter, Desai questions whether *laissez-faire* approaches to language in education policy can work in developing countries such as South Africa, where a diet of difference under apartheid led to huge inequalities in society. In such a context, choices lean towards homogenising approaches. The essence of the proposition made by Desai is that unless language in education policy decisions are top-down in South Africa, the legacies of the past will continue in the form of mainly English-medium instruction, despite progressive policies which encourage the use of mother-tongue education. Her starting premise is that the key to African language development is mother-tongue education. It is only when languages are used in high domains such as education that they will develop fully. Using initiatives launched by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) as the backdrop for this chapter, she proceeds to illustrate systematically how not much has changed in schools serving the poor in the Western Cape. Dismally low literacy rates are the order of the day. Decentralising decision-making to the school level has led to the status quo remaining: Very few schools opt to extend isiXhosa, the local African language, as a medium beyond Grade 3. Moreover those who indeed choose to do so complain about the lack of textbooks in isiXhosa as publishers are not prepared to produce materials in isiXhosa if there is not a sufficient demand. She concludes by interrogating notions of multilingualism currently in vogue and questions whether linguistic practices from “below” can change power dynamics in unequal societies such as in South Africa.

The next three chapters focus on research and intervention projects in South Africa. In her chapter, Tessa Dowling addresses the important issue of the teaching of African languages as second languages. In an interesting chapter provocatively titled *Taught Language or Talked Language?* Dowling examines the problem of which language varieties to use when teaching African languages. Do we teach colloquial African language varieties or do we insist on teaching standard varieties that are sometimes not even understood by native African language speakers? In addressing these questions,
she makes reference to the new *IsiXhosa Intensive Course* currently offered by her at the University of Cape Town. The new course mixes slang, colloquial Xhosa and standard isiXhosa by introducing a set of characters who make use of these different language varieties. Students are thus able to see that a language can be as dynamic and different as the diverse population that speaks it. Part of the problem (and pleasure) of learning a language is the realisation that it cannot be learnt in isolation from its most talkative speech communities. This chapter should be useful to second language teachers of any language.

Vuyokazi Nomlomo's chapter discusses the relationship between the language used in teaching and learning in relation to turn-taking as a teacher-learner interaction technique in classroom discourse. Through the lens of Conversational Analysis (CA), her chapter explores how the language of instruction influences turn-taking in terms of turn-allocation and self-selection in the classroom, with special reference to Grade 4 science lessons taught through the medium of English and an indigenous language (isiXhosa) in a Western Cape primary school in South Africa. She argues that while the learners’ home language facilitates teacher-learner interaction and better understanding of subject content, it does not necessarily promote learner-centred teaching approaches as required by the new outcomes-based curriculum. While acknowledging the role of the different interactional units underpinning classroom interaction, the chapter concludes that sociocultural factors also play a significant role in understanding turn-taking in classroom interaction.

Greta Gudmundsdottir focuses on the implications of language when implementing information and communication technology (ICT) in three classrooms in the Western Cape, South Africa. She poses an interesting question which has been much under discussion – Does the use of ICT narrow the divide between rich and poor learners? The answer, as her research shows, is not a simple one, even in a fairly developed country such as South Africa. There is a tendency to equate ICT with computer literacy. Gudmundsdottir’s focus, however, is not only on the number of computers and the size of the bandwidth, or as Warschauer (2003) refers to it, “physical resources”, but also on “human resources”; that is the potential of the use of ICT to further the literacy and cognitive development of learners.
Her study focuses on three quite different primary schools in the Western Cape. It is not surprising to note that ICT use is most advanced at the school where physical, digital, human and social resources (Warschauer, 2003) are present. There is a clear correlation between learners’ and teachers’ mother tongues and ICT use. Where the teachers’ and learners’ language coincide with the language of instruction, greater use is made of ICT for the purposes of learning. Gudmundsdottir argues that the use of technology needs to be culturally appropriate for users to take best advantage of it. Education users and the state departments need to move beyond the “physical resources” aspect for ICT use to be owned by people if we are serious about narrowing the divide between rich and poor learners.

The remaining seven chapters focus on ongoing research in Tanzania on the language of instruction. Five of the chapters deal with the primary school sector while the last two focus on the use of Kiswahili in higher education.

Martha Qorro in her chapter undertakes a critical evaluation of selected textbooks used in teaching Grade 6 in mathematics, Kiswahili and English in the Kiswahili and English-medium primary schools in Tanzania selected for the second phase of LOITASA. The chapter describes the process of evaluation, taking into account the appropriateness and relevance of the said textbooks. It also analyses the question of appropriateness in terms of the linguistic level of difficulty of the textbooks (readability) in relation to pupils’ level of understanding as well as the textbooks they used in the previous year. The chapter also looks at the organisation or presentation of content and the way topics have been sequenced as well as the use or non-use of illustrations and how these affect pupils’ interest and their attraction to the books. The relevance of textbooks in terms of how the content relates to the curriculum and the extent to which they are appropriate in the Tanzanian context is also examined.

Four of the following six chapters are built on research carried out in the primary schools chosen for the second phase of the LOITASA project in Tanzania. Some of the schools are in Dar es Salaam and some in Morogoro. The research reported on here concerns the Dar es Salaam sites only and the early part of the project before the intervention by the LOITASA team had taken effect. Jane Bakahwemama has looked at the difference in achievement of
learners in the Kiswahili-medium government and the English-medium private primary schools in Tanzania. The study showed that the academic performance of pupils in the private primary school was generally better than the academic performance in the public primary school chosen for this study in Dar es Salaam.

The generally higher performance of pupils in the private primary school was associated with them having qualified, committed, sufficiently paid and motivated teachers as well as adequate teaching and learning materials. Other factors were small class size, provision of sufficient classroom exercises, home assignments and feedback as well as more learning opportunities in the form of private tuition. The parents of the children in private schools also used considerable time with their children to go through homework exercises. Bakahwemama concluded that in order for public primary schools to be successful, there is a need to improve teachers' working and living conditions and to provide the schools with adequate teaching and learning materials.

Bakahwemama found that there is a need for conducting in-service training, seminars and workshops for public school teachers to strengthen their existing knowledge and skills.

In the following chapter, Julitha Cecilia John, who has visited the same schools in the Dar es Salaam region, asks the question: What is the difference in the quality of education provided by Government and Private Primary schools in Tanzania? Through extensive interviewing and also by following the newspaper debate on the quality of education, John found that for lay people, English is not only a medium through which education can be accessed, but it is equated with quality education itself. Furthermore, people believe that without English, the education offered cannot meet international standards. People confuse quality of education with English proficiency and decide to take their children to PPS which use English as LoI. They would rather leave their children to be taught in poor English than to be taught in Kiswahili, a language they know well. In the long run, children end up with the ability to neither speak English nor acquire education, as the teachers in these schools are not very competent in the English language themselves. The teachers in PPS have the same qualifications and have gone through the same Teachers' Training Colleges as those in
GPS. People believe that the best way to learn English is to have it as the language of instruction.

Mwajuma Vuzo has made a comparative appraisal of teaching and learning resources in some private and government primary schools in Tanzania. Vuzo mentions that there is a perception that students attending privately-owned English medium of instruction primary schools tend to perform better than those in government-owned Kiswahili medium of instruction primary schools. Most of the private schools have far better teaching and learning facilities than the government schools. There are, however, some primary schools that do not have much difference in teaching and learning resources compared to government primary schools. Hence, Vuzo saw the need for the survey research she reports on in this chapter. The objectives of the study were to establish the teaching and learning resources available in both private and government primary schools. This was in order to provide an account of the resources that need to be provided in either private or government primary schools chosen to be part of the LOITASA project so that there is equality in the provision of education and the only difference is related to the language of instruction used in these schools.

Questionnaires, interviews and an observation checklist were the main data gathering techniques employed in this survey. The findings revealed that there are differences in the teaching and learning resources such that in English-medium primary schools, there were many more than those in government primary schools. It was further noted that these teaching and learning resources could send wrong signals to parents who assume that their children are getting quality education in relation to the use of English as the language of instruction. Vuzo recommends that selected government primary schools that are part of the LOITASA study should be stocked with teaching and learning resources to a similar level to that of selected private primary schools and the teaching and learning is observed and further evaluation is made on the students’ performance in these schools.

In her chapter, Zehlia Babaci-Wilhite poses the question: Why is the choice of the language of instruction in which students learn best seldom made in Tanzania? In order to find an answer to this question Babaci-Wilhite interviewed parents as well as policy-
Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai and Martha Qorro

makers. One of the important findings from her study is that parental decisions between public and private schools and between Kiswahili and English are made on the basis of insufficient information about the learning implications of their choices. Babaci-Wilhite sees it as essential that the government provides better information on the role of language in learning and on the advantages of Kiswahili as a LoI. When Babaci-Wilhite confronted government officials with this view, they responded that it should be the parents’ responsibility to seek out this information, and that the government had to respect parental choices, since Tanzania is a democracy. Based on Babaci-Wilhite’s results, the problem is, however, that there is a misunderstanding among parents about language and learning. They believe that having English as the LoI will improve students’ learning abilities and their opportunities in life. The myth has to be deflated in order for parents to make informed choices. The growth in private schools is partly due to the strength of this myth, whereas in truth, a great deal of the success of private schools has to do with greater access to resources compared with government schools.

Babaci-Wilhite sees that with the prevailing attitudes among parents as well as government officials, it will take time for the government to put a system into place to develop Kiswahili as a LoI in secondary and tertiary education. A sustainable investment should be made in Kiswahili as the LoI in secondary school and the performance of students monitored in order to assess whether they perform better at school.

Torill Aagot Halvorsen has looked at the ICT influence on the choice of language in Higher Education in Tanzania. The project presented in this chapter focuses on the Tanzanian elite: The staff and students at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). As the participants at the LEA conference in Oslo in June 2006 agreed upon, while the elite in African countries are part of the problem when it comes to changing the language of instruction to a familiar African language, they are at the same time a part of the solution to this problem (Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009).

This chapter illuminates the connection between new technologies and the choices being made in deciding which language students are to be taught in. Firstly, the chapter presents Halvorsen’s ongoing project run by the University of Oslo and the University of Dar
es Salaam which spans a period from 2008 to 2012. Secondly, the preliminary findings from fieldwork conducted at the UDSM from October 2008 to January 2009 are described. Finally, some reflections sum up the elucidated findings.

The last chapter in this book is written by Birgit Brock-Utne and Azaveli Lwaitama. It builds on a paper that the two authors presented at a conference on Philosophy in East Africa. The conference was held at the University of Dar es Salaam from 18 to 20 November 2009 and coincided with the UNESCO World Philosophy Day on 19 November 2009. In the chapter, the two authors draw on their experiences relating to their familiarity with aspects of the philosophy of education in Tanzania. They want to share with the reader their conceptions of what they consider to be the kind of African Philosophy that ought to guide the provision of Education for All in East Africa.

The chapter explores the meaning of African Philosophy and how best such a philosophy can be taught in East African institutions of higher learning, including, eventually, through the medium of Kiswahili. Also discussed are the experiences of introducing elements of the teaching of Philosophy through the medium of Kiswahili at the then Makumira Lutheran Seminary in Arusha, Northern Tanzania and at the Roman Catholic Church’s seminary known as the Salvatorian Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Morogoro, Central Tanzania. Furthermore, the philosophical underpinnings of justice administration in post-colonial Tanzania are discussed in light of insights from the philosophy of law gained from a recent critical discourse analysis study of judgements on land cases dating back to the ujamaa philosophy era.

In conclusion, East African Universities, together with universities in countries like Finland, Sweden and Norway, which have often supported them in their efforts to indigenise intellectual discourse, are urged to redouble their efforts in studying indigenous systems and remnant artefacts of traditional African wisdom, of the kind, for instance, that the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere drew upon in articulating the concept of Ujamaa, the essence of African socialism or ubuntu.

This book is edited by Zubeida Desai who is the South African project leader of LOITASA, Martha Qorro, who is on the steering
committee of the LOITASA project in Tanzania and Birgit Brock-Utne, who is the Norwegian project leader of LOITASA. Each chapter has been read and edited by at least two of us. In cases where we have been in doubt whether to include a chapter or not, all three editors have read it and taken a unanimous decision. Most of the chapters have been sent back to the authors for clarification. We have shortened some of the chapters to avoid repetition and to create a publication that we hope will be an interesting book with chapters that complement each other rather than a collection of unrelated articles. We have kept the references behind each chapter rather than gathering them all in the back. We have done this as we are aware of the fact that some students of African languages might be more interested in one chapter than in another. The final editing was done by all three of us during a week in Gordon’s Bay, South Africa in September 2009.

References


Teachers’ and Students’ Strategies in Coping with the English/Kiswahili Dilemma in the Teaching/Learning Process. PhD dissertation. University of Oslo: Faculty of Education.


