

On Not Taking Language Inequality for Granted: Hymesian Traces in Ethnographic Monitoring of South Africa's Multilingual Language Policy

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South African higher education is at a critical juncture in the implementation of South Africa's multilingual language policy promoting institutional status for nine African languages, English and Afrikaans. Drawing on more than a decade of short-term ethnographic work in South Africa, I recently engaged in participant-observation and dialogue with faculty, administrators, undergraduate and post-graduate students at the University of Limpopo and the University of KwaZulu-Natal to jointly assess current implementation and identify next steps and strategies for achieving truly multilingual teaching, learning and research. Concurring with Hymes that ethnographic monitoring of programs can be of great importance with regard to educational success and political consequences, I undertook my work from a collaborative stance, in which the participants and I jointly sought to describe and analyze current communicative conduct, uncover emergent patterns and meanings in program implementation, and evaluate the program and policy in terms of social meanings (Hymes, 1980). Hymes often reminded applied and educational linguists that despite the potential equality of all languages, differences in language and language use too often become a basis for social discrimination and actual inequality. While scholars may take these insights for granted after decades of scholarship, we nevertheless have our work cut out in raising critical language awareness in education and society more broadly. "We must never take for granted that what we take for granted is known to others" (Hymes, 1992, p. 3). Ethnographic monitoring in education offers one means toward *not* taking language inequality for granted.

Introduction

South African higher education is at a critical juncture in the implementation of South Africa's multilingual language policy promoting institutional status for nine African languages, English and Afrikaans (van der Walt, 2004). Drawing on more than a decade of short-term ethnographic work in South Africa, I recently engaged in participant-observation and dialogue with faculty, administrators, undergraduate and post-graduate students in two institutions of higher education there, at their invitation, to jointly assess current implementation and identify next steps and strategies for achieving truly multilingual teaching, learning and research. Concurring with Hymes that ethnographic monitoring of programs can be of great importance with regard to educational success and

political consequences, I undertook my work from a collaborative ethnographic stance, in which the participants and I jointly sought to describe and analyze current communicative conduct, uncover emergent patterns and meanings in program implementation, and evaluate the program and policy in terms of social meanings (Hymes, 1980).

In this paper, I undertake to explore two related sets of questions emerging from these experiences: 1) How does an ethnographer consult internationally on language education policy? Can this effort be ethnography? Does ethnographic monitoring offer an option? and 2) How is post-apartheid South Africa's multilingual language policy affecting Black African learners' academic opportunities? Can South Africa's multilingual language policy move beyond a seemingly two-steps forward, three-steps back pattern? Can ethnographic monitoring yield some answers toward that end? In what follows, I first provide a very brief background on South Africa's post-apartheid multilingual language policy, on Hymes' proposal for ethnographic monitoring, and on the methodological toolkit, conceptual repertoire, and knowledge of the South African context I brought to these ethnographic monitoring experiences. The body of the paper takes up the two very different cases, at the University of Limpopo in 2008 and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2010, respectively, in search of tentative answers to the questions.

South Africa's multilingual language policy (MLP)

Post-apartheid South Africa's Constitution of 1993 embraces language as a basic human right and multilingualism as a national resource, raising nine major African languages to national official status alongside English and Afrikaans—specifically, isiNdebele, Northern seSotho, Southern seSotho, SiSwati, xiTsonga, seTswana, TsiVenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. Along with the dismantling of the apartheid educational system, this has led to the burgeoning of multilingual, multicultural student populations in schools, classrooms, and universities nationwide.

While the federal government has invested institutional resources to implement the policy, including a national language planning board, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), and individual language planning bodies for each official language (PanSALB, 2001; Perry, 2004), it has become evident that there is huge variation in policy implementation across provinces, with some provinces such as the Western Cape being very proactive and others less so (Plüddemann, Mati, & Mahlalela-Thusi, 2000; Plüddemann, Braam, Broeder, Extra, & October, 2004). The policy, its promise and its challenges have drawn considerable scholarly attention from within and outside South Africa (Alexander, 1995; Bloch, 2009; Bloch & Alexander, 2003; Chick, 2003; Chick & McKay, 2001; de Klerk, 2000; Finlayson & Madiba, 2002; Granville et al., 1998; Heugh, 2003; Heugh, Siegruhn, & Plüddemann, 1995; Hornberger, 2002; Kamwangamalu, 1997, 1998; Stroud, 2001; Webb, 1999, 2002, 2004; Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2009). The policy and its implementation in education in particular are not without controversy, with scholars observing for example that the national educational policy contradicts the language policy in significant ways (Finlayson & Slabbert, 2004; Heugh, 2003, 2004) and others documenting and critiquing the rush to English-medium schools by African parents (e.g., Alexander, 2000; Banda, 2000; Granville et al., 1998; Hornberger, 2002; Hornberger & Vaish, 2009; Probyn, 2001; Ridge, 2004).

Not content to merely comment from the sidelines, numerous and eminent South African scholars have also engaged directly in implementation efforts at all levels of the education system. While complex issues continue to be identified and addressed in primary and secondary education, there has also been increased attention in recent years to policy implementation at the university level (Ndimande, 2004; van der Walt, 2004, forthcoming; van der Walt & Brink, 2005), as exemplified by the institutional programs I discuss below. The cases I explore here are higher education initiatives largely or entirely undertaken by scholars, focusing explicitly on the use of African languages in institutions where English is already well established as medium of instruction, and with explicit goals of righting South Africa's longstanding social injustices.

Hymes' ethnographic monitoring

Writing three decades ago with respect to U.S. bilingual education policy and programs, Hymes posits that ethnographic monitoring of programs can be of great importance with regard to documenting and furthering both the educational success and political consequences of the programs. He discusses three overriding purposes and activities of ethnographic monitoring, which I summarize as: 1) describe and analyze current communicative conduct in programs, 2) uncover emergent patterns and meanings in program implementation, and 3) evaluate the program and policy in terms of social meanings, specifically with regard to countering educational inequities and advancing social justice.

Regarding the first, descriptive, purpose, Hymes proposes that one has to recognize and interpret accurately students' and teachers' communicative conduct "in order to know what one wishes to change" (Hymes, 1980, p. 107); and he suggests this encompasses both rules of language and rules of language use, offering as examples practices around language mixing and enforcement of linguistic norms (Hymes, 1980, pp. 108-112). Consistent with his seminal writings on the ethnography of communication and communicative competence (Hymes, 1968, 1972, 1974), he further argues that it is the functions of language that are fundamental, while language forms are primarily instrumental. Thus, one has to discover not just "what varieties of language are in use, when and where and by whom, what features of language vary according to what parameters" but also "what varieties of language, features of language are being used *for* and to what effect" (Hymes, 1980, p. 113).

Moving to the more analytical and evaluative second and third purposes of ethnographic monitoring, Hymes urges ethnographic monitors to ask what is said about the program and about those who succeed or do less well; and what is presupposed in what is said. Examining emergent patterns and meanings in program implementation, one might uncover, for example, that a student who does poorly is considered stupid, or that students from a particular class or neighborhood or kind of family consistently do well, while others consistently do poorly (Hymes, 1980, p. 114).

Once these patterns and meanings are uncovered in the ongoing operation of programs, the third purpose of ethnographic monitoring turns the lens to outcomes—evaluating the effects and consequences of the program and of the policy as a whole. Here both educational success as measured by student outcomes and political consequences of the program in terms of advancing equity are of

interest. Observing that schools have implicitly functioned to define some people as inferior and that they do so on the “seemingly neutral ground of language,” whereas “bilingual education challenges the very fabric of schooling insofar as it adheres to the goal of overcoming linguistic inequality by changing what happens in schools themselves” (Hymes, 1980, pp. 110-111), Hymes foretold that in a few years the charge would likely be made that U.S. bilingual education had failed, with arguments being formulated along lines of both educational success and political consequences.

The clairvoyance and generalizability of Hymes’ observations are startling; what he wrote in the late 1970s in connection with critiques of U.S. bilingual education is equally relevant today for multilingual language policy in South Africa (and for language education policy in many other parts of the world). But he does not stop there. He offers a remedy—ethnographic monitoring of programs, he says, can be of great importance in countering such criticisms (Hymes, 1980, p. 116). In prescient anticipation of what would come to be an intractable problem in bilingual education program evaluation, he writes: “An evaluation in terms of gross numbers can only guess at what produced the numbers, and indeed, can only guess as to whether its numbers were obtained with measures appropriate to what is being evaluated” (Hymes, 1980, p. 115); but he goes on to suggest that “the ethnographic approach can go beyond tests and surveys to document and interpret the social meaning of success and failure to bilingual education” (p. 117). Via ethnography, the “circumstances and characteristics of successful results can be documented in ways that carry conviction” (p. 116).

What is more, he suggests that ethnography can also provide illumination as to the politics underlying arguments against bilingual education:

To argue that bilingualism is divisive is really to argue that it makes visible what one had preferred to ignore, an unequal distribution of rights and benefits. It is common to call ‘political’ and ‘divisive’ the raising of an issue that one had been able to ignore, and to ignore the political and oppressive implications of ignoring it. (p. 117)

Ethnographic monitoring, though, makes it impossible to ignore the unequal distribution of rights and benefits that is truly divisive in multilingual contexts, and to which multilingualism and multilingual education are creative responses (Haugen, 1973).

Finally, Hymes suggests that ethnographic monitoring need not and should not be the isolated task of the ethnographer, but rather can and should be undertaken in cooperation with program participants, who have the firmest understanding of the program’s operation, its challenges and successes. Van der Aa & Blommaert (2011) review Hymes et al.’s 1981 report on a three-year ethnographic monitoring project in Philadelphia’s public schools, emphasizing that Hymes “proposes a continuing mutual inquiry, not just ‘reporting back,’ because intensive and genuine co-operation is at the heart of ethnographic monitoring” (p. 324). They emphasize the report’s insistence on making “findings the possession of the school people who have contributed to their discovery” (Hymes et al., 1981, p. 6); and they underline, as did Hymes, that this is not just a matter of courtesy, but of good research method (p. 10).

Working very much in the ethnographer's favor for a collaborative ethnographic monitoring effort is the fact that ethnography is, in one sense, very accessible. Hymes saw the skills of the ethnographer as an extension of what humans normally do to:

learn the meanings, norms, and patterns of a way of life....The fact that good ethnography entails trust and confidence, that it requires some narrative accounting, and that it is an extension of a universal form of personal knowledge, make me think that ethnography is peculiarly appropriate to a democratic society. (Hymes, 1980, p. 98-99)

At the same time, ethnography is not simply a fieldwork method, but a methodological and conceptual paradigm. Blommaert (2009) has written eloquently about this, highlighting first that ethnography has always been about theory and not just method, that it "contains ontologies, methodologies, and epistemologies" (Blommaert, 2009, p. 262); and second that Hymes' work stands out for rescuing this history and advancing ethnography as descriptive theory. In differentiating between a linguistic notion of language and an ethnographic notion of speech, Hymes offers a theoretical perspective on language and communication that is essentially critical and counterhegemonic, in search of a complexifying rather than a simplifying description and analysis of social reality (Blommaert, 2009, p. 267).

What I have to offer as international consultant

In the South African cases I explore here, the nature of my task readily lent itself to collaboration. At both institutions, I was there at the invitation of colleagues and was expected to meet with a broad range of participants; to define my work as ethnographic and collaborative suited both their goals and mine. They are the experts and I am the outside facilitator, who brings eyes, ears, and experience in language education policy in multilingual contexts.

My ethnographic toolkit comprises chiefly skills and practice in systematic participant observation, interview, and document collection; in the means of recording these through fieldnotes, audio recording, and photography; and in analyzing and writing up findings in narrative accounts and reports that go back to my hosts/ collaborators, including joint authoring with participants. Many years of practice in multilingual learning contexts have given me a practiced eye and a fund of stories from other contexts—stories that prove welcome as participants encounter formidable challenges or recount their experiences in the present context.

The other two pieces of my Hymesian ethnographic toolkit are the etic 1-emic-etic 2 dialectic principle—"the dialectic in which theoretical frameworks are employed to describe and discover systems, and such discoveries in turn change the frameworks" (Pike, as cited in Hymes, 1990, p. 421); and the need for "concrete, yet comparative, cumulative, yet critical" ethnographic study of language use (Hymes, 1996, p. 63; see also McCarty, Collins, & Hopson, 2011). For these I draw also on my conceptual repertoire and my knowledge of the South African context, which I describe briefly in the next paragraphs.

My conceptual repertoire comprises a set of frames and metaphors emerging from my own ethnographic research and from theoretical and empirical work by

others. This repertoire includes the *continua of biliteracy* heuristic for educational policy, research, and practice in multilingual settings (Hornberger, 1989, 1990, 2003, 2008, 2010b; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Hult & King, 2011), complemented and explicated by analytical concepts describing *language in motion* in an increasingly mobile world (Blommaert, 2010); *communicative repertoires* of languages, dialects, styles, registers, discourses, modes (Blommaert, 2010; Gumperz, 1964; Hymes, 1980; Rymes, 2010); local and transnational knowledges, literacies, and identities (Moll & González, 1994; Warriner, 2007); and flexible bilingual *translanguaging* practices (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García 2009). The metaphor of language policy and planning as a layered onion conceptualizes these activities as not just macro level policy declarations but as scaled, processual, and dynamic decision-making by states, institutions, and classroom teachers, among others, best understood through the ethnography of language policy (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; McCarty, 2011; Menken & García, 2010; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). An ecological perspective acknowledging the role of evolution, environment, and endangerment in the life of languages; and an understanding of the importance/dialectic of opening up implementational and ideological spaces in educational policy and practice for fluid, multilingual, oral, contextualized practices and voices also inform my ethnographic monitoring in multilingual language policy implementation (Chick, 2003; Hornberger, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006; Hornberger & Hult, 2008; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Menken & García, 2010; McCarty, 2011; Schissel, 2012).

Finally, my knowledge of the South African context comes from a long-term involvement beginning in 1992, my most sustained involvement in an international context other than the Andes and Latin America, but with two significant limitations—all of my sojourns have been short-term and all of my interactions have been through the medium of English, since regretfully, I have no real knowledge of an African language. We turn now to the cases, taking up first my 2008 sojourn at the University of Limpopo in Polokwane, and then my 2010 visit at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban. My aim is to contribute to the “concrete, yet comparative, cumulative, yet critical” ethnographic study of language use (Hymes, 1996, p. 63) through considering these different contexts, and the different tasks I undertook there, using the frame of ethnographic monitoring. My hope is to thereby shed light on the reach of South Africa’s multilingual language policy in advancing Black African learners’ academic opportunities. I conclude with some reflections on *not* taking language inequality for granted.

University of Limpopo, Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies

I spent several weeks in 2008 at the University of Limpopo at a three year undergraduate program taught through the medium of both English and Sesotho sa Leboa (Sepedi), one of South Africa’s nine officially recognized African languages. This highly innovative program in Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies (CEMS) is to date South Africa’s only bilingual university-level program in English and an African language, founded in 2003 in direct and creative response to the openings afforded by South Africa’s multilingual language policy (Granville et al., 1998; Joseph & Ramani, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2012).

During my stay, I regularly sat in on a third year seminar:

Toward the end of today's Language and Thought class meeting in the Book Club, professor Michael and I step outside to warm ourselves in the sun while the three students present (Delinah, Elizabeth, Sibongile) confer among themselves, freely codeswitching in Sepedi and English, as to which of six child language development paradigms introduced in class last week best corresponds to a short text excerpt by K.C. Fuson 1979 describing a caretaker's interaction with a child.

Earlier in today's class we engaged intensively in activities designed by Michael to deepen our understanding of Vygotskian private speech and prepare the students to engage in their third-year research project exploring Sepedi-speaking children's private speech: today's activities included writing silently and then discussing our own uses of private speech, gauging various data sources such as diaries, interviews, and questionnaires along a Likert scale of soft to hard data, and now consideration of this case in terms of Vygotskian, Piagetian, Hallidayan, Behaviorist, and Chomskian paradigms, among others.

As Michael and I step outside, we are immediately approached by a broadly-smiling young woman who turns out to be one of the first CEMS graduates, Mapelo Tlowane, who has caught sight of her professor and comes over to greet him warmly. She reports she's doing well, her language consulting business started jointly with fellow CEMS-graduate Thabo is picking up, and she's recently had two job interviews in the translation and communication field.

She glowingly states she feels well-prepared and ready for whatever challenges this work might bring, exuding a contagious enthusiasm and confidence that visibly light up the faces of the current CEMS students when Michael invites her in to the class to greet them. After her brief visit of a few minutes, the three students return to their academic task with renewed energy and focus, and perhaps a strengthened conviction of the value of language-oriented research and study. (N. Hornberger, field notes, 5 August 2008).

CEMS is entirely the creation of its founding directors Esther Ramani and Michael Joseph and is dependent on their vision and energy. It is, by their own account and my observation, an ongoing struggle to build and sustain CEMS in the University of Limpopo context, in terms of both political support and institutional resources. Even as CEMS celebrated its tenth anniversary in October 2012, and despite its many successes and advances, threats to its survival continued (E. Ramani, personal communication, September, 29 2012). The University of Limpopo, an under-resourced Historically Black College serving a mainly Black African student population, seeks to position itself in the post-apartheid era as an English-medium, international institution with a wide and increasing range of majors.

Among the challenges met and surmounted is the creation of the Sepedi-medium modules; these they developed and taught along with University of Limpopo graduate Mamphago Modiba (Ramani, Kekana, Modiba, & Joseph, 2007). Modiba went on to finish her Ph.D. and now holds a permanent position at the university; since 2010, CEMS alumna Mapelo Tlowana (of the vignette) teaches the Sepedi-medium modules. Another set of challenges are logistical

ones around space, collegial support, and funding. Fortuitously, or perhaps as a strategic precursor to CEMS, Esther and Michael had initiated a Book Club in their early years at Limpopo for students transitioning into university studies, for which they secured a designated classroom space to house the books they donated and collected (Joseph & Ramani, 2002). This physical and intellectual space has proven invaluable for CEMS classes and seminars, especially important since their own office space has been severely cramped, with Esther and Michael sharing one small office in which to house not only their own work but also teaching materials, research literature and equipment for the program.

Perhaps their biggest challenge has been in designing and implementing a curriculum to support the development of their students' academic biliteracy (Joseph & Ramani, 2004a, 2004b, 2012). In developing the program, they sought to apply research literature including Cummins' four-quadrant model (Cummins, 1982; Joseph & Ramani, 2004b) and my continua of biliteracy. It was this that led them to invite me as Fulbright Senior Specialist to consult with them. We jointly outlined my task along the following lines:

1. document the program by sitting in on classes and interviewing undergraduate and postgraduate students and alumni;
2. meet with the department head, school dean, and university vice-chancellor to get their views on CEMS and its unique contributions;
3. contribute to a developing CEMS research culture by offering university-wide lectures and program seminars on my research on multilingual education—in particular, the continua of biliteracy, and advise postgraduate students on their theses;
4. review and revise with CEMS faculty the content, methodology, and assessment procedures in their existing curricular modules;
5. develop with CEMS faculty a proposed one-year Honors degree and a two-year Master's degree; and
6. strategize with CEMS faculty on ways to extend the program to include other major languages of the province, xiTsonga and tshiVenda, along with Sepedi.

Ethnographic monitoring at Limpopo

Here briefly is what emerged as seen through the ethnographic monitoring frame.

Ethnographic monitoring 1 – Documenting communicative conduct

As suggested in the opening vignette, students make frequent, flexible, and fluid use of Sepedi in their English-medium classes (and vice versa). The communicative repertoire on tap in the program also includes not only South African English, Afrikaans, and local varieties of Sepedi, but also other local South African languages, as well as foreign languages accessible through the internet and varieties of Indian English and other Indian languages spoken by Ramani and Joseph, who had transplanted themselves from their native India to South Africa in the early 1990s. Seen through the lens of biliteracy media, CEMS learners

and teachers are making simultaneous use of structures and scripts ranged along continua from similar to dissimilar and convergent to divergent, as well as of a rich repertoire of styles, registers, modes, and modalities, all comprising what Hymes referred to as *instrumentalities* of communication (Hymes 1974, p. 60). Importantly, the flow and fluidity of languages in the classroom reflect and expand on local multilingual communicative practices, oral, written, and electronic.

Ethnographic monitoring 2 – Analyzing emergent patterns and meanings

The program instantiates the continua of biliteracy in ways that enable significant learning advantages to accrue to the Sepedi speaking students enrolled. One of the keys to this turned out to be the program's simultaneous emphasis on rigorous academic literacies development in both languages, as repeatedly emphasized by the founders in my conversations with them and as observed for example in the third year students' individual research projects on Vygotsky's private speech, mentioned in the opening vignette (see Joseph & Ramani, 2012). The New South Africa's multilingual language policy opened up ideological and implementational spaces as part of a nationwide effort to turn language ideologies and relations of power toward social justice and equity. In these spaces, CEMS classroom practices not only make fluid and flexible use of languages as media of instruction; they also quite intentionally draw on both academic and identity resources for texts, materials and curriculum, and foster critical awareness and acceptance of students' communicative repertoires, identities, and imagined communities (Kanno & Norton, 2003). There can be no question that these emphases and the presuppositions underlying them contribute to the successful student outcomes observed.

Ethnographic monitoring 3 – Evaluating the program and policy

As of 2008, three CEMS cohorts had completed the program and three more were in progress. Of the 14 students who had completed, seven were pursuing post-graduate studies, two had started a language-consulting firm together, others were working in language-related positions, and two in non-related fields. As Hymes (1980) suggests, though, a more telling account of the circumstances and characteristics of a program's educational success and political consequences comes from an ethnographic perspective, in this case from interviews with alumni, a sample of which I include here:

Theo finished the BA CEMS degree last year and is teaching English for business communication at a private college. He started the job in February, mid-semester, and was able to bring his students up to a passing mark. He attributes his teaching success to the good training he got at CEMS; for business communication, the analysis of genre, etc. Also, he uses Sepedi in class and encourages his students, ages 16-25, to do the same; this is so that they can get at a truer understanding of content, even though their writing is ultimately in English. Theo has applied for a job as communications officer in the Department of Labor and is hoping for a job with benefits. Ideally, he would like to work for a few years and then come back for an honors BA and MA in CEMS. (Interview, August, 15, 2008)

These insights from ethnographic monitoring of the CEMS program, conveyed as they emerged during my visit and written up in reports and subsequent papers in consultation and collaboration with Joseph and Ramani (Hornberger, 2010a, 2010b; Joseph & Ramani, 2012), helped to inform the ongoing development, expansion, and recognition of the program, both while I was there and subsequently. Our collaborative ethnographic monitorings also contributed to CEMS' gaining approval for the new proposed Honors program (E. Ramani, personal communication, 9/21/10) and to growing appreciation for CEMS within the university, South Africa and internationally (Joseph & Ramani, personal communications). Turning now to my ethnographic monitoring experience at UKZN, we shift scales from the program to university level.

University of KwaZulu-Natal, University Teaching and Learning Office

I spent two weeks in 2010 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) at the invitation of the University Teaching and Learning Office (UTLO), which had recently assumed responsibility for implementing the university's 2006 multilingual language policy. The UKZN Language Policy affirms respect for all of South Africa's official, heritage, and other languages, and a commitment to promoting awareness of multilingualism and institutional status for the official languages of KwaZulu-Natal—isiZulu, English, and Afrikaans. Elevation of the status and use of isiZulu in higher education is a major aim, in recognition that 80% of KwaZulu-Natal's population speaks isiZulu (a July 2010 amendment also mentions isiXhosa).

Since the UTLO has a university-wide charge, I observed and spoke with faculty and students in schools and departments across the university's five campuses, including the centrally important School of isiZulu Studies, from which this fieldnote excerpt comes:

I am spending the day at the School of isiZulu Studies in the Memorial Tower Building at UKZN's Howard College campus, a corridor of layered meanings for me since it adjoins the corridor that housed the (now defunct) Department of Linguistics where I spent three weeks in 1996 when this was University of Natal – there is a whole history of post-apartheid institutional transformation behind those layers.

My host today is Associate Professor Nobuhle Hlongwa, former Head of isiZulu Studies, who has recently been appointed Deputy Dean of Humanities. We meet with her newly appointed Dean and also with the current Head of isiZulu Studies to get their thoughts and reflections on strategies for furthering implementation of Zulu-medium instruction at UKZN. In between, she catches me up on her life, career and research, and her integral involvement in UKZN efforts to implement isiZulu as a medium of instruction – as Head of IsiZulu Studies, but also as language teacher, teacher educator, researcher, and research collaborator in a cross-school project funded by SANTED, the South Africa-Norway Tertiary Education Development Program. With a growing number of publications and responsibilities, Nobuhle's national and international career is taking off and she is a key figure in the implementation of isiZulu at UKZN and in South Africa.

Though we were scheduled to meet with the isiZulu Studies faculty that afternoon, the campus water system has been out all morning, so the whole campus cancels business and closes down as of 1 pm. Instead she invites her colleagues to join us for her graduate language planning seminar on Thursday, a class for which she has written and published an introductory textbook in isiZulu, *Ukuhlelwa Kolimi*. As the class transpires on Thursday, we have a lively discussion among about 15-20 faculty and master's students (all school teachers) after my talk. Issues raised include the difficulty of categorizing South Africans' language proficiencies as first language (L1) or second language (L2) and the need to deconstruct such designations, rural and urban varieties of isiZulu and codeswitching, school learners writing Zulu-ized English words rather than pure isiZulu in their isiZulu-medium classes, the reaction of parents to new school policies of teaching isiZulu-medium rather than English in the primary grades, the stigmatization these UKZN students experience for doing a master's in isiZulu, and the need for mother-tongue-based multilingual education in the schools and at UKZN to counter the hegemony of English – not to replace English with Zulu, but in an additive model. (N. Hornberger, field notes, August 2 and August, 5, 2010)

In 2010, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was at a critical juncture in its implementation of South Africa's multilingual language policy. The university completed in 2004 a multi-year process merging five formerly segregated higher education institutions into one university, widely dispersed across the five campuses. This merger offered new and complex logistical challenges, including management of water shortages such as that in the vignette, and at the same time opened new and promising opportunities for Black and Indian populations formerly excluded from systems of power, opportunities embodied for example in the new roles and responsibilities assumed by faculty members such as Nobuhle Hlongwa, introduced above, or Renuka Vithal, introduced below, both at the formerly white Howard campus.

Beginning in 2006, UKZN Faculty approved a Language Policy, Plan and Budget, outlining steps for implementation in two ten-year phases beginning 2008, and placing responsibility for implementing the Policy in the Faculties, with advice and support from a University Languages Board, Language Planning Facilitator, and language support personnel on each campus charged with facilitating isiZulu language development, translation, and isiZulu-medium provision. After some false starts in 2006 and thereafter, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) for Teaching and Learning, Renuka Vithal, assumed responsibility as of 2010.

At the time of my visit, a University Languages Board chaired by the DVC, a Director of Language Development, and a Language Planning Coordinator located in the University Teaching and Learning Office (UTLO) were all expected to be in place before the end of 2010. Part of the purpose of my visit was to facilitate consultation and dialogue across the schools and faculties toward advising the incoming Language Planning Board, Director, and Coordinator on next steps for implementation of the language policy to make UKZN more multilingual in teaching, learning, and research. My specific tasks were to 1) observe and dialogue with faculty, administrators, and postgraduate students of different faculties across different campuses—including Education, Humanities, Management, and

Health Sciences, as well as to observe at public schools and meet with teachers of the English Language Education Trust, a long established NGO which I had first visited in 1996 (see Dhunpath, 2010); 2) jointly assess current implementation; and 3) jointly identify next steps and strategies.

This visit felt in some ways less ethnographic than my stay at Limpopo, due to a more explicit and top-down agenda-setting by my hosts, the larger network of programs and people I was responsible for understanding, and the higher proportion of scheduled group meetings to self-initiated participant observation and interviewing. Ethnographic monitoring fits perhaps less obviously here, but I ultimately concluded it provides a frame for understanding and interpreting my language-policy consulting role in this case too. On the one hand, I pursued my task with the same methodological toolkit, conceptual repertoire, and contextual knowledge as in the Limpopo case; and on the other, part of the success of my involvement as I gleaned it from my hosts was my (ethnographic) ability to listen attentively to all parties and to facilitate, analyze and synthesize conversations within and across the different faculties who rarely had opportunity to engage in dialogue and information-sharing around these issues. The scale was different, but the monitoring activities were similar.

Ethnographic monitoring at UKZN

Here briefly is what emerged as seen through the ethnographic monitoring frame.

Ethnographic monitoring 1 – Documenting communicative conduct

Existing and forthcoming pedagogy and curriculum enabling multilingual language use in classes, as gleaned from participant observation, interview and document review, included:

1. a class on language planning taught through isiZulu-medium, using a recently published textbook *Ukukhulwa Kolimi* (Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2009), briefly described in my opening vignette;
2. Language and Literacy Education faculty engaged in curricular planning to design a new track of six modules in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics to accompany six existing modules in literature, some of the new modules to be taught through the medium of isiZulu;
3. plans by the head of the School of Language, Literature and Linguistics to reinstate applied linguistics programs and modules based on those taught in the past at University of Natal, incorporating also her experience and existing research on flexible use of English and isiZulu in classroom instruction (Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2008);
4. the three-year SANTED project involving faculty from Nursing, Education, Psychology, and isiZulu Studies in the development of discipline-specific modules in isiZulu, terminology development and translation activities (Wildsmith & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2010; also Engelbrecht & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2010; Engelbrecht, Nkosi, Wentzel, Govender, & McInerney, 2008; Engelbrecht, Shangase, Majeke, Mthembu, & Zondi, 2010;

Ndimande-Hlongwa, Balfour, Mkhize, & Engelbrecht, 2008; Ndimande-Hlongwa, Mazibuko, & Gordon, 2010).

Ethnographic monitoring 2 – Analyzing emergent patterns and meanings

Ecological tensions abounded around opening ideological spaces and shifting educational discourse toward welcoming and accommodating instruction through the medium of isiZulu and other African languages. In local school visits, I observed a first grade lesson on animals skillfully taught through English-medium with codeswitching to isiZulu to clarify meanings and encourage participation; and met with a group of principals of formerly Indian schools, concerned about what they called the gap in Black students' language from "spoken isiZulu at home to written English at school" (N. Hornberger, field notes, 4 August 2010). Conversations with schoolteachers and university faculty recurringly surfaced the seemingly irreconcilable tension between parents' demand for English as language of power vs. students' biliteracy development needs; the challenges of negotiating multilingualism in classroom and curriculum (see Hornberger, 2002); and the perennial "problems in the socio-educational legitimization of vernacular languages" (Fishman, 1982, p. 4) including lack of teachers, materials, or language corpus (grammar, vocabulary, orthography).

Ecological tensions specific to the UKZN context revolved around concerns about the special role of isiZulu and the School of isiZulu Studies in implementing the multilingual language policy. Emerging through interview, focus group, and participant observation, there were concerns lest isiZulu become the sole rather than primary focus of UKZN language policy—what about other South African official, marginalized, and heritage languages? What about languages spoken by immigrants or foreign students, such as French, Portuguese, Kiswahili? And there were concerns as to the appropriate role for the School of isiZulu Studies in the implementation of isiZulu-medium teaching across the university; isiZulu faculty expertise is clearly central to the undertaking, but they are neither enough in number nor do they necessarily cover all the areas of expertise required to meet the need.

Ethnographic monitoring 3 – Evaluating the program and policy

What I heard and helped to formulate collaboratively with participants were 1) strategies for moving forward in implementation of the policy, i.e., opening implementational spaces; and 2) calls for disseminating and developing research on the policy. In a sense, what was being called for was more ethnographic monitoring 1 and 2 to be undertaken by participants, suggesting an ethnographic monitoring cycle that I as collaborative consultant could highlight and advocate for—and did.

Strategies for implementation, generated in dialogue with school-specific faculty, staff, and students, took up the following rubrics. Curricular planning about which modules will be offered through isiZulu medium should yield a repertoire of approaches suited to discipline-specific curricular needs, strengths, and aims as determined by the responsible faculty. An ecological approach would suggest that not every module be offered in both English medium and isiZulu medium, but that some might be, while others might be offered only in English or

only in isiZulu, or perhaps in a mixed or hybrid mode with lectures in English and follow up discussion sections in isiZulu and perhaps other African languages.

Multilingual classroom practices can be explicitly explored and planned for, recognizing that codeswitching, recently theorized also as translanguaging, bilingual supportive scaffolding, or flexible multilingualism (see Baker, 2003; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2007, 2009; Hornberger, 2010b; Saxena, 2010), offers a communicative resource to be exploited rather than eschewed. Communicative repertoires for learning and teaching include not only spoken and written, global, local, and mixed varieties of English, isiZulu and other languages, but also other representational resources such as visual, gestural, performative, digital, photographic, etc. (see Hornberger 2009; Stein, 2000, 2004, 2008).

Academic literacies are to be supported not only in English, but also in isiZulu and possibly other languages, building on several decades of research showing that second language literacies are best built on the foundation of first language literacies (see Hornberger, 2003; Joseph & Ramani, 2004b). Assessment practices must be consistent with curricular and classroom practices—including formative, portfolio, and especially multilingual assessments, yet to be designed (see Mathew, 2008).

isiZulu language acquisition opportunity and incentive (Cooper, 1989) should be made available for staff and students, including online courses. isiZulu corpus planning requires a coordinated effort. isiZulu Studies could set up an electronic clearinghouse for isiZulu terminology development, including dissemination via mass media and elicitation of feedback from the public.

Calls for disseminating and developing research focused on:

1. a sociolinguistic survey of primary/secondary education medium of instruction in KwaZulu-Natal that would shed light on such basic (and missing) information as what proportion of isiZulu-speaking students are taught through isiZulu vs. English medium of instruction, up to what grade;
2. ethnographic research on teaching and learning multilingually, i.e., language use, codeswitching, discourses, ways of speaking, to be carried out in primary-secondary education classrooms, in community-based clinical practice settings, and in higher education disciplines;
3. ethnographic research on first and second language acquisition in isiZulu—in the community and classroom;
4. corpus planning, for example terminology development involving students and staff and using an interactive website for dissemination and feedback to build a database; and
5. isiZulu linguistic structure, given the ongoing need for documentation on actual isiZulu language structure and use.

As at Limpopo, the insights gleaned and shared collaboratively with my hosts orally and in writing informed the ongoing development and expansion of their initiatives in multilingual language policy implementation at the higher education level. An update a year after my visit revealed a number of our recommended initiatives under way, including a functioning Language Board and Language Office, budget allocations for 10 specific curricular projects proposed from the different faculties, and the development of an institution-wide Terminology Development Platform (R. Dhunpath, personal communication, November, 14, 2011). Our collaborative conversations, meetings, reports, and, we hope, future

published papers constitute both documentation and interpretation of what has been accomplished, in addition to being a spur to widen and deepen the effort.

On not taking language inequality for granted

The programs and faculty/student groups I've worked with in these two contexts remain convinced, like me, that multilingual education alternatives that take and build on Black African learners' home languages in additive rather than subtractive ways offer the best avenues for their academic learning and socioeconomic mobility in post-apartheid South Africa. Hymes often reminded applied and educational linguists that despite the potential equality of all languages, differences in language and language use too often become a basis for social discrimination and actual inequality. While we as scholars may take these insights for granted after decades of scholarship, we nevertheless have our work cut out in raising critical language awareness in education and society more broadly. "We must never take for granted that what we take for granted is known to others" (Hymes, 1992, p. 3). What is obvious for us, and for my hosts and collaborators in Limpopo and UKZN, is not necessarily so for the colleagues, students, and families we work with in our educational programs, nor for policymakers and popular commentators in the larger society. So long as schools and educational institutions at whatever level continue to define some people as inferior on the "seemingly neutral ground of language" (Hymes 1980, p. 110), the task for educational and applied linguists must be to seek ways to counter that reality in favor of more socially just education. Based on my experiences in these two South African higher education contexts, I'm suggesting here, with Hymes, that ethnographic monitoring in language education policy offers one means toward *not* taking language inequality for granted.

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