

This paper examines the issue of school language policy in Namibia twenty years after independence. It critically analyses the country's education system, which is shaped by the hegemony of English. The author argues that Namibia's indigenous languages are systematically under-utilised in schooling, in favour of English. The resultant lack of fit between the language of the home and of the school contributes to poor results and high drop-out rates and to economic under-development. Related problems discussed include the politically-motivated avoidance of cultural diversity in the curriculum, teacher competence and qualifications, and the lack of literature and textbooks in indigenous languages. The paper recommends that the Namibian government should strengthen social diversity by committing to multilingual instruction based on the mother tongues of learners.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

## Multilingualism and the language policy for Namibian schools

Andree-Jeanne Töttemeyer



PRAESA Occasional Papers No. 37

— ◆ —

### Acknowledgements

Our acknowledgements to the Ford Foundation for financial support towards the publication of this paper.



Published by PRAESA  
(Project for the Study of Alternative  
Education in South Africa)  
University of Cape Town  
Private Bag Rondebosch 7701  
Cape Town, South Africa  
Tel: 021 650 4013  
Fax: 021 650 3027  
Email: [edu-praes@uct.ac.za](mailto:edu-praes@uct.ac.za)  
Website: <http://www.praesa.org.za>

ISBN: 978-0-799224-72-6

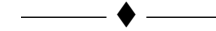
Copyright: © 2010 the author and PRAESA



Series Editor: Peter Plüddemann



DTP conversion: Andy Thesen  
Printing: Digi4print



PRAESA's series of occasional papers is meant to provide an opportunity for the research done by staff members and associated researchers working in the domains of language, education, and language policy in education to obtain initial exposure to an interested peer audience. All views expressed are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of PRAESA. It is hoped that feedback will improve the final version in which this research is eventually published or distributed. For more information on the series go to the PRAESA website:  
<http://www.praesa.org.za>.



Professor Andree-Jeanne Töttemeyer lectured in information studies at four universities in South Africa and Namibia. She chairs the Namibian Children's Book Forum which aims to promote a reading culture among Namibian children. The author is the director of multilingual publishing projects for children in thirteen Namibian languages. Specializing in the sociology of reading, she made a study of the language policy for Namibian schools in her quest to find reasons why Namibian children struggle to read.  
Email: [totem@iafrica.com.na](mailto:totem@iafrica.com.na).



# **Multilingualism and the language policy for Namibian schools**



**Andree-Jeanne Töttemeyer**

**PRAESA Occasional Papers No. 37**

Language in a multilingual country like Namibia is no simple matter. Nobody in countries like Britain, Germany or Italy would even think about whether the official language of the country, the medium of communication in all administrative, legislative and judiciary bodies and also the medium of instruction in schools, should be any other language but English, German and Italian, respectively.

## Contents

Exuku	5
Abstract	6
Opsomming	7
Abbreviations	8
<b>1. The multilingual reality in Namibia</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. The position of languages in the school system</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. The effects of educational reform and the language policy on primary and secondary education</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4. What was done or not done to prepare teachers for educational reform?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. Teacher qualifications</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6. Teacher training for and proficiency in the Namibian national languages</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>7. Assessment and examination results</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>8. The reading skills of Namibian Grade 6 learners and their teachers</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>9. Background of learners in Namibian schools</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>10. School enrolment and drop-out rate</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>11. The effect of the language policy on senior secondary and tertiary education</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>12. The effect of poor secondary school examination results on the country and the sub-continent at large</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>13. Which language medium of instruction do parents prefer for their children and which language/s do African governments prefer?</b>	<b>53</b>

<b>14. The psychological effects of educational reforms with specific reference to education in an unknown language</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>15. Cultural identity and politics</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>16. Why is progress towards English language proficiency so slow?</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>17. Recommendations</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>18. Conclusion</b>	<b>72</b>
Endnotes	72
References	78
Other publications in the Occasional Papers series	83

## Exuku

Mombapila omu Omuprofesa Andree-Jeanne Tötemeyer ota popi kombinga yoinima idjuu oyo i li momulanduveta womalaka meefikola, pefimbo la pita loukoloni, tali tongele Ovaafrika. Omido omilongombali mondjokona yemanguluko paife, omulandu welongo laNamibia otau twikile wa nwefwa mo natango kokakatongotongo aka ka fyuululwa okudja moukoloni nokomufindako woshiingilisha oo wa tulwa mokati koshiwana. Omufindo wOshiingilisha, osho shi li Elaka lospambelewa moshilongo nande ohali popiwa ashike komwaalu munini wovakalimo, (omwaalu uhe dule 2%) otau longifa oiniwe naayo ya li ya nuninwa omalaka omoshilongo enya omulongo naavali

Eyooloko lefimano/lomufindo oo oli na mo onhumbu momulandu wokufikola. Omulanduveta womalaka otau ufa elongo lelaka laina yomulongwa, mwa kwatelwa omalaka ovadalelwa mo a longwe ashike meendodo nhatu dotete, manga inaku lundulukilwa kOshiingilisha, ashike osho hashi ningwa oshimwe shi lili. Onghalo yelongo otai nghudipalekwa eshi omwaalu weefikola edi da hala okulongifa Oshiingilisha ongelaka lomalombwelo okudja mondodo yotete tadi mono omapitikilo oku shi ninga notadi tane, efiku-nefiku.

Eshi ohashi etifa omwaka pokati kelaka eli lokeumbo naalo hali popiwa kofikla, sho osha talwa osho oshietifi shakula tashi shoidjemo yelongo lovalongwa ya nghundipala ile efiyepo lofikola li li pombada. Oupyakadi umwe wa kundafanwa mombapila omu owa kwatela mo enwefemo lopapolitika lokuhenuka omayooloko opamifyuululwakalo momufindalandu, omaunghulungu nomaulongelwe ovalongi, ounamambo nomambo makwao momalaka ovadalelwamo inaa henena.

Ombapila otai popile unene eshi mokati kaikwao, kutya: Epangelo laNamibia oli na okunghonopaleka omayooloko opanghalafano mokuninga omulanduveta wopamifyuululwakalo domumwe, opo omalaka mahapu a longifwe mokuyandja omalombwelo she likolelela komalaka ooina yovalongwa, eyambulepo lomalaka ovadalelwamo nexumifo komesho londjiikilile yokulesha, nande ongaho omulanduveta ou ou na oku tulwa moilonga paenghatu/eendodo.

## Abstract

In this paper Professor Andree-Jeanne Töttemeyer tackles the difficult issue of school language policy in a post-colonial African context. Twenty years into the independence era, Namibia's education system continues to be shaped by the country's colonial-apartheid heritage, and by the hegemony of English in the public sphere. The ruling elite's insistence on the dominance of English, the country's official language that is spoken as a home language by fewer than 2% of the population, comes at the expense of the remaining twelve national languages. This difference in status is reflected in the schooling system. Policy prescribes that mother-tongue education (MTE) involving the indigenous languages be offered for the first three grades only, before the switch to English. In practice however, the situation is even worse as there is a growing number of schools that get ministerial permission to use English as the only medium of instruction from Grade 1.

The resultant lack of fit between the language of the home and of the school is identified as a major contributing factor to poor academic results and high drop-out rates. Other problems discussed include the politically-motivated avoidance of cultural diversity in the curriculum, teacher competence and qualifications, and the lack of literature and textbooks in indigenous languages.

The paper recommends, among other things, that the Namibian government should strengthen social diversity by adopting a policy committed to multiculturalism, to incremental bilingual instruction based on the mother tongues of learners, to the development of the indigenous languages, and to the promotion of a reading culture, even if such a policy may have to be implemented in stages.

## Opsomming

In hierdie studie bespreek Prof Andree-Jeanne Töttemeyer die netelige kwessie van 'n skooltalebeleid in die konteks van post-koloniale Afrika.

Twintig jaar 'n onafhanklikheidswording word die onderwys in Namibië steeds deur die nalatenskap van die kolonialisme en apartheid gevorm, sowel as deur die hegemonie van Engels in die openbare lewe. Die regerende elite se volharding met Engels, die land se amptelike taal wat deur minder as 2% van die bevolking tuis gepraat word, geskied ten koste van die oorblywende twaalf nasionale tale. Die verskil in status word in die skolestelsel weerspieël, waar moedertaalonderwys volgens beleid slegs tot die eerste drie grade beperk word voordat daar formeel na Engels oorgeskakel word. In die praktyk is die situasie egter erger aangesien daar 'n toenemende aantal skole is wat ministeriële verlof kry om Engels as die enigste medium van onderrig te gebruik vanaf Graad 1. Die uitwerking van hierdie beleid is dat die taal van die huis en die taal van die skool nie dieselfde is nie.

Hierdie situasie word as 'n hoofrede vir swak akademiese prestasie en die hoë uitvalkoers gidentifiseer. Ander probleme wat bespreek word sluit in die polities-gemotiveerde vermyding van kulturele verskeidenheid in die kurrikulum, die kwessie van die bekwaamheid en kwalifikasies van onderwysers, en die gebrek aan literatuur en handboeke in die inheemse tale.

Die studie doen 'n beroep op die Namibiese regering om maatskaplike diversiteit te steun deur die aanneem van 'n multikulturele beleid. Verdere aanbevelings word gemaak t.o.v. 'n tragsgewyse benadering tot tweetalige onderwys wat op die leerders se huistaal (of tale) gebaseer is, die uitbou van die inheemse tale, en die bevordering van 'n leeskuiluur, al sou so 'n beleid geleidelik uitgevoer moes word.

## Abbreviations

EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Ministry Information Service
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
SACMEQ	Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SWAPO	South West African Peoples' Organisation
UNAM	University of Namibia

## 1. The multilingual reality in Namibia

The language scene in Namibia is so radically different that it requires much more effort to find a solution that will enable citizens to communicate with one another and will allow children of different ethnicities and mother tongues to learn effectively in a highly competitive world. There are thirteen written languages in Namibia with a standardized orthography<sup>1</sup>. In addition, there are also about sixteen oral languages for which no orthography exists. An overview of the language situation as it has been developing in Namibia since 1990 will now be presented.

At the time of independence in 1990, there were two official languages in the territory: Afrikaans<sup>2</sup> and English. English was however, not used extensively before 1990 with the result that the implementation of English as the medium of instruction in the government schools of the Oshiwambo speaking north during the 1980s was unsuccessful (Harlech-Jones, 1990: 198–200). Already during the early 19th century, Afrikaans (Cape Dutch) became the dominant *lingua franca* in south and central Namibia<sup>3</sup> and partly also in the north. By the 1950s the majority of the population could communicate in Afrikaans. Even the Finnish Lutheran Mission in the north (the former Ovamboland) decided on Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in 1925 while it was also spoken in Kavango.

In contrast to the so called Anglophone African countries, English never was a colonial language in Namibia. However, in 1990 the Namibian constitution (Republic of Namibia, [1990]: Sub-Article 3.1) proclaimed English as the official language for Namibia. Sub-Articles 3.2 and 3.3 however, do make provision for the use of other languages for educational and legislative, administrative and judicial purposes under certain circumstances. But in practice, English has been predominating since 1990 to the extent that the other languages are rarely used for official purposes. The main reason

given for the choice of English was that English is a world language and that it would be difficult to choose any one of the Namibian languages as the official language of the country. Afrikaans was not favoured by the new leaders since it was seen as the language of oppression<sup>4</sup>.

SWAPO publications during the liberation struggle, however, did not necessarily state in all documents that English should be the only official language in Namibia. Some documents published in 1982 and 1983 stated that English should be **an** official language. According to Robert Phillipson (1992: 228 as quoted by Brock-Utne, 1995: 14), 'SWAPO decided that English should be **an** official language in independent Namibia<sup>5</sup>.' However, already in 1981, the key document *Toward a language policy for Namibia, English as the official language: perspectives and strategies* (UNIN 1981: 123), elevated English to the position of **the** official language. The publication, financed by the Ford Foundation, was based on the work of three English-speaking expatriate scholars who were attached to the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Lusaka, one an American, one a British Council employee and the third an Indian. This key document was published after an international conference with strong British and American representation. The conference was held to consider the choice of English as an official language for Namibia (cf. Phillipson, 1992: 228 as quoted by Brock-Utne, 1995: 14). It is however, significant as indicated above, that within SWAPO itself, even two years after publication of the above mentioned key document, there was clearly no consensus about English becoming the **only** official language in an independent Namibia.

Only a very small minority of the population could speak, read and write English in 1990<sup>6</sup>, but the decision was nevertheless made for English as the official language in the hope that that language would be a unifying force that would promote national integration and unity. The other languages with a standardised orthography were afforded the status of 'national languages.'

## 2. The position of languages in the school system

At the time of independence in 1990 all learners were receiving instruction through the mother tongue for the first three years of school thereafter Afrikaans medium instruction was phased in. English was also taught as a second language subject throughout all schools as was done in South Africa, but was hardly spoken in the country at large. Some of the indigenous mother tongues as single subjects were also offered up to secondary school level.

English medium instruction in the schools as decided by the newly elected government, already started in January 1991, nine months after independence was proclaimed on 21 March 1990. However, final language policy documents for the schools were officially accepted at a later stage<sup>7</sup>. The constitution does not prohibit the use of other languages for educational purposes 'subject to compliance with such requirements as may be imposed by law, to ensure proficiency in the official language, or for pedagogic reasons' (Republic of Namibia, [1990]:Sub-Article 3.2). The language policy for Namibian schools, therefore, permitted mother tongue instruction or otherwise instruction in a dominant second language spoken locally, during the first three years of schooling. The language policy document, *The language policy for schools 1992–1996 and beyond* (1992:3) emphatically guaranteed 'The equality of all national languages regardless of the number of speakers or the level of development of a particular language'. Thereby all national languages were approved for use in Namibian schools. Those schools offering mother tongue or second language instruction had to offer English as a single subject during the first three years, thereafter compulsory English-medium instruction was phased in in Grade 4. Teachers were allowed in certain circumstances to use another language in Grade 4 from time to time, just for explanatory purposes, but from Grade 5 onwards, all



subjects were to be offered in English only except for the mother tongue/second language as a subject<sup>8</sup>.

The wording of the first official policy document, however, left the door open for English medium instruction from Grade 1 onwards. As a result, some schools, particularly Windhoek schools, did not opt for either the three years mother tongue or other dominant language instruction or the teaching of any of the Namibian indigenous languages as a subject. They taught in English from Grade 1 upwards, i.e. the indigenous, also called 'local languages' or African languages were not offered at all in those schools.

The language policy for schools was somewhat amended in 2002 and 2008 as will be shown, but some principals still believe that they have the right to decide which African/indigenous/local languages shall be taught or not taught in their schools, or even to decide that no African language shall be taught. This assumed freedom to discriminate against some or all African languages, even when they are being spoken in the immediate vicinity, is not stipulated anywhere.

The teaching of African languages in Namibian schools is surrounded by many challenges. The lack of reading and teaching materials in most of these languages is a major problem for teachers. Learners need more than just set readers to develop a reading skill and a love of reading in their home languages. Publishers however, cannot publish even meritorious manuscripts in these languages unless they have been chosen as setworks for the schools. Books for general informational or recreational reading in African languages therefore, do not get published unless a sponsor can be found who will pay for the production costs. With a small population and so many languages, only a very small print run per language can be produced. Printing only 500 copies is expensive and even 500 copies take a long time to sell. As a consequence, publishing in African languages other than school books, has always been a long term risk and has diminished since independence (see endnote 23). The government is the only buyer of the school books and the main buyer of the few African language trade books published through sponsorships. The latter books are bought by the library services for the school and community libraries. Parents seldom buy books for leisure reading for their children.

The same phenomenon is the norm in South Africa as well. Whereas only 35% of books published for children in Europe are school textbooks, 95% of all books published for children in South Africa, are school textbooks. Illiterate parents, who hardly have enough money for food, will not

buy children's books for enjoyment. The publishing of such books is considered by most African publishers as an unprofitable undertaking. In South Africa, only 4% of the population can afford to buy books.

In Namibia there are no magazines or any newspaper coverage in some of the local languages. However, three major newspapers, two publishing mainly in English and one mainly in Afrikaans, do publish regular pages in some of the local languages. These pages are avidly read by the citizens. These newspaper pages are just about the only additional reading materials in some of the languages that can be used in the schools for more advanced learners. For primary school learners there are the multilingual publications of the Namibian Children's Book Forum, an NGO that promotes a reading culture among Namibian children. The Under the Story Tree project, consisting of a 93-page story book illustrated in full colour, published in nine Namibian African languages and four other languages, is suitable for 7- to 11-year-old readers (Tötemeyer, 2009: 13).

Multilingual radio broadcasts by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation are being offered. Educational programmes are however, mostly in English only in spite of the fact that there is a great need for such programmes in the national languages.

Schools in the urban areas have another problem in that often a variety of mother tongues are represented in one class, each language group being too small to warrant separate teaching. Some schools opt for multigrade teaching in such situations, by putting learners of different grades together in one group for the African language lessons only.

In the Kavango and Caprivi regions the languages Rumanyo and Thimbukushu are being neglected. Rumanyo has only very recently been introduced in the schools in Kavango while most Thimbukushu speaking children are being educated either in Silozi or Rukwangali from Grade 1 upwards, first as if it were their mother tongue and then from Grade 4 as a single 'mother tongue' subject.

In Caprivi the Silozi language is a bone of contention. The majority of the people in the region resent the way in which Silozi has been favoured by politicians both before and after independence. It is a foreign language of Zambian origin functioning as a type of *lingua franca* in Caprivi. It is a dominant communication and teaching language but it is not the most widely spoken home language in Caprivi. Sisubya is more dominant and there are also a few other oral languages, the main one being Sifwe. The last mentioned languages however, have no standardised orthography and

are therefore not offered in the schools to teach mother tongue speakers. This situation is often used as an excuse by authorities for doing nothing. Use and development of a language go hand in hand, the one being the dynamo for the other, i.e. if the decision is made that some of the hitherto oral languages shall be taught in the schools, then an orthography and the requisite vocabulary to describe certain concepts for which no words exist, will be developed, i.e. the languages will start developing. Resistance to Silozi medium instruction in the schools and the neglect by government of Sisubya and other oral languages is growing. This is understandable in the light of the fact that almost 80% of the learners in Caprivi being taught in Silozi, have other home languages (Kangumu, 2009: 7).

Not all Namibians agreed with the new language policy upon implementation. Harlech-Jones (1990: 182) in interviews with 161 Namibian teachers across Namibia, established that 78.2% of the interviewees 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'pupils will do better at school if the second language, English or Afrikaans, is brought in *gradually* as a medium of instruction, over a number of years.' Since then, several efforts have been made to convince government to extend the number of years of mother tongue instruction beyond Grade 3, but in vain. In April 2000 a Language Conference in Okahandja advocated the extension of mother tongue instruction in schools beyond Grade 3<sup>9</sup>. In 2002 a new language policy was drafted by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture<sup>10</sup>. This draft policy however, basically advocated the retention of the *status quo* for reasons of lack of funding. The only changes were that it was emphasised that any school wanting to offer English medium instruction from Grade 1 must receive ministerial approval; secondly, it was emphatically stated that ALL learners must study at least two languages as subjects from Grade 1 onwards, one of which must be English. It also included an option for a foreign or third language in the senior secondary school.

During the drafting of the National Curriculum for Basic Education in 2008, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) again tried to convince the Ministry to extend mother tongue instruction up to Grade 7 but without success. This new curriculum, which was to be implemented in the schools as from 2010, basically reflects the same language policy as the original language policy of 1992, with the exception that schools wanting to offer English medium instruction from Grade 1 upwards need ministerial approval and that two languages should be included in the curriculum.

### 3. The effects of educational reform and the language policy on primary and secondary education

The sudden transition from Afrikaans-medium to English-medium instruction in Namibian schools was problematic. Not only learners but also most teachers were struggling with English. Both groups were suffering from anxiety about learning and teaching through the medium of English (Chamberlain, 1993; Melber, 1985: 15). Within a couple of years after the abrupt switch to English medium education, it became clear that teachers and many learners were not enjoying education in the schools.

A survey in 1993 by field workers of the Florida State University (Florida State University and SIAPAC-Namibia with the Ministry of Education and Culture as referred to by Kotzé, 1994a: 11, and Harlech-Jones, 2001: 122) used a 9-point scale to establish the English language proficiency of teachers at 20 randomly selected schools in all educational regions. Results were that 60% of the 100 surveyed Namibian teachers were not able to teach effectively in English. Another 25% of the teachers could not communicate in English as they scored only one point out of a possible nine; this value designates 'a few words of no communicative value'. This means that only 15% of the surveyed group were able to teach effectively in English while 85% were either not able to teach effectively or not at all in English. In interviews teachers were prone to saying that 'learners do well in English', but when probed, they admitted that most of their learners did not know English. Already in 1992–1993 both groups were manifesting frustration with having to communicate in a language the majority could not speak and/or understand well; discipline in Namibian schools had deteriorated to an alarming level.

Some learners had become so rebellious and aggressive that teachers were afraid of them.

In 1994 Henderson (1994: 42–43), a consultant to the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, made the following observation: ‘The inability to cope with English as a teaching language forces the teachers to use the regional language in the classroom ... Insufficient English language competence is a massive problem which affects the vast majority of teachers teaching at all levels in Namibian schools.’

England and Lawrence (as quoted by Harlech-Jones, 2001: 122) established in 1996 through interviews with teachers in the northern centres of Ondangwa and Oshakati that teachers were feeling the stress of the language policy. Teachers tended to use the home language in classes and learners tended to rely on rote learning due to a lack of proficiency in English. Most teachers could only be interviewed in a language other than English.

An English reading and writing proficiency test which included the writing of an essay in response to a written question and interviews, administered in 1998 to 100 teachers from all seven educational regions in Namibia (Otaala 2001: 209–110), arrived at the following findings:

1. Teachers were not able to convey meaning in their communication
2. Teachers struggled to make sense of the language of a straightforward written question about a matter familiar to them
3. Teachers showed that their ability at sentence construction was limited
4. Many teachers were not qualified to teach English or other subjects
5. Many teachers lacked fluency in English.

Otaala (2001: 211) reported that ‘the teachers said that English was hardly used as medium of instruction, even in classes of English. Afrikaans and mother tongues were often used as media of instruction.’ This practice however, creates serious problems. The textbooks are in English and at the end of Grade 10 all learners have to sit for their first public examination administered in English. Learners must by then be able to understand the questions set in English and be able to answer these in English. This preliminary research by Otaala was done after English as the medium of instruction had been operational in Namibian schools for more than seven years, suggesting that there had been no marked improvement in teachers’ English language proficiency during this period. Concomitantly, teacher

anxiety had not diminished. Otaala (2001: 215) stated that teachers reported that some learners knew more English than them; in such situations the teachers became either aggressive or defensive.

Bradley (2001: 45) opines that ‘Widespread inability to convey meaning through language, coupled with the general weakness in using non-oral means to support meaning and poor elicitation skills, means that in many classes across the country, little meaningful learning is taking place for much of the time.’ Poor reading skills would appear to be the single largest language problem of Namibia’s teachers and student teachers (ibid: 48).

The question arises whether the government recognizes the fact that the language policy is making unfair demands on Namibian learners and their teachers. There has until date, been little understanding among language policy planners of how difficult it is, particularly for primary school learners, to cope with a language of instruction they do not understand, their parents do not understand and, particularly in the rural areas where 65% of the population is domiciled, is hardly spoken outside the school.

## 4. What was done or not done to prepare teachers for educational reform?

Bradley (2006: 37) states that

the very abrupt switch to English medium teaching did not permit a nation-wide programme for the upgrading of teachers' English ... There was clearly a severe underestimate of the trauma that a switch of medium would cause the country's teachers, especially when added to the radical changes being made to every fundamental element of the educational system.

Teachers and school heads had to implement the following reforms all at once:

1. A new approach to children and learning ('child-centredness' – they are *learners not pupils*)
2. A new assessment system
3. Switching to teaching in a language, English, which most could hardly speak or write
4. A new curriculum
5. A new approach to classroom discipline (Harlech-Jones, 2006: 30–31).

Harlech-Jones rightly points out that

the wholehearted co-operation of teachers is vital for successful implementation of educational reforms. The essence of the matter, is putting the teacher at the centre of any effort to improve the quality of education. There needs to be a meeting of minds between policy makers/planners and teachers/school heads (the implementers) ... Change only happens when people are willing to change – and willingness takes time, trust, discussion, and reflection. (pp. 30–31)

Implementation of English in Namibian schools was, however, extremely hasty even though some efforts were made by government between 1991 and 1993 to publicize the new language policy. Feedback was invited on a widely circulated booklet, *The provisional language policy for schools*, but response was poor. Apparently the document was not understood by teachers owing to a lacking knowledge of English. Thereupon a 400 participant conference was organized in Ongwediva in the north in 1992<sup>11</sup> 'but some misunderstandings still persisted' (Chamberlain, 1993: 4). Since most teachers were not able to express themselves properly in English, 'a meeting of minds' was hardly possible.

O'Sullivan (2002: 219–237) conducted research in Namibia from 1995 to 1997 in order to find an answer to the research question: 'What are the barriers to educational reform implementation?' She found that the pivotal role of teachers in the achievement of effective educational reform implementation was not seriously considered by policy makers. They failed to take into account the realities in which teachers work, their so called 'classrooms realities'. This led to the development of English language teaching reforms that were significantly beyond teachers' capacity.

Expatriate policy makers developed the English syllabus together with a number of Windhoek teachers. The teaching reality of Windhoek teachers however, does not reflect the 'classrooms reality' of the vast majority of Namibian teachers. The efforts of the English syllabus working committee to access realities were tokenistic. Neither the teachers nor the school principals in most parts of the country were equipped to implement reforms. In 1995–1997, 76% of all primary school teachers were underqualified or unqualified. 'The syllabus assumed a level of language and professional competence that was beyond teachers' capacity' (O'Sullivan, 2002: 230). Most learners could not speak English and in the greater part of Namibia there was no English in the environment<sup>12</sup>.

Advisory teachers were not able to equip teachers with the necessary skills owing to the geographical remoteness of many schools and various other reasons. Week-long regional workshops on the educational reforms offered to selected school principals with the expectation that they would pass this information on to other school principals in their regions, were not useful as tools of information dissemination. Support of principals by inspectors was limited as they did not visit schools often. Communication channels between the centre and the diaspora functioned one way mainly,

i.e. by means of memos and policies in too complicated English, circulated from Windhoek to schools countrywide.

O'Sullivan (2002: 227–229) found that most schools had no telephones and regional offices were not supporting schools as they should. 'Implementation takes place in the classrooms and the teachers are the ultimate implementers of reforms,' but the aims of the language policy for Namibian schools were unrealistic and unattainable. Policy makers 'ignore teachers' "classrooms realities" at their peril.' They need 'to strike a balance between what is desired and what can be done' (p. 235).

Further problems were presented by Brock-Utne (1995: 25–26). She reported that teachers complained that they were required to translate syllabi for the indigenous languages written in English by subject advisers. They did not agree with the Western content and teaching methods of the syllabi intended for the teaching of African children. Many textbooks were poor translations of South African books written in English and Afrikaans. They were lacking in cultural specific content. There was greater satisfaction with the school readers but there was a wish that these books should contain stories that transmit cultural knowledge such as stories with traditional ceremonies, folktales, myths, legends and praises.

In 2000 only 384 out of 1545 Namibian schools had school libraries (EMIS, 2000). Textbooks, teaching materials, writing paper and pencils were lacking. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ I) (Voigts, 1998) established that in 1995 only 52.3% of Namibian learners had their own reading book or textbook. In Kavango only 24% of learners had textbooks. The overall percentage of learners with books diminished further in 2005 (Makuwa, 2005. SACMEQ II: Table 3.13) to only 46.6% of Namibian learners who had their own reading book or textbook. The pupil-teacher ratio in primary education in 2001 was 32 in primary education and 22 in secondary education (UNESCO, 2005: EFA Table 13B).

Owing to growing government concern about the low quality of education in Namibian schools, a 15 year strategic plan, the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) for the period 2005/6 – 2020 was adopted to bring about reformation of the education and training sector. To that effect the World Bank is assisting the Namibian government *inter alia* in the areas of primary and secondary education. Since some African languages were lacking suitable readers for the first three grades, the Ministry of Education since 2005 is making special efforts to provide read-

ers and teacher guides in six of the mother tongues for the first three grades in the Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero, Rukwangali, Rumanyo, Thimbukushu and Silozi languages<sup>13</sup>. ETSIP also includes a few measures for the enhancement of early childhood development and pre-school education<sup>14</sup>, as well as the retention of children in basic education.

## 5. Teacher qualifications

The Ministry of Education in Namibia defines a qualified primary and junior secondary school (basic education) teacher as somebody with teacher training equivalent to at least three years' tertiary training after Grade 12.

The four teacher training colleges in Namibia, one each in Windhoek, Ongwediva (Oshakati), Rundu and Katima Mulilo are responsible for the training of primary and junior secondary school teachers, i.e. for Grades 1 to 10. They offer the three-year Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD). These four teacher training colleges, until the end of 2010 governed by the Ministry of Education, are being incorporated into the University of Namibia for implementation as from the beginning of 2011. At this stage it is known that teacher training for Grades 1–10 will be extended to four years and upgraded to a university BPrimEd degree. It is not clear whether it will be a requirement for all in-service teachers with a three-year college qualification, to upgrade their training.

The BETD is still being offered in the form of a four year BETD in-service teacher training programme, specifically tailored to the needs of un- and under-qualified serving teachers. This programme was piloted in 1994 by the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) and started to run formally in 1996. Until the end of the 2008 academic year, 3 935 primary and junior secondary teachers had qualified through this programme at NIED and it was expected that at least 300 more will graduate at the end of the 2009 academic year. In December 2001, the University of Namibia through its Centre for External Studies (CES) also started to offer the BETD INSET programme in close co-operation with NIED. The mode of training is a combination of contact sessions with tutors during school holidays and distance training. For the 12 module (per subject) programme, students are examined during the contact periods three times per year on completion of each module. A written

assignment to be handed in for each subject module is also required. Students can choose the Lower Primary option, or opt for combinations of the following subjects: Mathematics and Integrated Natural Sciences, or Social Sciences which includes English in combination with one of the following languages: Oshiwambo (Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama), Afrikaans, Khoekhoegowab, Rukwangali, Silozi, Otjiherero, Rumanyo and Thimbukushu. By 2010, 607 language teachers successfully completed the diploma. Contact sessions were offered at the teachers' resource centres in Keetmanshoop, Khorixas, Rundu and Katima Mulilo and at the Windhoek College of Education and the Ongwediva College of Education during the first week of each school holiday. At present 800 students are still registered for the programme, but since student numbers are decreasing, the last intake of new students was in 2006; consequently the BETD INSET programme was scheduled to be terminated in 2013 (Fourie, 2009). It is unknown whether this programme will be allowed to continue as from 2011, and what is being planned for teachers who are still busy completing the three year BETD course. The University of Namibia BETD INSET (in-service teacher training) programme will also be terminated in the near future owing to dwindling student numbers.

The BETD INSET programme has greatly contributed to the steady increase in numbers of qualified teachers during the last ten years in Namibia. In 1998 there were 12 000 primary school teachers in Namibia, by 2008, ten years later, the number had grown to 13 853 primary school teachers. In 2001 only 38% of the teachers in primary education were qualified, i.e. 62% were either under-qualified or unqualified (UNESCO, 2005: EFA Global Monitoring Report Table 13A p. 352). Since then there has been a steady improvement in the percentage of qualified primary school teachers to 39.3% in 2002, 60.9% in 2004, 63.3% in 2006, and 87.4% in 2008 (EMIS 2008: Table 48, over). There is some evidence, as will be shown, that the percentage given for 2008 may be too high but even if it should be correct, it is a matter of concern that 12.6% of all primary school teachers are still not properly qualified to teach, in spite of the fact that in-service training through BETD INSET is and has been available for more than a decade. These teachers are mainly teaching in the northern rural and/or remote regions where 65% of all Namibian primary school learners are situated<sup>15</sup>. The most qualified teachers are in the towns and cities.

Region	Primary (in percentage)										Secondary (in percentage)									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008						
National	Total	45.2	50.9	55.6	61.3	65.1	71.0	71.1	76.4	80.6	83.5	86.6	87.6	90.3	90.1					
	Females	45.2	50.4	54.7	60.8	64.7	71.2	70.4	79.4	82.2	84.9	88.0	88.6	90.4	90.6					
	Males	45.1	52.0	57.5	62.3	66.1	70.5	72.7	73.8	79.1	82.4	85.4	86.6	90.1	89.6					
Regions																				
<b>Caprivi</b>	Total	34.8	41.2	44.1	50.6	58.3	65.6	69.8	69.8	73.9	78.7	83.0	84.7	87.9	87.9					
	Females	42.6	49.6	51.2	57.8	65.2	72.3	74.1	74.9	73.1	77.2	81.5	89.2	89.8	91.2					
	Males	25.0	30.3	34.2	39.9	46.9	56.8	62.6	67.4	74.3	79.5	83.8	82.3	86.7	85.7					
<b>Erongo</b>	Total	56.4	63.6	68.6	71.9	75.2	77.5	78.3	87.8	91.8	92.0	94.6	90.8	91.9	94.2					
	Females	58.0	65.8	70.9	72.9	76.0	78.9	79.3	91.3	93.9	94.5	96.2	90.9	92.3	93.5					
	Males	51.4	56.9	60.7	68.6	72.2	72.5	74.9	83.8	89.1	89.1	92.6	90.7	91.3	95.0					
<b>Hardap</b>	Total	58.8	62.9	68.0	70.0	70.3	73.8	78.2	83.6	87.6	90.2	89.2	90.8	94.4	93.0					
	Females	54.3	61.1	66.4	67.7	68.5	71.7	76.2	85.0	87.8	94.3	91.5	92.6	95.8	93.6					
	Males	69.2	67.4	71.7	75.4	74.5	77.7	82.4	82.4	87.4	86.8	87.2	89.0	93.4	92.4					
<b>Head Office</b>	Total	72.1	82.8	77.2	89.0	91.8	100.0	92.5	94.1	93.2	93.2	89.3	94.2	91.6	85.9					
	Females	70.4	84.9	76.3	90.0	92.2	100.0	91.9	98.4	100.0	93.8	94.1	99.3	92.1	89.8					
	Males	78.2	73.9	80.5	85.0	90.8	100.0	94.3	84.9	70.7	90.9	78.3	83.6	90.5	77.8					
<b>Karas</b>	Total	58.5	61.2	66.5	66.9	68.2	71.8	68.6	84.9	89.9	89.0	90.9	87.5	89.4	85.7					
	Females	55.3	57.8	61.7	60.9	63.3	68.0	65.2	84.9	92.6	92.5	91.8	90.0	86.0	80.5					
	Males	68.2	71.9	80.5	84.2	82.9	82.0	79.6	85.0	87.1	85.3	89.8	85.1	93.2	91.5					
<b>Kavango</b>	Total	31.4	39.2	44.4	49.0	53.8	60.0	61.5	68.9	76.1	77.8	81.8	85.2	88.3	87.7					
	Females	36.2	43.5	48.9	54.6	57.7	66.1	64.5	74.9	76.8	78.5	84.0	86.6	89.1	88.9					
	Males	27.8	35.9	40.9	44.2	50.4	55.1	58.8	66.7	75.8	77.5	80.8	84.5	87.9	87.2					

<b>Khomas</b>	Total	76.0	80.9	84.2	86.0	86.6	89.4	88.7	90.5	91.0	93.2	93.1	93.6	94.1	92.4
	Females	75.8	80.8	84.0	85.7	85.8	88.8	88.0	91.9	92.1	94.3	94.4	94.0	93.6	92.3
	Males	76.7	81.3	85.3	87.2	90.1	91.7	91.4	87.9	89.1	91.4	91.0	92.9	94.9	92.7
<b>Kunene</b>	Total	39.0	48.9	56.9	61.6	68.7	73.3	73.9	72.8	80.6	88.2	85.8	84.6	93.3	90.4
	Females	41.0	51.6	55.3	63.2	69.4	74.0	70.4	73.6	85.1	91.3	86.2	77.1	92.4	88.6
	Males	36.9	45.8	58.8	59.8	67.9	72.4	78.2	72.5	78.1	86.3	85.6	89.2	93.9	91.6
<b>Ohangwena</b>	Total	43.9	48.8	52.3	60.2	65.8	72.5	70.8	72.3	77.9	81.5	84.9	86.4	89.0	89.4
	Females	38.3	43.2	46.8	55.7	61.5	68.1	66.4	69.9	77.1	80.2	84.6	86.5	87.8	90.3
	Males	55.6	60.8	63.4	69.2	74.5	79.8	79.9	74.2	78.6	82.5	85.1	86.3	90.1	88.6
<b>Omaheke</b>	Total	54.9	59.5	63.6	69.9	69.7	71.1	68.4	76.8	81.1	88.1	90.7	86.7	88.8	88.7
	Females	55.9	60.7	63.5	69.7	69.6	71.2	67.7	87.3	85.3	87.8	93.8	83.5	88.4	89.1
	Males	52.8	57.3	63.7	70.4	69.8	71.0	69.8	70.6	78.5	88.3	88.3	89.6	89.1	88.3
<b>Omusati</b>	Total	38.4	43.8	47.3	54.0	57.3	64.4	64.4	73.6	77.5	80.7	85.4	85.7	89.7	90.3
	Females	34.1	39.1	43.0	49.9	54.2	60.6	60.8	72.2	75.4	78.2	83.8	85.2	89.7	90.2
	Males	50.7	57.8	60.4	66.9	66.5	73.4	74.2	74.7	79.2	82.8	86.8	86.2	89.7	90.4
<b>Oshana</b>	Total	41.2	43.6	46.6	55.9	62.0	68.0	68.8	69.3	72.8	77.5	81.9	85.3	88.2	90.1
	Females	37.8	40.4	43.5	53.2	59.4	66.9	67.0	69.7	73.1	78.6	83.8	87.0	88.6	91.0
	Males	52.9	54.6	57.7	65.2	71.0	71.1	74.9	68.8	72.6	76.3	79.8	83.3	87.8	89.1
<b>Oshikoto</b>	Total	42.0	48.1	53.8	61.4	65.9	72.5	72.5	71.4	78.6	80.9	86.0	87.3	90.9	91.6
	Females	39.2	43.0	48.3	57.2	61.9	70.1	69.7	76.1	82.2	84.5	89.1	88.2	91.1	91.8
	Males	47.7	58.5	65.1	70.3	74.5	76.9	78.1	67.0	75.1	77.6	83.4	86.4	90.7	91.3
	Total	39.3	48.3	60.9	62.5	63.3	68.1	71.2	81.5	82.5	86.0	89.1	89.2	89.3	87.4
	Females	45.0	51.8	63.7	65.0	67.6	71.5	75.2	85.6	85.1	87.3	89.6	90.7	91.2	89.2
	Males	30.8	42.7	55.6	57.1	54.0	61.4	62.3	77.8	80.1	84.7	88.7	87.8	87.3	85.6

Table 48: Percentages of primary and secondary teachers qualified to teach between 2002 &amp; 2008

Since 2007 the unqualified teachers cannot register for the BETD INSET programme, their only possibility to receive in-service training at present is through the regular NIED in-service training programmes coordinated by the education officers for specific subject areas.

Of all teachers in the secondary schools in 2001, 60.6% were adequately qualified (EFA, 2005: Statistical Annex). In 2008, 97% of all secondary school teachers were qualified (EFA, 2008: Statistical Annex). As will be shown in the next section they are, however, not always assigned by principals to teach the subjects in which they are most highly qualified. Also, in Namibia, being a qualified teacher does not automatically guarantee that such teacher has a good command of the English language.

## 6. Teacher training for and proficiency in the Namibian national languages

The approval by government at independence of all Namibian national languages as media of instruction from Grades 1 to 3 or as single subjects throughout the twelve years of basic (Grades 1–10) and senior secondary education (Grades 11–12), presupposes that there will be qualified teachers to teach these languages in the schools. But this is not the case. Neither the university nor the four colleges of education have collectively been offering all Namibian African languages. Some of the languages such as Hu|hoansi and Setswana are not offered anywhere; as a result there are no trained teachers in those languages. In addition to English, the colleges of education that train teachers for Grades 1 to 10 collectively offer eight of the languages, namely Afrikaans, Khoekhoegowab and Otjiherero at the Windhoek College, Oshiwambo (a merger of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama) at the Ongwediva College, Rukwangali, Thimbukushu and Rumanyo at the Rundu College, and Silozi at the Caprivi College. The student numbers registered at the colleges for the various national languages remain consistently high because students who major in language also take one of the national languages (in addition to English, which is compulsory). In this way the schools from Grades 1 to 10 are being well served by a steady flow of teachers trained in those languages.

Training of teachers for the senior secondary schools is not undertaken by the colleges but by the University of Namibia (UNAM). There is no compulsion for teacher trainees to opt for any of the African languages offered by the university and since African languages have lost their attraction since independence, very few students choose to study these languages.

The programme of the Diploma for Education in African Languages (DEAL) which is being offered to serving teachers by means of distance



training by the Centre of External Studies of the University of Namibia (UNAM), includes the following three languages: Oshiwambo, Otjiherero and Khoekhoegowab. Initially many students registered for the diploma but student numbers have dwindled to 20 in 2008 and nine in 2009. As a consequence, DEAL will be phased out.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of African Languages, UNAM, offers the subjects Oshiwambo, Khoekhoegowab and Otjiherero to teacher trainees for the senior secondary schools (Grades 11–12). Student numbers for at least two of these subjects have always been relatively low but have decreased since independence and are now minimal except for Oshiwambo for which 67 students were registered in 2009. There are only five degree students and one master's student for Otjiherero while only two students are studying Khoekhoegowab, one in the beginner's course and one final year degree student. In 2000 UNAM had to terminate its courses in Rukwangali and Silozi because the contracts for the lecturers were not renewed<sup>16</sup>.

Every language that UNAM is not offering signifies that there will be no fully trained teachers to teach these languages in the senior secondary schools of Namibia. As shown above, no senior secondary school teachers are presently being trained for the following languages: Silozi, Rukwangali, Thimbukushu, Rumanyo and, as has been mentioned previously, Setswana and Ju|hoansi. Of necessity under-qualified or unqualified mother tongue speakers of these languages are appointed as school teachers for these languages. Since the student numbers studying Khoekhoegowab and Otjiherero at UNAM are so low, the majority of teachers offering these subjects at senior secondary school level will therefore also be unqualified or under-qualified mother tongue speakers. They have to offer these languages to Grade 12 learners on two levels: the National Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) Ordinary Level and also on the Higher Level<sup>17</sup>. So far there has been no major research done on the reading and writing skills of teachers of the national languages in Namibian schools.

Some principals tend to assign the most poorly qualified teachers to teach the African languages. This has led to the stigmatization of African language teachers to the point that students at UNAM, as indicated, do not want to opt for the study of these languages. The EMIS 2008 statistics suggest that principals seem to think that anyone speaking a language can also teach a language and this statement also applies to the European languages: 41% of all primary school teachers teaching English as a first language

and 43.3.5% teaching English as a second language, had not studied the language up to Grade 12 themselves i.e. their training level in the language was less than Grade 12. The training level of Khoekhoegowab first language teachers was about the same and for Otjiherero and Afrikaans the proportion of teachers with less than Grade 12 schooling in the languages themselves was even higher. More than half of the teachers offering Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama had the same low level of training. (i.e. less than Grade 12) in the language. Generally the qualifications of teachers teaching the first four grades where they have to teach all subjects, were appallingly low: 4945 of 8284 teachers, i.e. 59.7% of the total teachers teaching Grades 1 to 4 in 2008, had a qualification of less than Grade 12 (EMIS 2008 Table 43)<sup>18</sup>.

It is a matter of concern that the situation as regards language teachers in the secondary schools is not much better, in spite of the fact that according to official statistics, 97% (sic!) of all secondary school teachers are qualified. Worse, of those teaching English as a first language, 43.7% had not studied the language up to Grade 12 themselves. Of the secondary school teachers teaching Afrikaans first and/or second language, English second language, German first and/or second language, Otjiherero, Oshikwanyama, and Khoekhoegowab first language, between 40% and 49% had a level of training in the language of less than Grade 12. For Oshindonga the percentage was even higher, namely 50.3% (EMIS 2008 Table 43). These teachers may mainly be used to teach Grades 8 to 10 only and not Grades 11 and 12 but it is possible that some of them have to offer above mentioned languages to Grade 12 learners on the National Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) Ordinary and Higher Levels without having studied these languages themselves up to Grade 12. This suggests that principals allocate subjects to teachers in which they are not qualified to teach; alternatively, in spite of official statistics, there are still significant numbers of teachers in the secondary schools with a teachers' qualification that permitted admission to teacher training during the pre-independence era. i.e. with a school leaving certificate of less than Grade 12.

## 7. Assessment and examination results

In 2004 there were 148 000 learners in secondary education. According to the new education system, learners sitting for the Grade 10 and 12 examinations get a separate certificate for every subject rated from A (7 points) to G (1 point). The terms 'pass' or 'fail' are not used by the Ministry of Education; if a subject is rated as ungraded, a learner receives no certificate and has actually failed that subject. The rationale behind this policy is that a learner may be eligible for employment even if only one subject has been given a high or acceptable rating, provided this subject is required for a specific post. An aggregate of 23 points for Grade 10 learners is required for admission to Grade 11. A learner's six best (out of nine) subjects, which must include English, need a minimum rating of F each. Grade 12 learners with 20 points are eligible for admission to the civil service while 25–35 points are required for admission to degree studies at UNAM, depending on the stipulations of each faculty. For pregraduate diploma studies an aggregate of 22 points for Grade 12 is required by tertiary training institutions. However, the Ministry does not consider learners with fewer points as having failed, as they may find admission to vocational colleges or other occupations.

In 1993 the results of the first public examinations for Grade 10 were devastating. The examination was administered by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and written in English. Only 15% of learners who sat for the Cambridge O Levels (Grade 10) examinations qualified for promotion to Grade 11 at the end of 1993 (Florida State University and SIAPAC-Namibia with the Ministry of Education and Culture as quoted in Kotzé, 1994 b: 1–2). Parents were shocked and could not understand why their children who had been promoted from Grades 1 to 9, many without having been required to repeat any grade, were not

allowed to progress to Grade 11. Teachers received the main blame for the outcome.

Since then, improvement on the percentage of learners who achieved success in Grade 10 has been slow<sup>19</sup>. In 2007, 14 years after the appalling 1993 results, 36 633 learners sat for the Grade 10 Junior Secondary Examination. Of these learners, only 49% were permitted to progress to Grade 11. Symbols for English as a second language, were low. Only 20% of learners achieved A, B or C symbols for English while 70% got D, E or F symbols. The results for the subjects Geography, History and Life Science were quite similar to the subject English (EMIS Education Statistics, 2007).

Regarding the unsuccessful learners, it is a matter of grave concern that from the early nineties until 2007, more than 50% of Grade 10 learners annually were not allowed to continue their school career to the senior secondary level. In real numbers, more than 19 000 Grade 10 learners had to leave school at the end of 2007 after failing to achieve acceptable gradings for promotion to Grade 11 (EMIS, 2007). Up to the year 2007 learners not admitted to Grade 11 were not allowed to repeat Grade 10 in school but only through the difficult mode of distance learning through the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL). Since 2008 a limited number of Grade 10 repeaters are admitted to some schools. Learners who want to repeat Grade 12 are still not allowed to return to school. The only possibility for them to improve their results is through NAMCOL. The cumulative effect of this practice over the years is enormous. If in one year 19 000 Grade 10 learners had to leave school, an estimated minimum of 210 000 young people had to leave school between 1993 and 2007, most of them without any useful certification. This is very high considering that the total population of Namibia is only 2.2 million. The figure of 210 000 does not include the figures for the Grade 12 learners who were not allowed to repeat Grade 12 at school, or those with aggregates of less than 20 points, or school drop outs.

Until very recently there has been a disturbing lack of understanding on the part of government of how difficult it is for a learner who was not promoted to Grade 11, to successfully repeat Grade 10 through the distance learning mode; this particularly when his/her main problem for 'failure' in the first place was poor comprehension of and writing skills in English. To date government has also been insensitive to the plight of unsuccessful Grade 12 learners who have great difficulty in completing their education through the distance mode.

## 8. The reading skills of Namibian Grade 6 learners and their teachers

According to a UNICEF survey on the reading skills of Grade 6 learners in Africa in 2003 (UNICEF, 2003) only 7.6% of all Namibian Grade 6 learners could read well, while another 25.9% possessed minimum reading competency. This suggests that two-thirds of Namibian Grade 6 learners could hardly read or not read at all. In the same survey, UNICEF established that in Kenya where only 69% of all Kenyan children attend primary school, almost two thirds of Grade 6 learners could read well and another 20% could read with minimum competency. One difference to Namibia is that in Kenyan primary schools, the medium of instruction is mainly in the national language Kiswahili. This African language is spoken by more than 50 million people in East Africa.

In 2005 the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) launched its second report on a survey conducted from 2000 to 2004 of Grade 6 learners' and teachers' proficiency in reading and mathematics in fourteen African countries. These were Namibia, South Africa, Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania Mainland, Tanzania Zanzibar, Uganda, Swaziland, Malawi, and Mozambique. SACMEQ is an independent intergovernmental NGO, with its coordination centre housed within the UNESCO Harare, Zimbabwe Cluster Office.

The Namibia Report of SACMEQ II (Makuwa, D, 2005) showed in figures and tables that Namibia came third from bottom i.e. in the twelfth place, in the reading test for learners on a level far below the SACMEQ II average. Namibia performed just slightly better than Zambia and Malawi (Figure 7.1). In the Mathematics test, Namibian Grade 6 learners were bottom, i.e. in the fourteenth place (Figure 7.3).

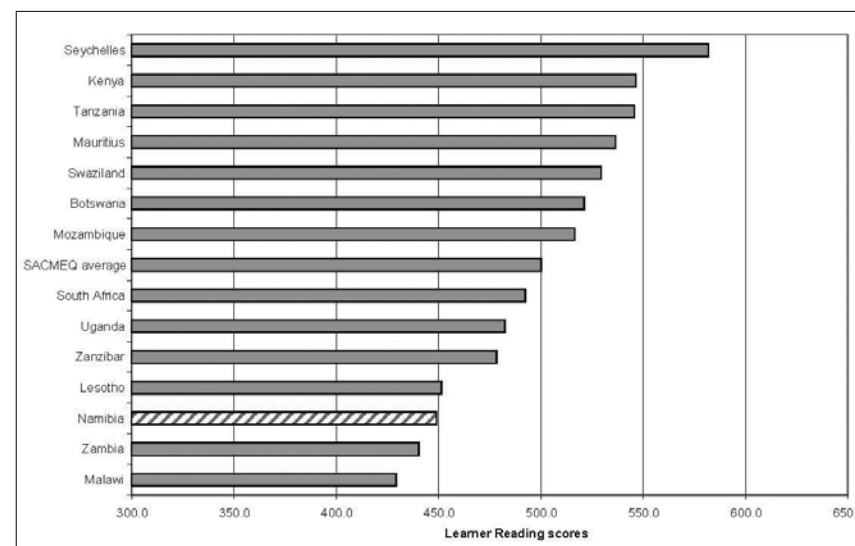


Figure 7.1: Learner reading scores by country (source: Makuwa, 2005: 171)

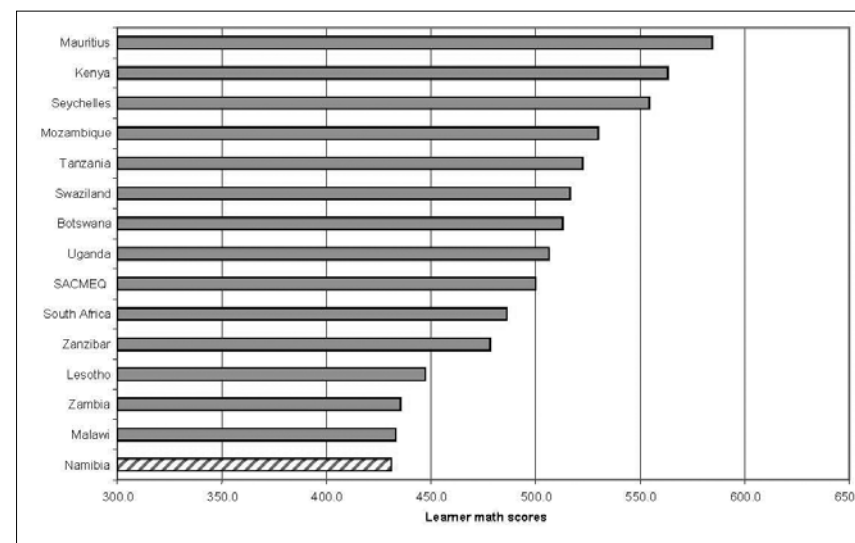


Figure 7.3: Learner mathematics scores by country (source: Makuwa, 2005: 172)

Region	SACMEQ I						SACMEQ II					
	Learners reaching minimum level of mastery			Learners reaching desirable level of mastery			Learners reaching minimum level of mastery			Learners reaching desirable level of mastery		
	%	SE		%	SE		%	SE		%	SE	
Caprivi	3.2	0.85		0.0	0.00		4.2	1.67		1.1	0.70	
Erongo	59.9	10.54		23.4	10.20		52.3	9.15		25.1	7.47	
Hardap	45.5	11.38		15.8	5.54		49.4	8.26		23.4	5.94	
Karas	51.8	10.18		15.8	5.82		45.4	8.11		16.2	6.06	
Kavango	11.1	3.02		0.1	0.14		7.5	1.76		0.5	0.34	
Khomas	73.8	6.09		38.5	8.88		63.7	6.48		35.3	6.79	
Kunene	15.2	3.55		1.0	0.79		16.2	5.25		3.5	2.52	
Ohangwena	9.9	1.65		0.0	0.00		3.4	1.20		0.2	0.17	
Omahake	20.2	14.81		0.0	0.00		11.6	3.97		1.1	0.93	
Omusati	4.6	1.21		0.0	0.00		4.4	1.15		0.2	0.15	
Oshikoto	15.4	14.96		12.1	12.85		10.0	5.45		5.6	3.87	
Otjozondjupa	37.9	12.51		14.7	12.86		26.7	7.91		12.1	5.97	
Oshana	11.8	3.08		0.0	0.00		11.0	3.25		1.2	0.49	
Namibia	22.7	1.76		7.8	1.51		16.9	1.17		6.7	0.88	

Table 7.3 Percentages and sampling errors of learners reaching minimum and desirable reading levels of mastery (SACMEQ I and SACMEQ II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 176)

Region	Learner performance on all items					
	SACMEQ I		SACMEQ II			
	Reading		Reading		Mathematics	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Caprivi	430.9	2.76	417.3	4.71	405.2	4.03
Erongo	545.7	28.69	527.5	24.22	494.4	21.23
Hardap	512.3	21.79	518.7	20.27	499.0	17.89
Karas	519.8	21.86	510.4	19.49	482.7	18.33
Kavango	448.3	5.13	431.5	4.99	419.0	4.95
Khomas	585.5	22.14	567.0	18.77	530.5	19.06
Kunene	455.6	6.04	448.2	13.29	445.4	14.17
Ohangwena	444.2	3.65	416.9	3.69	398.8	2.65
Omahake	450.3	19.04	434.4	8.23	426.4	5.16
Omusati	440.1	3.10	424.0	3.91	410.0	3.82
Oshikoto	460.3	43.51	428.3	13.38	420.0	13.51
Otjozondjupa	509.9	34.97	468.9	21.39	458.8	17.04
Oshana	451.2	8.10	429.9	7.68	402.4	6.79
Namibia	472.9	4.65	449.0	3.12	431.1	2.93

Table 7.1: Means and sampling errors for the reading and mathematics test scores of learners with all items (SACMEQ I and SACMEQ II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 174)

Region	Teachers reaching minimum level of mastery		Teachers reaching desirable level of mastery	
	%	SE	%	SE
Caprivi	100.0	0.00	76.5	12.58
Erongo	100.0	0.00	100.0	0.00
Hardap	100.0	0.00	100.0	0.00
Karas	100.0	0.00	100.0	0.00
Kavango	100.0	0.00	90.4	5.50
Khomas	100.0	0.00	97.5	2.50
Kunene	100.0	0.00	88.2	8.40
Ohangwena	100.0	0.00	94.7	3.71
Omaheke	77.9	15.04	77.9	15.04
Omusati	100.0	0.00	92.8	4.12
Oshikoto	100.0	0.00	96.8	3.24
Otjozondjupa	100.0	0.00	100.0	0.00
OShana	100.0	0.00	95.6	3.19
Namibia	99.4	0.42	94.1	1.42

**Table 7.4: Percentages and sampling errors of teachers reaching minimum and desirable reading levels of mastery (SACMEQ II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 177)**

The reading test results grouped proficiency on two levels: *Minimum level*: ‘can barely survive during the next year of schooling’, and *Desirable level*: ‘be guaranteed to succeed during the next year of schooling’. Only 16.9% of Namibian Grade 6 learners reached the minimum level and 6.7% the desirable level in 2000 (Table 7.3). These results indicate that in 2000 only 23.6% of Namibian Grade 6 learners could read on an acceptable level, the majority of this percentage only minimally well. The results furthermore

suggest that the reading proficiency of 76.4% of the learners was inadequate, possibly to the point that some could not read at all. Table 7.5 which compares the SACMEQ I results of 1995 published in 1998 (Voigts, 1998 SACMEQ I) with SACMEQ II results in 2000 published in 2005, shows a decline in reading proficiency in Namibia. In 1995 the desirable reading level was reached by 7.8% of Grade 6 learners.

Regarding regional variations in Namibia, there were great differences, both in 1995 and 2000. Only 5% of learners reached the minimum level of reading in three northern regions and only 1.2% the desirable level of mastery in six northern regions. In the Erongo and Khomas regions 59.6% and 73.8% of learners respectively achieved minimum reading levels and 23.4% and 38.5% desirable levels (Table 7.3). The Erongo region includes towns such as Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, while the Khomas region includes the city of Windhoek. Overall, learners from urban areas and/or from higher income groups performed better than learners from rural/remote areas and/or from low income groups, as is the situation in the greater part of the northern regions. Gender differences in performance were also tested but the results did not show significant differences in the proficiencies of boys and girls (Table 7.5).

Teachers teaching Grade 6 learners were given exactly the same reading and mathematics tests as the learners. Taking into account that the level of difficulty of the tests was for twelve year old Grade 6 learners, the ideal would be that 100% of the teachers would achieve desirable levels of proficiency in both subjects. Out of twelve African countries (South Africa and Mauritius did not take part in the teachers’ tests) Namibian teachers came sixth but below the SACMEQ average in the reading proficiency test (Figure 7.2), and in the Mathematics test (Figure 7.4) they were second from bottom, i.e. in the eleventh place. Again there were great regional variations in Namibia, with teachers from the northern regions performing less well to the point that 5% of the Grade 6 learners scored higher levels than the bottom 12% of teachers (Table 7.1). In the Omaheke region 78% of the teachers reached only the minimum level of reading for Grade 6. On a scale of 8 reading levels, 13.9% of teachers in Omaheke were at level 1 i.e. they were in the pre-reading phase and could hardly read what is required of a Grade 6 learner whom they were supposed to teach. Another 8.2% of teachers in Omaheke were at level 3, i.e. they could not read for comprehension. Nationally 6% of the teachers teaching Grade 6 could not reach levels 4 to 5 which is the desirable reading level

for Grade 6 (Table 7.4) and 58.8% could not reach level 8, the highest level on the scale for learner reading competency. A matter of grave concern is that the teachers with the lowest competencies were teaching more than 65% of all Grade 6 learners in the country.

The government is aware of the fact that low English language proficiency among teachers contributes to low English language proficiency among learners. Special English proficiency training courses for teachers are being planned by NIED of the Ministry of Education and will be offered as from 2011. The University of Namibia has been contracted to offer these courses. It is hoped that the course, when successfully completed, will enable teachers to use quality English instead of broken English (popularly called 'Namlish') or other languages while they are supposed to offer English medium instruction. Research is needed to establish the geographical distribution of Standard English speakers and 'Namlish' speakers in Namibia. Circumstantial evidence indicates that the further citizens live from the urban areas, the more they speak 'Namlish' and often no English at all, not even 'Namlish'.

As was indicated in Section 3 most teachers are not using the required medium of instruction while teaching. Since language acquisition is dependent upon hearing more than anything else, a higher level of

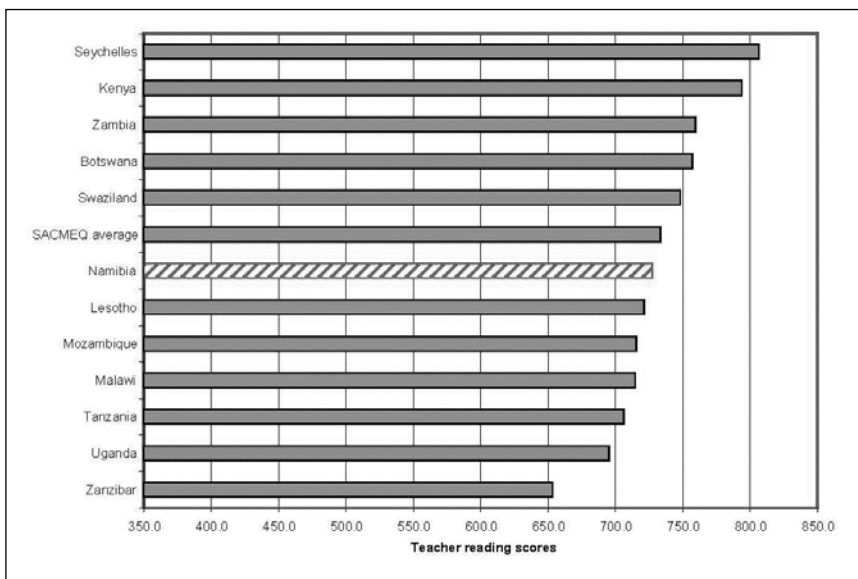
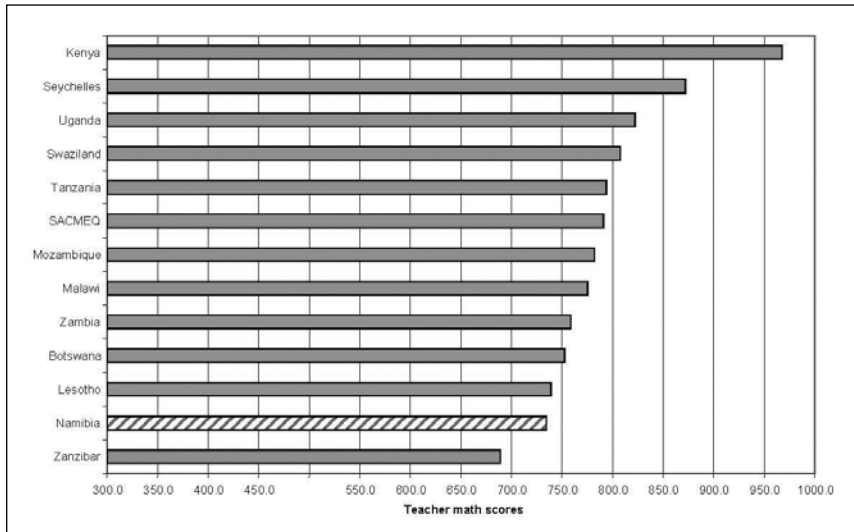


Figure 7.2: Teacher reading scores by country (source: Makuwa, 2005: 171)

Sub-groups	Learners reaching minimum level of mastery		Learners reaching desirable level of mastery		Learners reaching minimum level of mastery		Learners reaching desirable level of mastery	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Gender								
Boys	24.2	1.92	8.1	1.59	16.2	1.35	6.6	0.99
Girls	21.4	1.83	7.5	1.54	17.5	1.24	6.9	0.90
Socio-economic level								
Low SES	11.1	1.09	1.2	0.31	5.9	0.56	0.8	0.17
High SES	34.1	2.95	14.2	2.78	31.9	2.26	14.9	1.92
School location								
Isolated/Rural	9.9	1.17	0.8	0.29	4.5	0.65	0.2	0.08
Small town	26.8	7.49	10.5	6.39	25.5	4.08	10.0	2.79
Large city	62.2	5.80	29.0	5.80	53.1	4.57	27.1	4.05
Namibia	22.7	1.76	7.8	1.51	16.9	1.17	6.7	0.88

Table 7.5: Percentages and sampling errors of learners reaching minimum and desirable reading levels of mastery by sub-groups (SACMEQ I and SACMEQ II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 178)



**Figure 7.4: Teacher mathematics scores by country (source: Makuwa, 2005: 173)**

English language proficiency among teachers should contribute to a higher level of English language proficiency among learners. The question however, remains: Will both teachers and learners acquire a high level of English language proficiency when they only speak and hear English in the school and not outside the school, as is the situation in which 65% of all teachers and learners find themselves?

The empirical research on English language proficiency discussed in this section (Section 8) entailed only *reading proficiency*. The English *writing proficiency* of both learners and teachers has not been sufficiently researched. Otaala's preliminary research on a sample of 100 teachers, as indicated in Section 3, showed that teachers in 1998 could neither read nor write well in English.

## 9. Background of learners in Namibian schools

SACMEQ II in 2005, made a special study of the background of Namibian learners. A summary of the main findings is as follows:

1. The level of education of the parents was relatively low: 7.3% of the learners had mothers who had not been to school and 6.7% had fathers with no schooling; 32.6% of the mothers and 32.5% of the fathers had some primary education only. The rest of the parents had various levels of secondary education; 11.2% of the mothers had tertiary education (Tables 3.1(b) and 3.2).
2. The national average for books at home was 22 books (Table 3.1(b)). Percentages of other reading materials and electronic communication media in the homes were as follows: Newspapers 48%, Magazines 28%, Radio 90%, Television 40%, Telephone 26% (Table 3.4). In the northeast and in some of the central northern regions the percentages were extremely low.
3. More than half of Namibian learners (51%) lived in homes with floors of earth, clay or canvas, 79% in homes with walls of sticks, grass, mud, wood or metal sheets and 56% in homes with roofs of grass, thatch, cardboard, wood, metal sheets.
4. Only 35% of all learners lived in urban areas and 65% in rural areas. On average the distance from the learner's homes to the primary and secondary schools, the clinic, the library, the bookshop was 30km, and much further in Caprivi and Kunene (Table 3.6).
5. The average age of Grade 6 learners was 13.86 years (Table 3.1(a)).
6. More than 54% of learners had repeated a grade once or more (including learners who 'dropped in' after having 'dropped out') (Table 3.7 9(a) and (b)). (As explained in endnote 20 below, 15% of learners per class per year are allowed to repeat a class with the exception of Grades 12 and 10;

Region	Age (months)		Sex (female)		Books: At home (number)		Possessions at home (index)		Meals (index)		Parent Education	
	Mean	SE	%	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Caprivi	155.0	1.83	46.4	2.28	11.7	3.10	4.6	0.51	11.1	0.14	3.6	0.24
Erongo	156.2	1.32	48.6	2.15	21.3	4.92	8.7	0.51	11.5	0.16	4.2	0.17
Hardap	156.3	1.38	48.1	1.97	26.8	6.09	7.3	0.48	11.0	0.26	3.8	0.18
Karas	158.8	1.31	53.1	2.57	21.6	5.07	7.5	0.51	10.8	0.13	3.9	0.17
Kavango	173.4	1.72	48.0	1.93	14.6	2.08	3.9	0.35	9.6	0.22	3.0	0.10
Khomas	154.2	1.32	51.5	2.07	42.7	6.45	8.8	0.28	10.9	0.14	4.6	0.13
Kunene	161.7	2.70	53.0	2.40	27.0	19.07	5.7	0.83	11.3	0.25	3.0	0.22
Ohangwena	174.7	1.62	57.5	1.97	15.3	2.00	4.2	0.19	11.0	0.18	3.1	0.09
Omahake	160.0	1.65	47.3	1.65	32.2	7.69	5.8	0.58	10.2	0.42	3.4	0.15
Omusati	169.4	1.39	53.5	1.37	19.0	1.65	4.6	0.18	10.8	0.15	3.2	0.09
Oshikoto	167.5	2.22	51.6	1.67	21.9	5.37	4.7	0.40	10.5	0.19	3.3	0.13
Otjozondjupa	159.6	1.81	46.6	1.98	37.2	5.83	6.4	0.69	10.8	0.19	3.8	0.21
Oshana	166.2	1.60	51.8	1.85	20.6	1.85	5.2	0.30	10.9	0.16	3.5	0.13
Namibia	166.4	0.57	51.9	0.61	22.0	1.16	5.4	0.10	10.7	0.06	3.5	0.04

Table 3.1(b): Means, percentages, and sampling errors for the learner age, sex, and home-related characteristics (SACMEQ II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 52)

since 2008 a limited number of the latter may also repeat at school).

- When asked about their support of learners with homework, only 46.5% of parents reportedly ensured that homework was done, 33.9% helped with homework and 35.7% checked the work done by learners (Table 3.10). The reason for the lack of support may be the low level of schooling among many parents.

As far as enrolment is concerned, Namibia came third on the UNESCO list for gender parity in African schools during the 2005 Education for All Schools Survey, but average Namibian statistics may be misleading. Whereas gender parity prevails in some regions, in the historically most disadvantaged regions such as Kavango, Caprivi and Kunene, it does not. Gender disparity in Kavango is similar to Nigeria, Ghana and Congo Republic with only 39% girls as compared to 61% boys enrolled in Grades 11 and 12 (UNESCO, 2005). Namibia is at risk of not being able to achieve gender parity in 2015 or 2025 (UNESCO, 2008: EFA Table 5.3 p. 184).

		Mother education levels						Total
		No school	Some primary	All primary	Some secondary	All secondary	Some tertiary	
Father education levels	No school	44.5	33.8	8.9	5.6	4.2	3.0	100.0 (6.7)
	Some primary	7.9	62.2	11.2	9.8	5.1	3.8	100.0 (32.5)
	All primary	4.4	35.9	29.5	15.0	10.1	5.2	100.0 (7.7)
	Some secondary	2.9	13.0	22.4	39.7	13.5	8.6	100.0 (22.9)
	All secondary	3.1	19.0	10.9	21.6	36.1	9.3	100.0 (14.0)
	Some tertiary	1.8	10.7	8.8	14.4	27.3	37.1	100.0 (16.3)
Total		7.3	32.6	14.6	19.1	15.3	11.2	100.0

Table 3.2 Percentage of mothers and fathers with different levels of education (source: Makuwa, 2005: 53)



IDEDREG	Newspaper	Magazine	Radio	TV	VCR	Cassette	Telephone
Caprivi	29	17	92	49	16	39	14
Erongo	62	61	87	82	53	67	67
Hardap	49	47	74	68	31	55	60
Karas	42	47	91	60	31	75	54
Kavango	33	17	88	26	15	38	15
Khomas	66	60	92	89	53	64	72
Kunene	29	43	66	51	30	37	38
Ohangwena	46	13	93	21	08	36	06
Omaheke	32	22	73	56	26	40	51
Omusati	51	24	94	23	07	34	12
Oshikoto	51	27	95	28	16	35	18
Otjozondjupa	39	35	82	71	32	44	46
Oshana	56	27	94	40	16	42	21
Namibia	48	28	90	40	19	42	26

**Table 3.4: Percentages of learners in homes with the following possessions (source: Makuwa, 2005: 57)**

Region	SACMEQ I				SACMEQ II			
	Urban		Distance (km)		Urban		Distance (km)	
	%	SE	Mean	SE	%	SE	Mean	SE
Caprivi	15.0	8.19	44.5	6.84	21.4	11.55	65.0	14.58
Erongo	90.9	9.29	26.1	13.07	84.5	8.88	20.5	6.34
Hardap	88.9	11.49	23.4	14.64	87.6	8.62	16.8	7.37
Karas	18.2	12.47	65.7	17.56	83.5	9.32	31.7	12.15
Kavango	35.0	12.41	36.0	9.23	31.6	9.88	32.3	7.03
Khomas	92.9	7.26	5.8	2.61	96.0	4.03	4.5	1.24
Kunene	44.4	18.16	99.0	33.70	39.6	13.41	109.7	27.77
Ohangwena	11.1	7.68	24.1	3.23	15.5	6.11	35.0	5.83
Omahake	75.0	28.28	38.9	32.35	26.3	13.14	75.5	18.24
Omusati	4.5	4.57	33.9	4.42	9.8	4.84	31.4	3.00
Oshikoto	14.3	15.12	26.1	6.96	24.3	8.93	28.1	4.73
Otjozondjupa	71.4	19.52	21.6	11.92	73.7	11.85	37.2	15.52
Oshana	12.5	13.14	13.1	2.71	31.6	9.71	11.8	1.33
Namibia	33.4	2.92	31.2	2.58	36.5	2.57	30.8	2.02

**Table 3.6: School location (SACMEQ I and SACMEQ II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 61)**

Region	Age (months)		Sex (female)		Books at home (number)		Possessions at home (index)		Meals (index)		Parent Education	
	Mean	SE	%	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Caprivi	166.5	4.09	42.0	2.20	15.2	3.99	3.9	0.29	10.3	0.21	3.5	0.15
Erongo	161.7	2.42	49.5	1.78	38.2	9.62	8.3	0.56	11.0	0.19	4.1	0.15
Hardap	159.1	3.40	48.1	2.55	19.7	5.75	7.1	0.37	10.6	0.32	3.5	0.26
Karas	164.6	2.28	47.7	1.83	25.5	5.15	6.7	0.86	10.9	0.23	3.6	0.23
Kavango	186.5	2.24	43.8	2.82	12.9	3.81	4.2	0.46	10.1	0.27	2.9	0.13
Khomas	160.9	1.99	46.7	2.57	42.0	8.86	8.6	0.54	10.9	0.11	4.2	0.20
Kunene	179.6	6.32	52.5	3.10	20.1	6.12	5.2	0.37	10.7	0.37	3.1	0.30
Ohangwena	196.9	3.00	59.5	2.17	30.2	5.06	4.7	0.25	10.3	0.39	3.1	0.10
Omahake	170.8	3.15	47.6	3.05	8.8	7.31	6.8	1.37	11.2	0.50	3.4	0.19
Omusati	184.9	1.86	51.6	2.18	28.3	4.56	5.2	0.19	10.9	0.10	3.2	0.08
Oshikoto	190.1	7.11	58.7	2.53	35.8	9.44	5.7	0.92	10.5	0.51	3.6	0.27
Otjozondjupa	167.1	3.13	52.7	1.40	40.8	8.23	7.7	0.37	10.5	0.35	3.6	0.28
Oshana	178.3	4.29	53.6	2.70	22.1	4.00	6.0	0.53	11.0	0.22	3.3	0.15
Namibia	178.3	0.98	51.2	0.74	27.6	1.86	5.8	0.13	10.7	0.08	3.4	0.05

**Table 3.1(a): Means, percentages, and sampling errors for the learner age, sex, and home-related characteristics (SACMEQ I) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 51)**

Region	Home assistance 'most of the time' with school work											
	SACMEQ I *						SACMEQ II *					
	Ensure home-work done		Help with the homework		Look at school work done		Ensure home-work done		Help with the homework		Look at school work done	
%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	
Caprivi	24.1	3.21	19.0	2.96	17.2	2.10	22.8	5.57	13.9	4.40	9.4	3.03
Erongo	58.9	5.75	27.0	2.92	38.9	3.78	56.3	6.14	30.3	4.06	38.5	3.79
Hardap	44.7	5.31	19.9	2.70	29.2	2.83	49.1	5.71	31.8	5.54	28.3	3.70
Karas	49.7	5.44	22.8	2.60	33.0	3.97	57.9	5.70	35.6	3.89	45.1	5.88
Kavango	28.9	4.33	9.8	3.01	18.9	3.75	31.8	3.40	25.3	4.80	26.6	3.40
Khomas	61.1	2.31	28.5	3.74	40.1	3.00	59.0	3.03	38.4	3.81	44.0	2.65
Kunene	31.4	5.76	23.7	5.22	30.2	4.23	35.2	10.09	14.8	3.63	20.8	6.15
Ohangwena	42.0	4.17	28.1	3.21	40.5	3.15	40.7	3.26	35.9	2.78	38.9	2.40
Omaheke	33.8	18.86	8.1	3.85	22.5	9.33	42.0	6.69	30.9	4.73	32.7	5.63
Omusati	52.1	4.35	31.1	3.33	40.8	3.16	48.4	3.50	36.9	3.14	36.5	2.44
Oshikoto	56.2	7.52	38.0	3.98	55.9	5.74	51.2	4.14	33.0	2.56	36.6	3.80
Otjozondjupa	46.3	5.80	22.1	3.53	43.0	2.50	57.6	5.34	36.7	5.11	36.1	4.69
Oshana	38.3	6.24	23.8	2.85	33.7	5.25	50.2	3.64	40.7	3.83	40.9	1.60
Namibia	45.0	1.62	25.3	1.14	35.9	1.19	46.5	1.29	33.9	1.18	35.7	0.97

**Table 3.10. Home assistance with school related work (SACMEQ I and II) (source: Makuwa, 2005: 67)**

trend. According to a survey conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research in 2009, only 81% of all school-age children are presently attending school. In 2006 the Second Millennium Development Goals Report Namibia (p. 11) indicated that in that year alone, 10 000 learners dropped out of school.

## 10. School enrolment and drop-out rate

In 2005 UNESCO's survey Education for All, considered Namibia as one of the leaders in Africa as far as school attendance is concerned<sup>20</sup>. At the same time it was, however, stated that growth in the number of enrolments had not gone hand in hand with a higher quality of education. Namibia is still very far from reaching Development Goal No. 6 of UNESCO to achieve quality education by 2015. Namibia came second from bottom out of 12 African countries (UNESCO, 2005: EFA Figure 3.36b p. 125). Namibia is at serious risk of not achieving the goal of universal primary enrolment by 2015. The process is too slow (UNESCO, 2008: EFA Table 5.2 p. 180). In 1999 the gross enrolment in primary education was 104% (sic). This figure includes over-age children enrolling in Grade 1; it also seemingly does happen that some parents register the same child more than once) and in 2005 98% of all children of school-going age. The net enrolment was 73% and 72% respectively (EFA, 2008). Of the learners in school, 37% were one to two years over age for their classes. The survival rate to Grade 5 was 86% and to Grade 7 the survival rate was 76% in 2004 but only 63% of the learners successfully completed Grade 7. The average repetition rate in primary education was approximately 15% in 2005 but some learners tended to drop out rather than repeat grades.

Regarding the transition to secondary education, 78.4% of primary school learners entered secondary school but all in all only 39% of learners were registered for the secondary schools in 2005. The dramatic drop in enrolment after the Grade 10 examinations accounts for this low average for Grades 8 to 12, i.e. for secondary education as a whole in 2005. In 1999 there were 100 000 out of school children in Namibia and in 2005 the figure had risen to 116 000. School attendance in Namibia is on a downward

reading skills affect all areas of teaching and learning. The effect of this state of affairs is a serious impediment to the development of higher education in Namibia. The number of students who gain access to higher education is too small and the majority is not equipped for competitive and independent study and research.

## **11. The effect of the language policy on senior secondary and tertiary education**

By 2004 only 41% and by 2007 49% of Grade 10 learners graduated to Grade 11 (EMIS, 2007). Of boys of that age, 60% were not in senior secondary school. The Institute for Public Policy Research (Booyesen 2004: 8) found that 80% of the learners from the Karas and Hardap regions who wrote the International General Certificate for Senior Education (IGCSE) Grade 12 examination in 2003 did not meet the minimum qualifications for admission to the civil service and only 11% qualified for admission to local tertiary institutions. The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate evaluates more than two million students from 165 countries. Their finding was that Namibian IGCSE candidates achieved far worse symbols in 2003 than the average for all other countries, the majority being African countries (cf. Section 6).

In 2008 only 6% of Grade 12 school leavers were enrolled in tertiary education. The fields of study chosen have tended to decrease in education and the arts and humanities in favour of the social sciences, business, law and natural sciences (UNESCO, 2005: EFA p. 332; UNESCO, 2008: EFA). The University of Namibia (UNAM) offers a four year bachelors degree using the first year as a bridging year to improve competency in English and to bring several other subjects up to university first year level. The author, having for many years lectured to UNAM students, the cream of the Namibian senior secondary school leavers, can testify to the poor English writing proficiency of the majority.

Research on English language proficiency conducted by Bradley (2001: 42), established that 69% of Namibian college students did not have the required levels of understanding to cope effectively with study courses. Poor

## 12. The effect of poor secondary school examination results on the country and the sub-continent at large

The estimated 210 000 young people walking the streets after not having been successful in the Grade 10 examinations is a matter of concern. The question arises as to the use (or otherwise) of results certificates with F and G symbols. What prospects do these young people have of making a proper living? Their future does not look promising but rather bleak. Unemployment contributes to a fragile socio-political climate in the country. Poverty and criminality is increasing in Namibia. It is known that teenage boys are getting involved in cattle theft and poaching, and farm murders are on the increase.

The main problems surrounding education in Namibia are not unique; it is to a large extent a Sub-Saharan African phenomenon. The problems include high outcomes of functional illiteracy in spite of schooling or literacy training, and high school drop out rates. The reasons for these problems are mainly the low level of education of many parents, poverty and the use of a language which learners are not familiar with as the medium of instruction in schools.

The World Bank has established that the benefits of teaching children in their mother tongue/first language are that children attend school more regularly; they don't drop out easily; they are academically and socio-economically more successful; they learn the second language more easily (Greaney, 2003).

## 13. Which language medium of instruction do parents prefer for their children and which language/s do African governments prefer?

There are several reasons for the popularity of the colonial language for communication and educational purposes in Africa:

1. The low regard in which indigenous languages are held, even by the very speakers of those languages. Colonialism contributed to the notion that mother tongue education is second class education. This notion was further reinforced in South Africa and Namibia through the second rate education of *apartheid* offered to all learners except white children.
2. Owing to poverty and/or ignorance, many parents see the colonial language as a vehicle for development and want their children to become fluent in this language in the hope that the children will be more successful than they have been to secure good jobs. On the other hand, according to Brock-Utne (1995: 18), children often prefer the mother tongue because it is the only language they understand; their parents, particularly the educated parents, however, insist that they be taught in English.
3. The implementation of multilingual education policies is difficult. The number of mother tongue teachers is inadequate; not everybody who can speak a language can teach that language. The infrastructure of trained and knowledgeable officials and funding in the civil service is often lacking. To implement multilingual education will require huge budgets for the development of mother tongue training programmes for teachers at tertiary institutions, the writing and publishing of thousands

of readers and networks in several languages for the schools and the creation of many new posts.

4. There is a poor reading culture in indigenous languages, and there are very limited programmes that are being initiated or promoted to reverse this.
5. The indigenous languages are not being developed to keep abreast of the growth of information. For communication and publishing in the indigenous languages, many words to describe e.g. scientific and technological concepts are lacking. Speakers find that they have to use e.g. many English words when trying to express themselves on academic research topics and technology in an indigenous language.
6. In spite of the acceptance of policies favouring mother tongue education, many African governments deep down, are indifferent to universal mother tongue education. Many politicians, being members of a small elite, prefer to maintain the *status quo*. These political leaders speak the colonial languages fluently and send their children to private schools and first world universities. Former colonial powers and other first world leading countries also have an interest in strengthening the colonial languages in Africa; they want to exercise some indirect control of governments. For example, they do not even have scruples to co-operate and do business with African dictators (Harlech-Jones, 1995: 1–2).

It appears that many parents and educators are ashamed of their mother tongue and culture, considering them as being inferior to English. According to Pienaar-Louw (1997: 23) in a survey of language preferences of Namibian school leavers, percentages of school leavers who wanted their children to be taught in the mother tongue as their first language were 100% of German speakers, 49% of Afrikaans speakers and only 17.4% of Khoekhoegowab speakers. Of the latter group 41% denied their mother tongue and insisted that they were English speaking, 47% of Otjiherero speakers did the same. In comparison 75% of all parents in Holland want their children to be instructed in the mother tongue for their whole school career; generally mother tongue education is accepted worldwide, as a *sine qua non*, but not in Africa. Brock-Utne (1995: 11) states that ‘the decision to abandon one’s own language always derives from a change in self-esteem of the speech community ... It is one possible strategy for members of minority groups who have developed a “negative” social identity to change an inferior position.’

It is disconcerting that in spite of the difficulties encountered over the past twenty years in the educational arena, parents are still not aware that English medium instruction is contributing to their children’s poor performance in school. Most parents want their children to be instructed mainly in English as from the fourth school year at least. The survey by Pienaar-Louw (1997: 23) found that the percentages of learners in Grades 1 to 3 who were receiving mother tongue education in 1997 were very unequal. They were as follows: Afrikaans 60%, English 88%, German 94%, Khoekhoegowab 33%, Oshikanyama 82%, Oshindonga 92% and Otjiherero 31%.

In 2008 there were 243 schools in Namibia that had ministerial approval to offer English as the sole medium of instruction from Grade 1 onwards. There is a growing tendency among parents to remove their children from schools offering mother tongue instruction and enrolling them at schools with English as the sole medium of instruction. The percentage of mother tongue speakers, who were enjoying education in their mother tongue in Grades 1 to 3, varied in 2008 but was nevertheless still relatively high in some languages. More than 80% of Afrikaans, English, German, Khoekhoegowab, Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama speakers were educated in the mother tongue during the lower primary phase but only 45% Ju|hoansi and 41% Setswana speakers. The most neglected language was Thimbukushu with only 720 out of 37 273 i.e. 2% of the speakers who were being instructed in their mother tongue (EMIS, 2008:Table 18).

## 14. The psychological effects of educational reforms with specific reference to education in an unknown language

In 1999 Namibian psychologist, Dr Shaun Whittaker, warned that sudden immersion in a language unfamiliar to children has failed in every single African country that tried to implement it. To expect primary school children to become fluent in English within three to four years is unrealistic (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1999: 4). Dr Whittaker advocated mother tongue instruction during all primary school years with English as a subject. He further advised that English as the medium of instruction could be phased in gradually in the secondary school to the stage that half of the subjects could be offered in the mother tongue and half in English (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1999: 4).

As far as reform through a new educational philosophy is concerned, O'Sullivan (2002: 232) opines that learner centred approaches in the cultures of some developing countries are not appropriate. In Namibia, e.g. children are reared not to question elders, so they will find it unacceptable to enter into a free discourse with their teachers.

Harlech-Jones quotes Berger (1976: 210) as follows: 'Policies that ignore the indigenous definitions of a situation will fail.' The effect of an Utopian language policy on the education of the already most disadvantaged, is that they are 'rendered voiceless and not able to make themselves heard in public debate owing to lack of command of the official language; they are dispossessed of the dominant language, passive, helpless, confused and profoundly suspicious of government' (Harlech-Jones, 1995: 22–23). Melber (1985: 34) also warns with the chilling slogan: 'A voiceless people, die a soundless death.'

Tanzanian linguist, Casimir Rubagumya (2003: 1) believes that learning the colonial language first, impedes, rather than facilitates literacy. Parents

who will not or cannot take the responsibility for raising their children to speak and think in the colonial language, should let them be taught in the mother tongue otherwise the education of their children is doomed to failure. Education in the colonial language is culturally alienating. African children who grow up speaking the colonial language as their first language can be termed Afro-English or Afro-Saxons (Rubagumya, 2003: 6–7). Elite parents create an artificial environment in their homes, alienating their children from their surroundings. According to Rubagumya there is no African country, not even in so-called Anglophone Africa, where even half of the population speaks, reads and writes English.

Haacke (1983: 14) states that instruction in an unknown language impedes cognitive perception; in a classroom situation, the children cannot partake in a dialogue which promotes learning. The development of independent thinking and decision-making after considering various points of view may also be inhibited. As a result many African children soon lose their eagerness to learn when taught in a language they struggle to understand. Classroom interaction is often very poor because learners are not enthusiastic and interested. Often they find no support at home because their parents are either illiterate or semi-literate, particularly in the official language.

On the socio-psychological level, the assimilation of two or more dissimilar languages can lead to cultural disorientation and stunted verbal expression. The person becomes culturally torn (Melber, 1985: 14). The Zimbabwean author and Shona-speaker, Dambudzo Marechera (in Melber, 1985: 14), poignantly describes the effect English, his second language, had on him: '... I lost the ability to express the simplest things ... I incessantly talked disjointed nonsense ... I felt raped inside through the conflict between Shona and English ... I felt literally as if my words had been stolen' [*my translation from the German*].

The efforts made by government to improve the quality of education through ETSIP appear more like patchwork. They do not touch the core of the problem surrounding the low quality of education in Namibia. The government does not seem able or willing to make a connection between the negative effects of a too early and total switch to English medium instruction in the schools and the low quality of teaching and learning. Only three years of mother tongue education – and not all lower primary schools, particularly the schools in Windhoek are offering mother tongue instruction but rather instruction in English with Afrikaans as a second language – is still considered as being sufficient.

In the Second Millennium Development Goals Report Namibia (p. 11) the 'three main reasons (given) for dropping out of school are pregnancy, demands from parents and distance to school'. It is further stated that 'poverty and hunger are two important aspects in relation to both drop-out rates and performance at school.' That most learners are struggling with English is not mentioned at all, i.e. it is not acknowledged as a reason or an aspect worth mentioning; maybe it is a reason or an aspect which is deliberately being overlooked. The Ministry of Education in EMIS 2008 Table 65 lists 18 possible reasons for dropping out of school but excludes the possibility that learners may drop out owing to discouragement because of their inability to understand and cope with English medium instruction. Interestingly one of the 18 possible reasons for dropping out which make up Table 65 is 'Unknown reasons.' Out of 11591 school drop outs in 2008, 3397 learners, i.e. 29.3%, left school for unknown reasons; this option received the highest percentage of all 18 possible reasons. It is not unreasonable to suspect that a sizeable portion of the 29.3% of learners could have done so out of frustration owing to their inability to cope with English medium instruction. More thorough research by the Ministry is needed to establish the truth.

The question arises whether it is fair to blame mainly the teachers for absenteeism, poor examination results and the lack of discipline in schools. Absenteeism among teachers may be a problem because they may have lost all enthusiasm for the profession because they cannot cope satisfactorily with English and the new curriculum. Harlech-Jones (2001: 124) states that 'It is no wonder if some teachers are accused of being demotivated – they are being required to implement the impossible!' Another question is if it is fair to blame only the learners for disobedience and absenteeism in the schools. Do some of them not perhaps behave this way out of desperation because they feel misunderstood and frustrated due to their incompetence in English? Government it appears is not taking cognisance of the desperate psychological climate in many schools and also among the many young people who had to leave school after an unsuccessful school career. Government remains in denial about a major cause of the problem, namely English medium instruction in the schools. Deep down decision-makers must know that 'a failure in it (English) is tantamount to a failure of the educational system' (Ndjoze-Ojo, 2000: 80). Arguments to defend the language policy are based on socio-economic, political and financial criteria and ignore 'the psychological, educational and linguistic factors in language policy in education in Namibia' (Harlech-Jones, op cit.).

## 15. Cultural identity and politics

It needs to be stated that through this paper, I am not militating against English as the official language of the country, but am merely stating that the decision to declare English as the *only* official language in Namibia and as the *main or sole medium of instruction* in Namibian schools was politically motivated. The philosophy behind this decision was that it was thought that through the introduction of a neutral language such as English, everybody would be equally disadvantaged, i.e. it would prevent the privileging of some groups (Harlech-Jones, 1995: 8). This assumption was wrong. The majority of the privileged whites in 1990 had a relatively good command of English and in addition, there was the small group of Namibians who returned from exile, having been trained in Europe, particularly in English speaking countries, who had an excellent command of English. These two groups immediately found themselves part of a small Namibian Anglotocracy or Anglo-elite, while the rest of the population was grossly disadvantaged and still to a large extent is.

In spite of the fact that the other twelve Namibian languages are accepted as 'national languages', they are not vigorously promoted. Harlech-Jones (1995: 9) states that the position of the new government is that 'There should be a substantial nod in the direction of "bilinguality" and "multilinguality" – but not so substantial as to endanger the dominant position of English.' A more gradual phasing in of English as official language alongside some of the more dominant national languages would have brought about a less drastic and abrupt change. Instead a message is sent out 'to many people who adhere to the "low cultures" ... that their cultures are denigrated, useless and headed for oblivion' (Harlech-Jones 2001: 126).

Harlech-Jones (1995: 12–13) quoting Popper (1966: 157–8), states that 'A dogmatic insistence ... driven by a vision of a distant, Utopian ideal ... leads to undemocratic measures, because the effort to reach these distant



goals requires a strong centralized rule of the few to keep the project on track and to ensure that the populace is not diverted by hardships along the way, by disagreements as to methods and by different proposals.' Furthermore, 'that considerable neglect and suffering will probably result while the ultimate aim is being pursued;' and that the suffering, neglect and hardship along the way may possibly prove to have been largely in vain. 'The Utopian engineer will have to be deaf to complaints and ... it will be part of his business to suppress unreasonable objections' (Popper, 1966: 160).

Political pressure put on language planners to expedite implementation of English as medium of instruction in schools, did not allow for adequate consultation of key implementers, namely the teachers. 'The politically intense pace of reforms' (O'Sullivan, 2002: 233), left the majority of teachers lagging far behind. Bradley (2001: 49) is of the opinion that 'there are no 'zero cost' options for improving teachers' proficiency in English. (Doing nothing is *not* a "zero cost" option, as there are outcomes of doing nothing which will cost Namibia). The cost of English as the principal medium of instruction at independence was a political decision'.

Already before independence, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas and Africa as quoted by Melber in 1985 (pp. 30–32) stated that the Namibian language agenda was reinforcing inequalities, the creation or perpetuation of elites and causing the denial, stigmatization and underdevelopment of mother tongues. They did not condemn English as the official language of communication, but only its overhasty implementation in the schools. They recommended the reinforcement of the mother tongues in education and the offering of English **as a subject only** for the 12 years of education. They criticized resistance against the use of mother tongues as the expression of a colonial mindset.

Twenty years of neglect of the national languages since independence has resulted in their rapid deterioration. This in spite of the language policy of the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Lusaka which already in 1981 included the institutionalization in Namibia of 'the various languages ... to their greatest advantage' (Chamberlain et al., 1981: v).

Educational reforms and the language policy for Namibia was, according to O'Sullivan (2002: 226), driven by three forms of international support: 'expatriate educationists involved in research studies concerning the state of education upon independence, which informed policy decisions; expatriate advisers who supported the policy-making process at central level; expatriate staff involved in projects supporting policy implementa-

tion.' Enormous support was given by overseas agencies such as the British Overseas Administration (ODA) and US Aid to establish English as the official language. This has led to the strengthening of the prestige of English in Namibia (cf. Brock-Utne, 1995: 4) to the point that it borders on cultural imperialism.

The avoidance of cultural diversity in the curriculum was likewise politically motivated. The rich and diverse cultural heritage of Namibians has deliberately been ignored by government in the curriculum for schools since independence. An obsession not to 'divide and rule' through the recognition of ethnicity and cultural differences as was done during the pre-independence *apartheid* era, has resulted in ethnicity and cultural diversity being viewed with suspicion. No space has been given for cultural studies in the curriculum for Namibian schools. As a result learners are not educated to take pride in an own cultural identity and no effort is made to teach learners about the various cultures in the country so as to nurture an understanding of and respect for one another. The curriculum does not offer opportunities for learners to learn from indigenous knowledge systems and also to learn from one another and develop appreciation for the customs and way of life of fellow Namibians. The only example in Namibia of the benefits of exposing children to culturally sensitive teaching material and teachers whom everyone respects, is the Village School Programme of the Naye Naye Foundation in the five private schools for the children of the Ju|hoansi speech community. This programme involves the whole community by integrating socialisation in the home and outside the school with formal teaching inside the school<sup>21</sup>.

During the liberation struggle in the early eighties, language policy planners outside the country applied certain criteria to judge the suitability of a language as the main official language for a future independent Namibia. These were: 1. Unity; 2. Acceptability; 3. Familiarity; 4. Feasibility; 5. Science and Technology; 6. Pan Aricanism; 7. Wider Communication; and 8. United Nations (Chamberlain, 1981). Brock-Utne (1995: 14) is of the opinion that criteria of extreme relevance that were not mentioned, are: 1. Ease of learning; 2. Namibian cultural authenticity; and 3. Empowering the underprivileged (which could include democratisation and self-reliance). She quotes Phillipson (1992: 293) as follows: 'It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the criteria seem to have been selected so as to make English emerge as the absolute winner.' Brock-Utne questions the argument that English would best promote Pan Africanism except among the 'minute

elite in so-called Anglophone African countries'. She argues that Kiswahili would have been a more likely language to promote Pan Africanism<sup>22</sup>. The main concern at the time was to remove Afrikaans from its position of main medium of instruction and replace it with English rather than developing the indigenous languages as media of instruction.

Brock-Utne (1995: 4–5) recorded criticisms on the language policy expressed already in 1995 by culturally conscious Namibians:

'The way English is getting all the support and the Namibian languages hardly any, we are heading towards dissolving our own languages and thereby culture.'

'The national education policy ought to be looked into again. Our children are fighting two enemies at the same time: the subject matter and the language.'

'The Namibian languages are being marginalised ... Emphasis is too much on English to the detriment of the other languages. People are developing a negative attitude towards their languages. The Ministry is doing nothing about this.'

'The government promotes English but seems to be half-hearted about multilingualism.'

'I think the indigenous Namibian languages should have been used for the whole of primary school. Now our languages are being left behind at a childish stage.'

The habit of politicians to deliver public addresses in English with an interpreter to translate to an audience, whose mother tongue is the same as the speaker, was particularly severely criticised: 'He should have spoken his own language. Then he would have been closer to the people.'

In 2000, Dr Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, then Deputy Director Language Centre, University of Namibia, until end of March 2009, Deputy Minister of Education also warned as follows: 'Namibia cannot with one language promote indigenous development especially, when that language is not indigenous. We as a nation need to promote and preserve our ... indigenous languages' (Ndjoze-Ojo, 2000: 81).

In a letter published in the *New Era* of 19 August 2005, N.K. Mbaeva, teacher of history and Otjiherero at a Windhoek secondary school, complains that 'where kids are taught to speak a second language at the expense of the mother tongue, (it) creates a semi-lingual society ... They don't speak any language properly ... Africans, for how long are we going to regard

everything African as second best? ... Our self-image, our culture and our identity are tarnished as we regard our own language as inferior to English ... Learners who have gone through English medium from pre-school up to Grade 12 are still illiterate! ... The official language in a multilingual society must not be promoted at the expense of national languages ... a nation without a culture is like a tree without roots ... We don't have roots – therefore we do not acquire knowledge. A tree gets minerals and water through its roots.'

## 16. Why is progress towards English language proficiency so slow?

The argument that it should be possible to achieve in Namibia a level of English language proficiency which is equal to the relatively high English language proficiency in Zimbabwe is unrealistic. What is not taken into account is that Zimbabwe was a British colony for 67 years and that for 120 years since the beginning of colonial times (1898), English has been and still is the most dominant language. Even illiterate peasants in Zimbabwe can speak sufficient English to do business. Namibia on the other hand, was never a British colony. English is a foreign language in Namibia and even 70 years (1919–1989) of compulsory English as a subject instituted by the South Africans in Namibian schools did not succeed in making the Namibians English speakers. Neither has the 20 years of mainly English medium instruction in Namibian schools since 1990 been that successful. It is also unlikely that a language which is the home language of less than 2% of the population could achieve national unity.

English language proficiency is somewhat better in the Caprivi region as compared to the rest of Namibia; consequently, the opinion among many Namibians in other parts of the country exists that 'if many Caprivians could achieve a higher level of English language proficiency, we can also achieve it'. There are however, both geographical and historical reasons why the rest of Namibia cannot easily achieve the same level of English language proficiency as the Caprivians, if ever. The narrow Caprivi-strip is surrounded by three predominantly English speaking former British colonies, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with the result that much transborder communication has been taking place since colonial times. Zambian teachers were also used to teach in Caprivian schools. The English language has therefore been a relatively dominant language in Caprivi for a very long time.

The problem with the colonial language is that large portions of African populations never manage to master the colonial language over and above perhaps a limited speaking proficiency. Lacking a reading and writing proficiency, they are entirely cut off from the educational process, from becoming functionally literate, from becoming informed through reading and to a large extent, from development *per se*. Such a situation creates an elitist class system. The question arises whether the Namibian government recognizes the fact that the language policy is reinforcing inequalities and the perpetuation and creation of a minority elite.

The main concern of this paper is that the neglect of the mother tongues is jeopardising the educational progress of a great number of learners. The low priority afforded to the national languages has not only contributed to the deterioration of these languages, but it has also not helped to markedly improve the English language proficiency of learners and teachers. There has been sufficient circumstantial evidence as well as research showing that children learn a second language more easily after having been thoroughly grounded in the mother tongue (cf. Brock-Utne, 1995: 18–19 who refers to the work of various scholars such as S. Krashen, 1991: Bilingual education; a focus on current research, *Occasional Papers in Bilingual Education* 3: 1–11 in this regard).

The argument is not against English as the official language of Namibia or its position as an important element of the educational system, but how it has been introduced at school level and how it has been favoured to the detriment of the national languages in Namibia. In the early nineties the Ministry of Education and Culture repeatedly stressed that English medium instruction will promote equal access to learning, will improve efficiency in education and enhance the quality of learning. This language policy has however, achieved the opposite. After twenty years it has become clear that these lofty ideals are all confounded. The language policy for Namibian schools has not succeeded in contributing to quality education in the schools; it has not effected equal access to learning and is not promoting the various cultures and languages of learners satisfactorily. It has therefore until now, not contributed to national development. There is much room for improvement.

## 17. Recommendations

In order to achieve a high quality educational system for Namibian children, the following steps should be considered:

1. Government needs to give consideration to the importance of social diversity and how it can contribute to the unity of the nation, instead of viewing it as a threat to unity. To strengthen social diversity, government should adopt a feasible policy to demonstrate commitment towards multiculturalism, multilingual instruction, the development of multiple languages and the promotion of a reading culture even though such policy may have to be implemented in stages.
2. Since the Namibian constitution does not prohibit the extended use of the national languages in education, mother tongue instruction should be extended beyond the first three years of schooling in the form of multilingual instruction alongside English. This could be achieved by gradually phasing in English medium instruction in the senior primary level to the extent that by Grade 7, science subjects and mathematics could be taught through English medium. This step towards multilingual instruction in the senior primary school can only be done in stages owing to the great expenditure required to develop readers and text books in the indigenous languages. In the junior secondary school, the phasing in of English medium teaching should be finally achieved by the beginning of Grade 10 when all the subjects with the exception of the mother tongue/second language should be taught through English medium. Multilingual text books for Grade 8 will be needed for half of the subjects in the curriculum and for Grade 9 will only be needed for about one quarter of the subjects in the curriculum.
3. Teachers with good language qualifications should be attracted to take up positions in the rural areas by means of special allowances and/or fringe benefits.
4. Government should budget properly for the indigenous language programmes. It is not acceptable that there are only funds available for prescribed school readers and textbooks. Funding should be provided for supplementary reading materials, for the purchase of local language stories for classrooms in order to develop a culture of reading among the children.
5. The publication of fiction in the indigenous languages should be promoted so as to develop a love of reading among learners and the nation at large. Since publishing in the local languages has diminished since independence<sup>23</sup>, the Ministry of Education should subsidize publishing houses to produce books in local languages in order to enable them to publish the many meritorious unpublished manuscripts by Namibians. Measures should also be put in place to ensure the prompt evaluation of manuscripts or books submitted for approval to the supplementary reading lists for the schools. Some of the Language Committees allow up to three years to pass before the Ministry approves or rejects a title. This practice discourages authors and publishers.
6. The indigenous languages should be strengthened in all teacher training programmes, particularly at university level, *inter alia*, with study bursaries, so as to develop a pool of qualified teachers for the teaching of these languages. The government needs to reverse the negative effect that the boosting of English at the expense of the national languages has had on student numbers on university level. There is no use in instituting the teaching of the national languages up to Grade 12 when student numbers in these courses are rapidly dwindling or if certain languages are not taught at the university or at any college in the country.
7. A plan should be developed for large towns and metropolitan areas such as Windhoek, where most of the languages are represented, whereby each school specializes in one of the languages, so as to ensure that there will be at least one school in the area where a learner can be instructed in a language he/she can understand; multigrade teaching could reduce the number of classes per language.
8. It should be made compulsory for schools to offer the national languages spoken in the area in which the school is situated and principals should be instructed not to use teachers to teach languages in the secondary school in which they have not received tertiary training; for

the primary school a language teacher should have studied the language at least up to Grade 12. The qualifications of teachers assigned to teach the mother tongue in schools should be checked since school principals are inclined to use the least qualified teachers in their schools to teach the local languages. This practice demonstrates the low regard in which principals and teachers hold the mother tongues and contributes to the wide-spread prejudice that local languages are inferior languages. Since principals have much influence with the parents, their attitudes need to be changed through sensitising workshops to convince them of the importance of the mother tongue, particularly those principals in the city schools who use the multiplicity of home languages represented in their schools as an excuse to offer instruction in English only or in English and Afrikaans only.

9. Namibian teachers' English speaking, reading and writing proficiency should be drastically improved, while at the same time, foreign teachers with an excellent proficiency in the English language should be appointed, where necessary.
10. The merging of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama into one language, named Oshiwambo should be expedited.
11. The co-operation of language planners in Zambia should be sought to achieve a uniform orthography for Silozi for use both in Namibia and Zambia. More books can then be published to the benefit of both nations.
12. The Khoesan language Ju|hoansi should be strengthened.
13. Consideration should be given to develop the orthography of the Sisubiya oral language.
14. Government should advise parents that it is beneficial for children to receive mother tongue education and that it will facilitate the learning of English.
15. The Ministry of Education should adopt a policy that explicitly states that the cultivation and preservation of Namibian languages is part of the objectives of the Directorate of Culture. The regional offices should do more than just supporting dancing groups. The teaching of Namibian languages, the performance of poems, praise songs, dramas, proverbs and riddles, the exhibition and sale of books in the local languages, the desk-top publishing of local stories and support towards the annual Readathon<sup>24</sup> in the schools, should form part of the work of

cultural officers. New books should be marketed during cultural festivals, particularly in remote areas, as people are often not aware of their existence.

16. The radio should offer educational programmes in all the local languages<sup>25</sup> and the 'Let us speak English' programme should be reinstated. New books in the local languages should be publicised through weekly or monthly book discussion programmes in the local languages and in English. An information campaign on the importance of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, directed at the general public, should be launched. The radio could be used with phone-in programmes and should allow callers to speak in any Namibian language.
17. Television could be used by high officials speaking in the local languages to advise parents on the importance of the mother tongue. The two languages Khoekhoegowab and Otjiherero especially, need urgent promotion (cf. Brock-Utne, 1995: 23–45 for points 15–17 above).
18. The development of school and community libraries should enjoy a high priority. They should stock literature in indigenous languages for children and adults, particularly the newly-literate, in order to strengthen their newly acquired reading skill, lest they relapse into illiteracy again.
19. The government should consider raising a reading levy from all corporations, or raising a reading tax of one cent on each can of beer or other popular drink in order to fund the implementation of the multilingual policy.
20. Research needs to be done in Namibia on the geographical distribution of standard English speakers, 'Namlish' speakers and non-speakers of either of these versions.
21. Research needs to be done on the English writing proficiency of Namibian teachers and learners as well as the writing proficiency of language teachers in the languages they are required to teach.
22. Research needs to be done on former learners who were not admitted to Grade 11 and have since then been out of school. What are they doing for a living and how do they feel about their education?
23. More thorough research which includes the language factor should be done to establish the true reasons for learners dropping out of school.

24. The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) of the African Union (AU) has recommended the reduction of the proliferation of languages in Africa, by placing related languages in clusters. The Academy believes that too many languages in a country are no excuse for doing nothing; neither is the excuse that indigenous languages are unsuitable for educational purposes because they lack technological and scientific vocabulary. Rubagumya (2003:7) believes that 'A language has to be used to develop; don't wait for it to develop first before you use it.'

In Namibia, several languages are closely related, i.e. they belong to a cluster, e.g. Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama and Otjiherero. For a start, one of these could be developed as language of communication to accommodate all speakers of the language cluster, thereby achieving a reduction of languages. This recommendation is not necessarily intended for the schools, but for public announcements whether oral or written in the form of posters, leaflets and notices in public places for the population at large.

Rukwangali, Thimbukushu and Rumanyo belong to a different cluster, so one of them can initially be developed, while Khoekhoegowab and the San languages if not strictly speaking forming a cluster, are related. Since most San and all Khoekhoegowab speakers also speak Afrikaans, either Khoekhoegowab or Afrikaans can be chosen. This leaves only Silozi which although not a Namibian language and also not the most dominant home language in Caprivi, is understood by various language groups in Caprivi.

These suggestions are made in an effort to achieve a reduction of Namibian languages for practical purposes. Whereas it would be impossible to use thirteen languages for public announcements and information campaigns it would be possible to use four or five languages plus English.

Various areas surrounding language that require more research have been mooted in this paper. One area has however, deliberately been omitted: Research to compare the progress of learners educated mainly in the mother tongue from Grades 1–12 with those learners who did not receive any tuition or hardly any tuition in the mother tongue but were taught through English medium only or mainly, is extremely difficult to conduct because the variables between the two situations are great. The English only schools are mainly in the cities and towns where English is heard in the environment, generally have more qualified teachers, better facilities, more books and teaching materials than the mostly rural schools where the local languages are spoken. The small minority of learners who are receiving mainly mother tongue instruction from Grades 1–12 in

Afrikaans, English or German, being predominantly white learners, tend to achieve the best school leaving results. This gives reason to believe that in addition to the fact that the schools of this minority of learners are much better equipped and staffed with the most highly qualified teachers, the mother tongue medium of instruction to these learners is also a factor of their educational success.

## 18. Conclusion

Education in an unknown language negatively impacts just about every area of development, particularly primary and secondary education, a reading culture, literacy, libraries, the publishing industry, gender equality and the quality of life.

Educational reform can only be achieved if there is the political will to take initiative and to offer continuous support. There also needs to be consensus among political parties that the promotion of not only English but also the strengthening of the national languages is in the national interest. Information campaigns will be needed to convince parents that reform is in their interest and to bring them to understand that extended mother tongue education combined with English, facilitates the acquisition of the latter. Teachers should be actively involved in policy development since they are key implementers of the policy (UNESCO, 2005: EFA p. 181).

As regards the children, three broad prerequisites needed to create a climate for learning are as follows:

1. A child has to understand what he/she is supposed to learn and if a child doesn't understand the language of the learning materials he/she can't learn. If a rural Oshindonga or Oshikwanyama speaking child sees a picture of a goat in his school reader and enthusiastically declares that this is an 'oshikombo', only to be told that this is wrong, the animal is a 'goat', are we not confusing the child and confounding his learning?
2. A child has to be enthusiastic about and enjoy learning otherwise he/she will not have the necessary drive to enquire for more. If learners struggle to master an unknown language and to express themselves in it, how can they enjoy learning? Instead of joy, anxiety sets in.
3. Formal teaching in the schools should harmonize culturally with socialization in the home and neighbourhood. The question is whether the language policy for Namibian schools is not confounding the

socialization processes of the home and neighbourhood. According to Harlech-Jones (2001: 122) 'the major factors in success and failure are to be found outside the school.' English medium instruction does not 'replicate the way in which learning actually takes place in the home and community and opposes, rather than reinforces, the socialization processes outside the school.'

Learning can only flourish where the education system enables learners to taste achievement, and enables them to gain an understanding of themselves, other people and the world they are living in, in a happy and relaxed school environment. This is presently not the climate in most Namibian schools. The various cultures do not fit into the present system. Learners not only have problems to cope with the study materials, learners of different cultures are also not being enabled to learn from one another in a dialogue that helps them gain confidence in their own identity and develop understanding of the cultures of other Namibians.

The Convention of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations on 20th November 1989 Article 29 (c) states that 'State parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values ...' (UNICEF, 1990: 60). The Minority Rights Group International who prepared the study, 'The State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009' in collaboration with UNICEF (Rizvi, 2009: 12), state that 'children must be educated in the language in which they interact with their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, grandmothers and grandfathers at home.'

Mahatma Ghandi once declared: 'I want the winds of all cultures to circulate freely around my house, but I don't want to be blown over by any one of them.' The final quotation is from Carpenter (as quoted by Calvert, 1992: 24): 'To neglect a language is to sabotage a culture.'

## Endnotes

1. The thirteen written languages in Namibia with a standardized orthography, called 'national languages', are according to the 2001 Namibian census, in order of number of home-language speakers: Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, these two closely related languages recently being considered as one under the name, Oshiwambo, Khoekhoegowab, Afrikaans, Otjiherero, Rukwangali, Silozi, Rumanyo, Thimbukushu, English, German, Ju'hoansi and Setswana. Some of the so called 'smaller' languages such as Silozi, Rumanyo and Setswana are transborder languages and belong to a much larger language group in the region. Oshikwanyama is also a transborder language spoken in Angola as well.
2. Afrikaans is a unique language which was developed mainly by the Khoesan tribes and slaves from the Far East at the Cape, South Africa, from High Dutch in the 17th and 18th centuries, to Cape Dutch in the late 18th century, to Afrikaans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The language has a West European linguistic structure, but is partly African and Oriental in content and/or idiom. Dutch was simplified and Khoe and Malay-Portuguese words and idioms were incorporated. It has been easy for both West European foreigners as well as the indigenous people in South Africa and Namibia to learn this language.
3. Afrikaans, in the form of Cape Dutch, was brought into Namibia mainly by two prominent Namibian political tribal leaders, namely Jager Afrikaner and Kido Witbooi, both born in South Africa in ca. 1790 and 1830, respectively. The Orlam Afrikaner, who used Cape Dutch for communication purposes, settled in Namibia as from 1796 (Dierks, 2003: 12–20).
4. Afrikaans did indeed become the language of *apartheid* after 1948 with the influx of Afrikaans-speaking white government officials from Pretoria, South Africa. It however, remains the fourth biggest Namibian mother tongue. It has also been spoken for more than 150 years by many more Namibians for purposes of cross-ethnic and also cross-border communication to South Africa.
5. Cf. the following SWAPO publications, Preliminary perspectives into an emergent educational system for Namibia, 1982: 40 and Commonwealth & SWAPO report, English language programme for Namibia Seminar Report. Lusaka 19–27 October 1983.
6. The Namibian National Census of 2001 (Republic of Namibia, 2003: Population and Housing Census, 2001, p. 47–48) states that English is the home language of only 1.9% of the population. This may have slightly increased since then.
7. Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993: *The language policy for schools: 1992–6 and beyond*. Longman/Overseas Development Administration (ODA).
8. The mother tongue may be offered as a subject right through to the end of the senior secondary school level.
9. National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), 2001. Language and development in Southern Africa: making the right choices; conference proceedings, National Institute for Educational Development, Okahandja, Namibia, 11–13 April 2000; edited by Richard Trewby and Sandra Fichat. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan. ISBN 999 16-0-286-0.
10. Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2002: Proposals for revisions: the Language policy for schools in Namibia: p. 4.
11. Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education: *Namibia National Conference on the Implementation of the Language Policy for Schools, Ongwediva Training Centre, 21–26 June 1992*. Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with the British Overseas Development Administration and the British Council. Windhoek: Longman Namibia, 1993. ISBN 99916-1-011-1.
12. In order to cope with English medium instruction in Grade 5, a learner needs a core vocabulary of 5 000 English words (McDonald and Burroughs, 1991 as quoted by O'Sullivan, 2002: 230).
13. The Upgrading African Languages Project (AfriLa) was funded by the German Foundation for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) with N\$ 10 million. The Ministry revised the curricula for the three grades to accommodate the teaching of these languages. ETSIP initially supported the publication of school text books in Mathematics and set books for English, but is now shifting its focus to support of the publication of set books for the teaching of local languages.
14. In 1990 the newly established Ministry of Education terminated all government funding for early childhood development. Preschools and kindergarten had to find funding elsewhere. Formal basic and secondary education clearly enjoyed a higher priority. The policy framework for long-term national development until 2030 also does not include future government funding of early childhood education (Government of the Republic of Namibia, Office of the President, 2004: 96–99). The responsibility for early childhood education was understood as being the responsibility of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW). However, in October 2006, the Cabinet took the decision that the responsibility for pre-primary education would be transferred from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to the Ministry of Education. Consequently, the early childhood phase for 0–4 year-olds remains with MGECW, while a pre-primary school year for 5–6 year-olds has become part of the Ministry of Education. Since then funding of pre-primary schools is being effected and a Grade R year has been instituted to prepare 5–6 year olds for primary school. This is however, too little, too late. The early childhood and pre-primary school phase combined should last at least three years. Research has shown that 'children who had attended a good quality early childhood learning programme enter school more confident and able, are more likely to succeed in school, are less likely to need remedial education, are less likely to be involved in crime and are more likely to get paid employment as an adult' (Atmore, 2009: 17).
15. In Namibia, unlike many African countries, only 35% of the population lives in urban areas. (Makuwa, 2005: SACMEQ II Table 3.6).
16. In South Africa the same trend can be seen: Where the University of South Africa (UNISA) had 30 000 students registered for Zulu in the past, this number has dwindled in 2009 to only 5 000 students.



17. At the end of 2007 the International General Certificate for Senior Education (IGCSE) and the Higher International General Certificate for Senior Education (HIGCSE) were replaced by the National Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary Level (NSSC) and National Senior Secondary Certificate Higher Level (HNSSC).
18. Before independence the majority of Namibian teachers were admitted to a teacher training certificate course with a school leaving certificate of Standard 8 (Grade 10).
19. For admission to Grade 11, a learner needs 23 points based on the symbols achieved in the Grade 10 examination and at least an F symbol for English as a second language.
20. In 2005 almost all school-age children (98%) for Grade 1 were in school and of these learners, 92% graduated to junior secondary school. This is high in comparison with most African countries. But 85% or more of Namibian learners from Grade 1 up to Grade 9 are automatically promoted to the next class at the end of the school year, even with symbols as low as a G (20–29%), because the Ministry of Education cannot fund uncontrolled repetition; repeaters increase the number of learners per class. A learner is however, allowed to repeat once during Grades 1–4, once during Grades 5–7 and once during Grades 8–9 (Republic of Namibia, Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training, 2001: 99–100). By 2000 more than 54% of learners had repeated a grade (Republic of Namibia, Office of the President, 2004: 11). The first external examination for learners is in Grade 10.
21. The Ju|hoan are one of the San language communities in Namibia residing on the way to Tsumkwe.
22. In Tanzania a unique three-language system is in existence. Sandwiched between the local languages and the colonial language, English, there is another indigenous but also transnational/transborder language, namely Kiswahili which is spoken by the majority. Kenya has the same three-language system. Kiswahili is also widely spoken in Uganda. In the rural areas the local language is the first language spoken, followed by Kiswahili as the second language; most rural people don't speak English at all. In urban areas, Kiswahili is often the first language spoken and English the second language, but all in all, English according to Rubagumya (2003: 5) is spoken by an estimated 50% of the population only. A class system in all three countries has developed, with local languages at the bottom, Kiswahili in the middle and English at the top. English remains the language of a small elite, yet English is glorified by many as 'a panacea that can solve all problems' (Rubagumya, 2003: 5). This mindset will consider education in Kiswahili to be second class education. Parents who can afford it, send their children to English-medium private schools. In 1975 the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa, held in Accra, Ghana, as well as the 1976 Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States held in Lagos, Nigeria, agreed on the strengthening and greater use of local languages as media of instruction in schools. An Inter-African Bureau of Languages of the Organization for African Unity (OAU, now African Union) was established. Progress has been slow, however.
23. In 1994 there were 904 Namibian books in print. Of these, 503 were in nine local languages, i.e. 56% of the total number of books in print (Namibian Books in Print, 1994). Fifty-three percent (53%) of the total turnover in 1992 of the biggest publishing house in Namibia, Gamsberg Macmillan, were from local language publishing. Two years later this was down to 30%. Today mainly textbooks in English, and only prescribed textbooks and readers in the local languages for Grades 1–3, are being published on a smaller scale by Macmillan Education Namibia (this publishing house had a name change in 2008). Occasionally trade books for children in the local languages are published with the assistance of organizations and sponsors from the private sector.
24. cf. Töttemeyer, 2003; Töttemeyer, 2001.
25. The regional NBC radio stations do offer programmes in the local languages, but not educational programmes.

## References

- Atmore, Eric. 2009. Education starts before Grade R. *Cape Argus*, Friday December 4: 17.
- Booyesen, Dani. 2004. Onderwys se silwer rand taan. *Republikein* 11 November: pp. 8–9.
- Bradley, Steve. 2001. English language proficiency of Namibian teachers/student teachers and basic education principals' and teachers' perceptions of the use of English in Namibian schools. *NERA Journal: a journal for the Namibian Educational Research Association*. pp. 36–57.
- Brock-Utne, Birgit. 1995. *The teaching of Namibian languages in the formal education system of Namibia*. Windhoek: Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) with the support of the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS).
- Calvert, P.J. 1992. The irrelevance of public libraries in the South Pacific. *Sites: a journal for radical perspectives on culture*, Summer 25: 24–38.
- Chamberlain, Dick. 1993. *The impact of the language policy for schools in Namibia*. Namibia: Ministry of Education and Culture, October 1993.
- Chamberlain, R, A Diallo & E J John, 1981: *Toward a language policy for Namibia*. Lusaka: United Nations Institute for Namibia.
- Dierks, Klaus. 2003. *Chronologie der namibischen Geschichte von der vorgeschichtlichen Zeit zum unabhängigen Namibia (2000)*. Zweite erweiterte Auflage. Windhoek: Namibia Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft, 2003. ISBN 99916-40-39-8.
- EMIS Education Ministry Information Service. 2007. *EMIS Education Statistics*. Windhoek: Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education.
- EMIS Education Ministry Information Service. 2008. *EMIS Education Statistics*. Windhoek: Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education.
- Florida State University and SIAPAC-Namibia with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Namibia. 1994. *Research Note*. Windhoek: Ministry of Education and Culture (mimeograph).
- Fourie, G. 2009. Telephonic interview with Mr Gert Fourie, National Coordinator BETD INSET at NIED, 23 November 2009.
- Greaney, Vincent. 2003. Plenary Session: Reading as a cornerstone in the Education for All process, 3rd Pan-African Reading for all Conference, Kampala, Uganda, August 19.
- Haacke, W. 1983. Minority languages in the education system of Namibia. Unpublished conference paper. Windhoek: Academy for Tertiary Education.
- Harlech-Jones, Brian. 2006. Why the future is illiterate: where did education reforms go wrong? *Insight Namibia*, July, pp. 30–31.
- Harlech-Jones, Brian. 2001. Language, nationalism and modernisation: reflections from Namibia, in Brian Harlech-Jones, Ismael Mbise & Helen Vale (eds) *Guardian of the word: literature, language and politics in SADC countries: proceedings of the Fifth General Conference of the Association of University Teachers of Literature and Language (ATOLL)*, Windhoek, 16–20 August 1998. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.
- Harlech-Jones, Brian. 1995. Looking at means and ends in language policy in Namibia. Paper delivered at the 20th LAUD Symposium, Duisburg, Germany, 28 February to 3 March 1995.
- Harlech-Jones, Brian. 1990. *You taught me language: the implementation of English as a medium of instruction in Namibia*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Henderson, T. 1994. English language teacher education in Namibia: current state and future needs. Report of a consultancy, 16–26 November, 1994 (mimeograph).
- Kotzé, Carol. 1994 a, Bad English is killing education. *Tempo*, 11 March: 11.
- Kotzé, Carol. 1994 b, Uitslae dui op ramp vir leerling in Namibië. *Tempo*, 13 March: 1–2.
- Kangumu, Bennett. 2009. Eye on Caprivi: the language debate, *New Era*, 9 July: 7.
- Legal Assistance Centre. 2004. Gender disparities in education. Issue 15 July: 11, Quality education for all? Issue 15 July: 12.
- Marechera, Dambudzo. 1981. Haus des Hungers. Erzählungen. Frankfurt Main: 52 in Melber, 1985: 14.
- Mbaeva, N.K. 2005. Our language barrier in learning (We are killing our roots). *New Era* 19 August: 9.

- Melber, Henning. 1985. *Ein sprachloses Volk stirbt einen lautlosen Tod: Fremdberrschaft, Befreiungskampf und Dekolonisation – Probleme der Sprachpolitik für ein unabhängiges Namibia*, Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie (Sprachkonkurrenz und gesellschaftliche Planung: das Erbe des Kolonialismus), September.
- Makuwa, D. 2005. The SACMEQ II Project in Namibia: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of education. Harare: Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ).
- Namibian Books in Print. 1994. *Books in Namibia – past trends & future prospects*; collected by Peter Reiner, Werner Hillebrecht and Jane Katjavivi. Windhoek: Association of Namibian Publishers.
- National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). 2008. *The National Curriculum for Basic Education*. Okahandja.
- National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). 2001. *Language and development in Southern Africa: making the right choices; conference proceedings, National Institute for Educational Development, Okahandja, Namibia*, 11–13 April 2000; edited by Richard Trewby and Sandra Fichat. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan. ISBN 999 16-0-286-0.
- Ndjoze-Ojo, Becky. 2000. Can one language achieve indigenous development? in Earle Taylor (ed.) *Education in perspective: Namibia's first decade: a commemorative book to mark Namibia's tenth anniversary*, Windhoek: Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology.
- O'Sullivan, Margo C. 2002. Reform implementation and the realities within which teachers work: a Namibian case study. *Compare. British Association for International and Comparative Education* 32 (2): 219–237.
- Otaala, Laura Ariko. 2001. A mismatch between Namibia's language policy planners and implementers: a preliminary investigation of the case of teachers, in Brian Harlech-Jones 2001.
- Pienaar-Louw, Anna. 1997. Moedertale en die Namibiese skoolverlater: 'n taalverhoudingstudie met die fokus op Afrikaanssprekendes. Mimeograph of unpublished MA thesis. Windhoek: University of Namibia.
- Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education: *Namibia National Conference on the Implementation of the Language Policy for Schools, Ongwediva Training Centre*, 21–26 June 1992. MEC in collaboration with the British Overseas Development Administration and the British Council. Windhoek: Longman Namibia, 1993.
- Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture. 1993. *The language policy for schools: 1992-6 and beyond*. Longman/ODA.
- Republic of Namibia. Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. 2002. *Proposals for revisions: the Language policy for schools in Namibia*: p. 4.
- Republic of Namibia, Office of the President. 2004. *Namibia Vision 2030: policy framework for long-term national development*. Windhoek: Office of the President.
- Republic of Namibia. 2003. *Population and Housing Census, 2001*. Windhoek.
- Republic of Namibia, Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training. 2001. *Towards a learning nation: meeting the challenge of change. Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training 1999*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan, 2002.
- Republic of Namibia. [1990]. *The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia*. Windhoek: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate Production and Publicity.
- Rizvi, Haider. 2009. Mother tongue absent, *Windhoek Observer* 18–25 July: 12.
- Rubagumya, Casimir M. 2003. The politics of language and literacy in Africa: the experience of Tanzania. Paper read at the 3rd Pan-African Reading for all Conference, Kampala, Uganda, August 19 2003.
- Töttemeyer, Andree-Jeanne. 2009. Multilingualism/multiculturalism in Africa and its impact on a reading culture: the Namibian experience. Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship incorporating the 13th International Forum on Research in School Librarianship, 2–4 September 2009, Abano Terme, Padova, Italy edited by Donatella Lombello and Luisa Marquard. Padova: International Association of School Librarianship. <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/conf/209/> ISSN-0257-3229 ISBN 978-1-890861-36-0.
- Töttemeyer, Andree-Jeanne. 2003. Crossing linguistic barriers: Readathon – agent of multi-lingualism. Paper presented at the 3rd Pan-African Conference on Reading for All, Kampala Uganda, 18–22 August 2003.

- Töttemeyer, Andree-Jeanne. 2001. The National Readathon of Namibia, 1988–2001, *School Libraries Worldwide*. 7 (July): 57–64.
- UNESCO. 2005. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005. Education for All. The quality imperative*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing. 2004.
- UNESCO. 2008. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008. Education for All by 2015: Will we make it?* Paris: UNESCO Publishing. 2007.
- UNICEF. 2003. *The state of the world's children 2004: girls, education and development*. New York: UNICEF, December 2003.
- UNICEF. 1990. *First call for Children: World Declaration and Plan of Action from the World Summit for Children*. Convention of the Rights of the Child: New York.
- Voigts, Andreas. 1998. *The quality of education: some policy suggestions based on a survey of schools*. Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. UNESCO: SACMEQ Namibia Policy Research Report No. 2.
- Whittaker, Shaun. 1999. Zwischen hemmender und kreativer Vielsprachigkeit. Summary of an English paper in German by Eberhard Hoffmann, *Allgemeine Zeitung* Freitag 18 June 1: 4.

### Additional reading

- Ellis, Justin. 1984. *Education, repression & liberation for Namibia*. (A Future for Namibia No. 4). London: World University Service and Catholic Institute for International Relations. ISBN 0 904393 78 CIIR ISBN 0 906405 10 6 WUS
- Gordon, Winsome. 2003. Plenary Session: Reading as a cornerstone in the Education for All process, 3rd Pan-African Reading For All Conference, Kampala, Uganda, August 19 2003.
- UNICEF, 1995. *Children in Namibia: reaching towards the rights of every child*. Windhoek. (Published in collaboration with the University of Namibia Social Sciences Division and the Legal Assistance Centre). ISBN 9916-734-0-7
- United Nations Institute for Namibia. 1984. *Education policy for independent Namibia: some fundamental considerations based on the work of Mosé P Tjitendero*. (Namibia Studies Series No.8 Edited by N.K. Duggal).

### Other publications in the Occasional Papers series

1. Bloch, C. 1998. Literacy in the early years: Teaching and learning in multilingual early childhood classrooms.
2. Plüddemann, P., Mati, X. & Mahlalela-Thusi, B. 2000. Problems and possibilities in multilingual classrooms in the Western Cape.
3. Alexander, N. 2000. English unassailable but unattainable: The dilemma of language policy in South African education.
4. Wolff, E.H. 2000. Pre-school child multilingualism and its educational implications in the African context.
5. Vesely, R. 2000. Multilingual environments for survival: The impact of English on Xhosa-speaking students in Cape Town.
6. Heugh, K. 2000. The case against bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa.
7. Broeder, P., Extra, G. & Maartens, J. 2002. Multilingualism in South Africa with a focus on KwaZulu-Natal and Metropolitan Durban.
8. Bloch, C. 2002. Concepts of early childhood development, literacy learning and materials development in multilingual settings.
9. Heugh, K. 2002. Revisiting bilingual education in and for South Africa.
10. Mahlalela, B. & Heugh, K. 2002. Terminology and schoolbooks in Southern African languages: Aren't there any?
11. October, M. 2002. Medium of instruction and its effect on matriculation examination results for 2000, in Western Cape secondary schools.
12. Perry, T. 2003. Language rights, ethnic politics: A critique of the Pan South African Language Board.
13. Alexander, N. 2003. The African Renaissance and the use of African languages in tertiary education.
14. Giliomee, H. 2003. The rise and possible demise of Afrikaans as a public language.
15. Plüddemann, P., Braam, D., Broeder, P., Extra, G. & October, M. 2004. Language policy implementation and language vitality in Western Cape primary schools.
16. Bloch, C. 2005. Enabling effective literacy learning in multilingual South African early childhood classrooms.

17. Plüddemann, P., Braam, D., October, M. & Wababa, Z. 2004. Dual-medium and parallel-medium schooling in the Western Cape: from default to design.
18. Mbatha, T. & Plüddemann, P. 2004. The status of isiXhosa as an additional language in selected Cape Town secondary schools.
19. Obanya, P. 2004. Learning in, with, and from the first language.
20. Alexander, N. 2004. Implications of Brown v. Board of Education: A post-apartheid South African perspective.
21. Braam, D. 2004. Community perceptions of change in a school's language policy.
22. Beckett, T. 2005. Language and dementia in bilingual settings: Evidence from two case studies.
23. Nkhoma-Darch, A. 2005. Border-straddling speech communities: Linguistic and educational challenges facing the Nyanja-Chewa-Mang'anja cluster of Southeastern Africa.
24. Busch, B., Jardine, A. & Tjoutuku, A. 2006. Language biographies for multilingual learning.
25. Bloch, C. 2006. Theory and strategy of early literacy in contemporary Africa with special reference to South Africa.
26. Gudhlanga, E.S. & Makaudze, G. 2007. Writing and publishing in indigenous languages is a mere waste of time: A critical appraisal of the challenges faced by writers and publishers of Shona literature in Zimbabwe.
27. Deyi, S. 2008. Ukusetyenziswa kolwimi lwesiXhosa ukufunda nokufundisa izifundo zezibalo.
28. Broeder, P. & Sorce, R. 2008. Skills and Levels in Europe – managing diversity in language education.
29. Jardine, A. 2008. Affirming marginal voices: a study of a group of primary school children in an asymmetrical multilingual setting.
30. Benson, C. 2008. Language 'choice' in education.
31. Da Rocha, T. 2010. What are the factors influencing the relationship between school language policy and the literacy proficiency of learners at Grade 7 level?
32. Plüddemann, P. 2010. Home-language based bilingual education: Towards a learner-centred language typology of primary schools in South Africa.
33. Alexander, N. 2010. The potential role of translation as social practice for the intellectualisation of African languages.
34. Wababa, Z. 2010. How scientific terms are taught and learnt in the Intermediate Phase.
35. Nodoba, G.J. 2010. A qualitative study of language preferences and behaviours of selected students and staff in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town, in the context of the university's implementation of its 2003 Language Policy and Plan.
36. Diwu, C. 2010. Effects of a Dialogical Argumentation Instructional Model on Grade 10 Learners' Conception of Fermentation.

