

Chapter 11

RE-INVIGORATING TEACHER-TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN LINGUISTIC VARIATION

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, many countries are becoming increasingly multilingual or multidialectal as people continue to travel, emigrate or immigrate. Multilingualism offers opportunities for linguistic, cultural, cognitive and pedagogical advancement. It also offers challenges for educators. Drawing on studies on bidialectism, diglossia, bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism, a number of the key challenges facing language teachers are highlighted. The chapter proposes that teacher-training programmes which expose teachers to the linguistic-variation issues relevant to their language setting are essential. Teacher training in linguistic variation is especially relevant in today's world because, in virtually every country, speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds are confronted by the burgeoning need to interface with one another. When designing such programmes, topics including the dominant role of English, language attitudes, mother-tongue use in formal education and teacher codeswitching ought to be understood in relation to the sociolinguistic landscape that surrounds the protagonists within a classroom. A number of pedagogical directions that teacher-training programmes would do well to embrace are proposed. Because teachers are among the primary pedagogues of effective language use, it is paramount that they are empowered to carry out this crucial role.

INTRODUCTION

Today's world is characterised by processes such as globalisation, global mobility, and multilingual and multicultural communication. Many countries are becoming increasingly multilingual or multidialectal as people continue to travel, emigrate or immigrate. Speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds are confronted by the burgeoning need to interface with one another. This need has brought to light new opportunities as well as challenges for people

in multilingual communities. Indeed, the use of many languages, the constant opportunity for language switching, multicultural classrooms, and variation in proficiencies in the various languages are all factors that expand the linguistic and cultural horizons of speakers while also presenting new challenges to the already very complex role of teachers. The educational context can thus serve as a superb vantage point from which the intricacies of these opportunities and challenges can be assessed. This chapter concentrates on the way multilingualism has impacted on teachers. Teachers are the focus of this chapter (and indeed of this entire volume) as they hold the key role of transmitting knowledge that is essential for our students' future success. Specifically, the chapter aims to highlight the importance of teacher training in linguistic variation. This is not a new proposition. However, despite the fact that the benefits of such training are widely recognised, training in linguistic variation remains extremely scarce.

The role of the teacher as a pedagogue for culturally- and linguistically-diverse learners cannot be overstressed. Whether the teachers of linguistically-diverse societies specialise in mother-tongue, foreign-language or bilingual/multilingual education, there exists a number of important constants to consider. Topics including language attitudes, students' use of the mother tongue in formal education, teachers' codeswitching and the dominant role of English routinely need to be addressed and understood in relation to the sociolinguistic landscape that surrounds teachers. For any language-training programme for teachers to be successful, the content of the programme ought to be situated in the social, cultural, historical and political context of the community concerned. Critically, educational practitioners are not always fully aware of the contribution of educational and linguistic theory and the way research can inform pedagogical practice. This chapter therefore aims to translate research findings into pedagogical directions that teacher-training programmes in linguistically-diverse societies could embrace and develop.

The chapter draws from studies on diglossia, bidialectism, multidialectism, bilingualism, multilingualism, and plurilingualism. For purposes of providing a definition that is both intuitive and broad, the term multilingualism is used to encompass settings with linguistically-diverse populations and, where relevant, attention is drawn to the exact sociolinguistic profile of a community. The chapter refers to a wide spectrum of geographic and linguistic contexts. Diverse though the contexts may be, they are unified by a shared focus on the role of linguistic diversity.

MULTILINGUALISM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY

There exist thousands of linguistic varieties in today's world. It is justifiable to state that multilingualism and/or multidialectism exist in almost all societies to various degrees. A multilingual society is one in which the use of two or more languages is employed to fulfil various functions. In multidialectal and diglossic societies, a language is further distinguished into different dialects, variants or registers which, in turn, have status differences. Most commonly, the standard varieties are known as 'high' varieties and the nonstandard varieties are known as 'low' varieties. Each variety evokes positive or negative attitudes depending on the context in which it is used. It is natural therefore that linguistic varieties within a society compete (through their speakers) for social and/or political power (Wardhaugh 1987). The

languages that eventually dominate are those which are associated with the political and economic elites of a society. It can be convincingly argued that the asymmetrical power relationship among the languages of a multilingual society perpetuates linguistic, social and political inequality as it favours some speakers over others. Gill (2004) describes how the Malaysian government's language policy regarding the medium of instruction in public and private institutions led to the creation of an elite group of graduates who had a linguistic advantage over other graduates. Public institutions employed Bahasa Melayu as the medium of instruction while private institutions were allowed to use English in higher education. This bifurcation created an ethnic divide between Chinese students who could afford private schooling and Malay students who attended state schools. The increasingly multilingual and multidialectal United States (which promotes and maintains the hegemony of standard American English) serves as an excellent example for demonstrating that language power relations perpetuate social inequality. Wilberschied and Dassier (1995) describe how minorities who speak a regional or social dialect of English, such as African American Vernacular English or Chicano English, are socially disadvantaged. It is evident from studies on language and employment that speakers of these stigmatised dialects may be rejected on the basis of their speech, a factor completely unrelated to job specifications (Atkins 1993). It must be noted here that languages dominant in one society may not necessarily hold a similar status in another society. For instance, Kioko and Muthwii (2003) discovered that Kenyans prefer standard Kenyan English for use in education over the English of native speakers (e.g. British, American, Australian). The crucial role of the local sociolinguistic setting cannot therefore be underestimated. It should always be considered when decisions about language are at stake.

As Fishman (1995: 51) notes, 'languages are not merely innocent means of communication'. Language can and has been used as a vehicle for linguistic and cultural maintenance, revitalisation, shift, or loss. One can see how, for instance, in countries with colonial histories, language was used for the subjugation of the colonised. This subjugation was done either by educating only a few in the colonisers' language (thereby creating an elite group who had access to power, wealth, and status) or by aiming at eradicating the indigenous languages (thereby leading to the demise of these indigenous varieties). South Africa serves as an excellent example for demonstrating that language was used as an instrument of political oppression. The English colonial government followed a policy of Anglicisation and denied Afrikaners the opportunity of learning via the medium of their home language. Later, based on home language, apartheid legislation created separate schools for African students, English-speaking whites, and Afrikaans-speaking whites (Probyn 2009). The language impact colonisation had on many postcolonial countries is still apparent. Remaining in the South African context, English and Afrikaans (the former colonial languages) along with nine African languages (Zulu, Xhosa, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, SiSwati, Tshivenda, and IsiNdebele) are the official languages of the country. English is still, in fact, the preferred language of education in South Africa today. Pennycook (1994) explains that English has accrued status as the language of learning as a result of the influence of colonial mission schools while the idea of instruction through an African language remains tainted by its association with apartheid education. Other former colonies in Africa which have retained the colonisers' language as the language of education include the Gambia (McGlynn and Martin 2009), Malawi (Kaphesi 2003), Botswana (Arthur 1994) and Kenya (Meritt 1992). In Asia, too, English serves as one of the official languages of Singapore and Hong Kong (both

of which are former British colonies). Naturally, the language of the colonisers has not been (actively) maintained by all former colonies. A reason for this is that the colonial language is reminiscent of oppression and suffering. Abandonment of the colonial languages is seen as liberation from the colonising force. Morocco serves as an ideal example for demonstrating how the language policy of the country after Morocco's independence aimed at replacing French and reinstating Arabic in an effort to assert the country's Arabo-Islamic identity and cultural independence from Western influence (and particularly that of the French) (Marley 2005).

Governments and educational policy makers are often challenged by multilingualism (Hernandez-Campoy 2007). Singapore serves as an example for demonstrating the complex nature of a multilingual and multiethnic country. Singapore's main ethnic groups are the Chinese with Mandarin, the Malays with Bahasa Melayu and the Indians with Tamil. The government has established bilingualism through its bilingual policy which requires students to learn English at first-language level and their mother tongue (which is defined as depending on the ethnic background of a student) at a second-language level. As Saravanan et al. (2007) explain, 'mother tongue' in the Singaporean context is associated with ethnic background and is considered as a second language at school. Again, this example reveals that any language policy/activity ought to be considered within a given society's specific language context.

One of the most obvious challenges faced by governments and educational policy makers is the selection of the official languages of a multilingual country. This is due to the fact that language acts as a crucial symbol of group consciousness, identity and solidarity. Languages that represent ethnic unity are normally chosen for nation building or maintenance. Governments also ought to ensure their own relevance in the wider economic and political context. Multilingual societies are therefore faced with the task of having to find a healthy balance between nationalistic sentiments and internationalisation. Multilingual countries with national languages that are not among the dominant languages in the wider international context feel the weight of this task especially heavily. Any decision the educational system of a country takes regarding the use of linguistic varieties in education is inevitably political (Mar-Molinero 2000).

As Tsui and Tollefson (2004) insightfully put it, in multiethnic and multicultural states, decisions regarding languages and education can even lead to war and bloodshed. Nical et al. (2004) caution that the tension generated by the assimilationist policy in the Philippines (which promotes English and Filipino/Tagalog and thus disadvantages students with other mother tongues) could develop into a more serious ethnic conflict over linguistic equity if multilingualism is not fostered in the school system. History has also shown that language and religion sometimes go hand in hand. To again draw on Morocco as an example, Moroccan identity is presented as Muslim and therefore Arab and Arabic-speaking. Similarly, in Greece, the Greek language and Greek Orthodoxy are seen as constitutive elements of the Greek identity. At the time of independence from the Ottomans, language and religion were used as the driving forces for liberation. Spolsky (2003) explains that, as a result of the government of Singapore's expression of support for the values that can be taught through religions, changes have taken place in the (i) number of speakers of English and Mandarin and (ii) the growth of Christianity and Buddhism. Spolsky (2003) describes how English and Mandarin are spreading at the expense of Chinese languages such as Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, Hainanese and Hakka and that Christianity and Buddhism are spreading at the cost

of Taoism. A justification for these changes is that Buddhism, like Christianity, has accepted English as a teaching medium. This example demonstrates that language and religion are sometimes tightly intertwined.

In many multilingual societies, the educational system (normally directed by the government) perpetuates the state of affairs regarding the status of the different linguistic varieties. Indeed, throughout history, educational systems have been responsible for the death of low-status varieties, the promotion of elite varieties, language shift, and maintenance or change of negative/positive attitudes towards languages. Malaysia serves as a valuable example for demonstrating how the language policy regarding the medium of instruction succeeded in raising the status of Bahasa Melayu and constructing national identity (Gill 2004). After its independence, Malaysia kept English (the former colonisers' tongue) as an official language for only ten years. Conscious efforts were made at the time for the establishment of Bahasa Malaysia as the official language and the main medium of instruction. This example demonstrates how language policy was responsible for nation building and promotion of the ethnic language (which was seen in opposition to the colonisers' language). It must be noted here that, because of internationalisation pressures (mentioned above), the Malaysian government has recently reinstated English as the medium of instruction in higher education in an effort to meet political, technological and economic world-demands. Another example comes from Cyprus. In 1981, a unanimous parliamentary decision mandated the creation of a trilingual (Greek, Turkish, English) university that was expected to strengthen the entity of Cyprus as a state and express the cultural heritage of the Greeks, Turks and other inhabitants of the island. The following year, however, the Ministry of Education and Culture reversed this parliamentary resolution and a university that would employ only the Greek language was proposed on the basis that this arrangement reflected the need to preserve the Greek Cypriots' identity and to acknowledge their struggle for ethnic survival. The ministry's proposal was thus a call for national unity through linguistic uniformity. It was finally agreed that the university be bilingual with Greek and Turkish as its official languages. English was excluded as it was deemed to be a threat to Cypriots' identity (Karoulla-Vrikki 2007). In another study carried out in Italy on the minority Slovene language, Kaučič-Baša (1997) argues that a general flaw of the language policy contributed to the inferior status of Slovene relative to Italian. Because of lack of an integrated law for the protection of the Slovene language and the prohibition from using the language in the public domain up until 2001, the Slovene language faced the threat of endangerment (within Italy).

Exploratory analyses like those made above invariably lead to the conclusion that educational policies are never politically neutral. These policies may simply reflect power structures or they may serve as agents for changing the established power structures. Decisions taken by governments, educational systems and policy makers in multilingual societies may unavoidably favour some and disadvantage others.

GLOBALISATION AND THE DOMINANT ROLE OF ENGLISH

Globalisation is inextricably linked to the dominant role of English. The economic and political dominance of English-speaking countries (United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada), the employment of English as the lingua franca on the Internet, and the

retaining of English as a working language in many postcolonial countries are all factors that offer English unprecedented power. As Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1999) note, English has become a much sought-after commodity. English is viewed as a necessity and is associated with economic and technological advancement. As a South African teacher bluntly put it 'English puts bread on the table' (Probyn *et al.* 2002). This view is particularly true for many smaller countries. In multilingual Fiji, for example, Fijians and Indo-Fijians (members of the two largest ethnic groups) recognise the importance of English in education and, as Shameem (2002) argues, English is becoming the most powerful lingua franca between these groups. Hong Kong is another example (albeit an ironic one) of a country which treats English as the means for maintaining a competitive edge in international business affairs. Tsui (2004) describes how the Hong Kong people protested against being educated in their own tongues and demanded education in English (the colonial language), even after Hong Kong had gained independence. As already mentioned, English holds a central position in multilingual Singapore as well. Saravanan *et al.* (2007) explain that English serves as a link language for the Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnic groups as it is not the language of any of these groups. McGlynn and Martin (2009) argue that, in actual fact, English is the preferred language of education in multilingual societies with tensions amongst the different ethnic groups. Indeed, preference for the English language has resulted in the mandatory exit of native varieties from the classroom.

As Tsui and Tollefson (2004) explain, the force of globalisation has resulted in two situations. On the one hand, globalisation pulls towards greater cultural and linguistic homogenisation and, on the other hand, it has generated resistance against assimilation by minority groups. Any teacher-training programme should address the impact of globalisation. Such programmes should focus on engendering knowledge about the circumstances by which globalisation has led to respect and *desire for cultural and linguistic plurality in many countries around the world.*

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

It is essential that affective variables such as language attitudes are taken into account when designing language-training programmes for teachers. The power of attitudes and underlying ideologies is undeniable as they may influence successful language learning, promote group unification amongst speakers or lead to linguistic exorcising. In multilingual communities, learning or maintaining a language depends on the perceived usefulness of that language as well as on the functions it fulfils for the individual and the society (Shameem 2004). The struggle of the indigenous Māori in New Zealand for reviving and maintaining their Māori language (in an effort to counter the dominance of English and ensure transmission of Māori heritage) serves as an excellent example for discussion of the immense changes speech communities (with affirmative attitudes) can bring about. In the early 1980s, Māoris worked outside the state educational system for the promotion of their language and heritage and finally managed to achieve recognition of Māori as the medium of instruction in education by the state educational system in 1990 (May 2004). This example demonstrates that positive attitudes and the will to fight for one's language can lead to desirable results and can save a language from death. The current section of this chapter reviews literature on the

attitudes of students, parents, teachers and language policies towards language diversity and education in multilingual settings.

Students' Attitudes

Studying students' attitudes towards the languages of their community can shed light on how motivated these students are to maintain any of these languages and, ultimately, to develop multilingual abilities. Because attitudes influence language behaviour, one could argue that fostering positive attitudes towards linguistic variation could have an impact on the success of a language's maintenance. Students' voices therefore should be heard and should serve as influences of language policy and planning.

Studies on students' opinions as to which codes should be used in formal schooling indicate that many nonstandard-speaking students view their own mother tongue as inappropriate in formal educational settings (Sciriha 1996). Some even consider nonstandard speech (which corresponds to their own mother tongue) to denote a distinct lack of education (Papapavlou 1998). Such attitudes, no doubt, affect students' self-esteem (Heit and Blair 1993). To avoid 'self-revulsion' developing in nonstandard-speaking students, their home varieties should be treated with respect in the class (James 1996). Inclusion of their varieties would signal to students that these varieties have value. It must also be noted that children's attitudes may reflect the attitudes of the adult speech community (Pavlou 1997). It is disturbing that such attitudes are based on unjustified stereotypes which are often continuously perpetuated by education itself (Wolfram 1999). As long as educational systems do not embrace linguistic diversity, such erroneous assumptions will persist in the students' minds.

Parents' Attitudes

Studies on parents' attitudes indicate that dialectal parents prefer their children to be educated in the standard varieties and, in many cases, they too view dialects as inferior (Hoover 1978, Hoover *et al.* 1997, McGroarty 1996). Many nonstandard-vernacular speakers want standard English to be taught so that there are additional occupational options opened to their children. Epstein and Xu (2003) highlight the antithetical attitudes of some parents who, although desirous for their home varieties to be recognised and respected in schools, concomitantly believe that teaching these varieties would affect their children's learning of the educational standard. Such contradictory attitudes lead to the unfortunate likelihood that children will also tend to view their vernaculars as inadequate for educational purposes. Saravanan (2004) argues that the strong parental preference for English in multilingual Singapore contributed to language shift, with Tamil speakers shifting to English.

Teachers' Attitudes

Teachers' language attitudes are crucial as they have the potential to affect students' language performance at school, whether this is performance in the mother tongue or in a second/foreign language. Some researchers believe that there would be no educational problem associated with nonstandard-speaking students if it were not for the negative attitudes of teachers (Trudgill 1975). It is no wonder that, as Münstermann (1989) states, almost every study on dialectal variation and education in the Netherlands emphasises the importance of teachers' attitudes towards this variation.

A number of studies highlights the pejorative view that some teachers hold towards the abilities of nonstandard-speaking students (Wilberschied and Dassier 1995, Garrett *et al.* 1999, Haig and Oliver 2003). These tendencies for teachers to ascribe negative characteristics to non-standard speakers are manifested in different forms: (i) Some teachers assume that if students do not use the standard variety it means that they do not have the ability to do so; these teachers ignore the possibility that such linguistic behaviour by students might be conscious (Ammon 1989). (ii) Lack of teachers' awareness of the linguistic differences between the standard and the nonstandard varieties leads some teachers to mark their pupils' written work inconsistently, thereby confusing the pupils (Cheshire 1982). (iii) Some teachers tend to have lower expectations of nonstandard-speaking students (Williams 1976) which, in turn, and crucially, may affect student performance (Tauber 1997).

In a study carried out in multilingual primary schools in Fiji, Shameen (2004) demonstrated that the majority of the participant teachers and headteachers believed that class English standards were likely to drop if Fiji English was promoted in the classroom. These teachers supported the use of standard English at all times. In another study carried out in multilingual Morocco, Marley (2005) observed that teachers hold the opinion that bilingualism and bilingual education are beneficial. However, as the author explains, this opinion appears to be true only if the languages concerned are prestigious. The teachers who participated in the study were in favour of Arabic-French bilingualism but not Arabic-Tamazight bilingualism. Specifically, many of these teachers were resolutely against the idea of using indigenous linguistic varieties in education as they felt that the varieties were of limited use and interest, liable to cause social and regional divisions and potentially detrimental to the acquisition of Arabic. It is undoubted pity to see such negative attitudes towards the native varieties of a great number of Moroccan children.

The Attitudes Inherent in Language Policies

Language educational policies in many countries also treat the standard as the educational variety and, at best, ignore the fact that some children go to school equipped with a native variety which differs from the educational standard (James 1996). As Vaughn-Cooke (1999) notes, minimising and trivialising the differences that exist between standard and nonstandard varieties may be the reason that many dialectal students do not succeed in learning the standard as a second dialect. This trivialisation simply shows how such policies fail to accept the fact that some students need formal instruction in the differences between the standard and nonstandard linguistic codes.

Language attitudes carry a great deal of power and, in most cases, they are difficult to change. Prior understanding of students', parents' and teachers' language attitudes is essential for the successful implementation of any teacher-training programme (Yiakoumetti and Esch 2009). Informed and informative language-training programmes for teachers which describe the crucial role of language attitudes in a particular setting are especially needed. Such programmes ought to be situated within the sociolinguistic and historicopolitical context of a given community. Any attempt to eliminate language prejudice cannot be successful if it is not embedded in a broader framework which encompasses regional, social and historical dimensions. One should not forget that teachers themselves are active members with a number of coexisting identities within a given community: they are powerful role models due to the nature of their profession, they live and interact with others in the community, they may be parents, and they are minority/dominant speakers themselves. All these coexisting identities provide teachers with an undeniable sense by which they can understand their community. With appropriate training which addresses the community's sociolinguistic realities, teachers can serve as a vehicle for promoting positive attitudes towards linguistic variation (Yiakoumetti *et al.* 2005).

Of course, one should remember that most of the responsibility should not fall on teachers. Most of the educational decisions are the products of social, political and economic agendas. As Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1994) note, behind the impressive rhetoric about respect for linguistic diversity in language policies around the world, there is little commitment on the part of governments about the exact role of the mother tongue in formal education. In societies such as these, one cannot blame teachers for not promoting certain peoples' mother tongue and thus restricting access for these speakers to economic and social wealth. Teachers, as well as their students, are at the mercy of the governments. One should also remember that multilingual governments are faced with the herculean task of having to balance the force of ethnolinguistic nationalism on the one hand and the force of globalisation on the other.

MOTHER-TONGUE USE IN FORMAL EDUCATION

The issue of using the mother tongue alongside dominant languages at school in multilingual societies has attracted a great deal of research attention. A plethora of research studies points to the affective, cognitive, cultural, linguistic and academic benefits of an education which embraces students' mother tongue in addition to other languages. Despite such evidence, there is still resistance against mother-tongue use by the general public, politicians and educators (Shohamy 2006, Sridhar 1996). Indeed, the pressures on the mother tongue from other languages in a multilingual setting are immense. This is especially so when the mother tongue is of low status and/or is considered inappropriate for formal functions. As Paciotto (2009) explains, misguided common sense brings people to believe that more exposure to the dominant language in schools brings more learning in that language, and that time spent on mother-tongue use takes away from this learning. This kind of argumentation by lay persons is related, in their eyes, to educational efficacy. However, there is no evidence to suggest that more mother-tongue use results in less target-language learning. In fact, studies such as those carried out by Yiakoumetti (2006, 2007a, 2007b) in Cyprus, suggest that

introducing the home variety into the classroom does not have any detrimental effect on students' oral and written production in the target variety. After an interventionist introduction of Greek Cypriot students' mother tongue (the Greek Cypriot dialect) alongside standard Greek, the students were in a position to better separate their two linguistic codes.

The aim of this section is to discuss the crucial role of mother-tongue use in formal education in an effort to explain the need for language-training programmes for teachers that incorporate information about this role within their curricula. Topics such as discouragement of the home language, language maintenance and revitalisation, self-perception and self-esteem, and benefits of mother-tongue use are briefly addressed.

Discouragement of Mother-Tongue Use

Many language policies around the world argue for exclusive use of the target linguistic varieties in the classroom. They either indirectly discourage mother-tongue use, ignore its existence altogether, or outright ban it from the classroom. One of the reasons suggested for the hostile stance towards mother tongue is the fear that entry of certain linguistic varieties into the school realm will contaminate the dominant school languages. Such fears are put forward as arguments by cultures that place a high value on the purity of certain codes, which must therefore be protected against linguistic cross-contamination (Schiffman 1996, 2006). Beliefs in correct and incorrect forms of speech and promotion of standard-language ideologies are associated with nationalism (Milroy 1999). Tsui and Tollefson (2004) argue convincingly that political and economic agendas are normally behind educational agendas. It is essential that, when examining the issue of mother-tongue use in formal schooling, the political, historical and economic ideologies of a given community be considered.

In many classrooms, the use of the home language is a punishable offense. Drawing on the multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural Guatemala, Fernando and Rubio (2002) explain that the educational system of the country used to forbid mother-tongue use in the classroom. Mayan students were physically punished when using their mother tongue instead of the only official language of the country, Spanish. The authors suggest that this situation still happens today in some schools. In another study, Ampah-Mensah (2009) describes the way a teacher scolded students who used Fante (as opposed to English, the prescribed medium of instruction) in schools in Ghana. In spite of the prohibitive stance towards home-language use, a great deal of such use persists in the classroom when members of the class share the same home language.

Language Maintenance and Revitalisation

Linguistically-diverse education that incorporates mother-tongue use within the school boundaries certainly aids language maintenance efforts. Fishman and Fishman (2000) argue that the use and study of the mother tongue at schools is the most important form of intergenerational transmission. It is advisable therefore that educational systems make sure that minority-language children are exposed to instruction of their native languages (Valdes 1997). In the study of Paciotto (2009) in Italy, Slovene minority teachers and students provided a strong advocacy of the contribution of the Slovene-medium school they attended

to the survival of the Slovene language and culture. The author explains that the employment of the mother tongue in formal schooling raised the status of the minoritised and marginalised Slovene language and culture. This status shift enabled Slovene to coexist in a more balanced fashion within the dominant and prestigious Italian culture.

Self-perception and Self-esteem

Students who are deprived from using the mother tongue in education are made to believe that their language is simply not good enough. Exclusion of the mother tongue can lead to lack of self-esteem and linguistic insecurity. A system that suppresses the home language and promotes other varieties is surely responsible for at least some part of students' underachievement (Wolfram *et al.* 1999). Even worse, educational policies which ban mother-tongue use can produce generations of children who are stripped of cultural values and traditions that are constitutive of identity.

Teachers ought to get informed about the educational benefits of education which encompasses mother-tongue use in multilingual settings. When the educational system is pluralist, incorporates variety and appreciates the crucial role of the mother tongue, true multilingualism is fostered.

Benefits of Mother-Tongue Use

A number of studies point out that the extent of use of the mother tongue could be varied according to the content of lessons. Research demonstrates the inefficiencies of instruction through a language medium in which students lack sufficient proficiency. McGlynn and Martin (2009) explain that, in order to increase students' chances of understanding the subject matter, teachers should bring the home languages of students into the classroom (in opposition to the imposed language policies). In Gambian classes, where English is the sole medium of instruction and home languages are prohibited, teachers employed Mandinka and Wolof to discuss socially important (and delicate) topics such as sexual health. Teachers employed students' home varieties in order to make sure that students understood the topic of sexually-transmitted diseases. This study demonstrates that the mother tongues of students were viewed as the most appropriate tools for transmitting knowledge of content that is fundamental to the well-being of the students.

TEACHER CODESWITCHING

Codeswitching is a natural sociolinguistic phenomenon that forms part of multilinguals' daily lives. People with diverse linguistic repertoires switch between their varieties consciously or unconsciously. Consequently, codeswitching serves many functions in multilingual societies. While codeswitching in community contexts is regarded as acceptable and common speech, it is deemed inappropriate and unacceptable in many classroom contexts (Wei and Martin 2009). This section concentrates on teachers' codeswitching in an effort to

demonstrate that codeswitching in the classroom should not be seen as the result of teachers' lack of knowledge of specific linguistic varieties. Instead, codeswitching should be utilised as a crucial communicative resource which leads to pedagogical benefits.

Probyn (2009) explains that codeswitching is not generally accepted as a legitimate classroom strategy and is not sanctioned in teacher training. Although Probyn (2009) refers to codeswitching in postcolonial South Africa, his sentiments hold for many linguistically-diverse classrooms around the world. The reason codeswitching is perceived so negatively is possibly due to what Phillipson (1992) refers to as the monolingual fallacy, that is, the principle that language is best taught monolingually. Language policies that favour such teaching undoubtedly perpetuate the negative image of codeswitching.

A number of studies demonstrates that many teachers themselves view codeswitching as a sign of linguistic and pedagogical incompetence. Teachers interviewed by Mitchell (1988) about their use of the mother tongue in the foreign-language class, felt that they were admitting professional misconduct in confessing to low levels of foreign-language use. Teachers interviewed by Probyn (2009) expressed the conviction that codeswitching is a 'bad thing to do'. Van de Craen and Humblet (1989) explain that teachers in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, feel ashamed when told that they use nonstandard varieties in the class and declare that they cannot speak 'as they should'. It is obvious that, despite teachers' best intentions, they resort to codeswitching and stray from the path outlined by certain narrow language policies. The simple reason for the continued existence of codeswitching in the classroom is that codeswitching is a valuable communicative strategy. It can serve many functions that teachers should utilise. By employing codeswitching, teachers can explain difficult linguistic structures, make comparisons/contrasts between a number of languages, provide instructions so that students with different ability levels can comprehend the activities at hand, and maintain the attention, interest and involvement of students. The new concurrent method, a teaching method that actively creates links between students' mother tongue and a foreign language, acknowledges codeswitching as a normal activity and encourages students to concurrently use both languages in the classroom. The language classroom therefore resembles life outside the classroom where codeswitching is viewed as a more natural phenomenon (Jacobson 1990).

Carless (2008) notes that some teachers often feel uncomfortable or guilty when they allow their students to use their home variety in the classroom. It is disappointing to see such feelings of guilt especially when codeswitching can serve many purposes such as efficient communication, social integration, and academic achievement. Some teachers may feel that codeswitching by the students is the result of lack of proficiency in the target variety. Eldridge's (1996) study demonstrates the opposite: high-achieving students codeswitched just as regularly as other students in the English class of a Turkish school. The author explains that codeswitching as an avoidance strategy was extremely rare in the class. In fact, the majority of codeswitching was related to learning objectives. Banning codeswitching from the classroom inhibits natural and spontaneous communication which is surely a constitutive element of language development.

In classrooms in which the teachers and learners generally share a common home language but the language policy prescribes the use of another as the sole medium of instruction, a natural response is for teachers and students to codeswitch. Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) explain that, in English classes in Malaysia, teachers and students regularly switch to Malay, the common language amongst the multilingual students of a classroom. This

codeswitching serves a number of functions and provides a conducive learning environment for students. Another study carried out in multilingual Taiwan revealed that codeswitching on the part of teachers was not a consequence of insufficient target language competence (Raschka *et al.* 2009). On the contrary, teachers purposefully switched between Mandarin and English for reasons of socialising, topic switching, classroom management and metalinguistic functioning. In yet another study, Cleghorn (1992) investigated the teacher use of English and three indigenous languages of Kenya (Kiswahili, Kikuyu and Luo) and argued that important ideas were more easily conveyed when teachers did not adhere to the English-only language-of-instruction policy.

Language policies which perceive codeswitching as a form of deficit behaviour, undoubtedly, constrain teachers' professional behaviour (Raschka *et al.* 2009). It is unrealistic to expect no codeswitching to occur in classrooms of multilingual societies. It is for this reason that any language-training programme for teachers should incorporate information on current research that relates to the usefulness of codeswitching as an appropriate pedagogical tool.

LANGUAGE-TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR TEACHERS

Linguistic diversity is one of the most fundamental dimensions of human behaviour, yet there are only a few programmes that educate teachers about it (Wolfram 1999). Gollnick (1992) suggests that teachers ought to be educated in the topics of multidialectism and multilingualism so that they are in a position to successfully educate their students. This is the stance of the current chapter as well. Re-invigorating language-training programmes for teachers which emphasise linguistic diversity and its cognitive and linguistic benefits should be one of the primary aims of educational systems of multilingual societies.

The incorporation of the following elements is essential to the success of training programmes: (i) the specific setting's sociolinguistic realities and historicopolitical ideologies; (ii) linguistic and educational theories on language acquisition, learning and teaching; and (iii) examples of educational practices in various multilingual settings. As can be seen from the previous sections, topics such as the impact of multilingualism, the role of English in market-led societies, language attitudes, the role of the mother tongue in education, and teachers' linguistic behaviour also ought to be taken into account when designing teacher-training programmes.

It is paramount that, in multilingual societies, clear guidelines are given to teachers on how they can utilise the many languages of their society. Training programmes ought to be practical and reflective of the social realities of the context at hand. Idealistic goals that do not take into account teacher limitations and practical constraints would most likely fail to fulfil their purpose. Lack of clear and feasible guidelines only leads to teachers' feeling confused about their exact role in the classroom. Kaphesi (2003) explains the uncertainties and dilemmas teachers face in Malawi. The educational language policy requires that teachers use a teacher's guide written in English and a pupils' book written in Chichewa to prepare a lesson in English and deliver it in Chichewa. The teachers of Kaphesi's (2003) study expressed concern about how to teach using two languages. This example amply demonstrates that teachers are sometimes caught between language-policy aspirations and

classroom realities. The importance of training programmes can also be seen in McGlynn's and Martin's (2009) discussion of the educational system of The Gambia. The authors explain that school materials for the first three primary-school grades have been prepared in the three main indigenous languages (Mandinka, Wolof and Fula) but because a programme for teacher training has yet to be designed, the materials cannot be utilised.

Below are some guidelines that teacher-training programmes could profitably follow:

- *Teachers should be educated about terms such as language, dialect, standard and nonstandard varieties. They should understand that, from a linguistic point of view, all these types of varieties are coherent, logical, complex and systematic, despite uninformed opinion that downgrades some of these types.*
- *Teachers should be educated about the factors that have inhibited the eradication of linguistic bias in education.*
- *Teachers should be informed about the dominant role of English which shapes and is shaped by globalisation.*
- *Teachers should be educated about the way social, historical, political and economic factors have impacted on the status of the linguistic varieties of their communities. They should also be educated about the history of linguistic diversity within the specific community in which they teach.*
- *Teachers should be made aware of the various functions of the linguistic varieties of their communities. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to be competent in all of these linguistic varieties. However, teachers' appreciation of the varieties' functions and symbolic representations would serve as a solid foundation for students' learning.*
- *Teachers should be made aware of the social, cognitive, linguistic and pedagogical significance of home languages. They should also know about the detrimental effects that education which excludes home languages can cause.*
- *Where feasible, teachers should be made aware of the linguistic differences and similarities between the varieties of a community. Even teachers who are able to communicate adequately in all varieties may not be in a position to help students without prior training in the linguistic differences and similarities of the varieties.*
- *Teachers should be given clear instructions as to how much students' nonstandard mother tongue can be used in the class or on what occasions and for what purposes. In some cases, such as in the Netherlands, the result is that the dialect is simply not used in the class, despite the very liberal Dutch language policy towards dialects (Hagen 1989). Hagen explains that, although teachers in Kerkrade hold positive attitudes towards the regional dialect, their behaviour in the classroom suggests that teachers are subject to the hegemony of the standard.*
- *Teachers should know that codeswitching offers more options both to themselves and to students.*
- *Teachers who are not native speakers of the dominant language should be told of the additional tools they possess for assisting students from backgrounds of nondominant languages. Having been through the process of learning the dominant language themselves, teachers can provide students with clear directives on ways they can overcome difficulties with the mainstream language. As King (1993) explains,*

minority teachers have an innate understanding of the backgrounds and attitudes of minority students.

- *Training programmes should explain to teachers that language attitudes play a crucial role in the life and death of a language. Language attitudes also affect students' sense of identity, linguistic ability, and academic performance.*
- *Dialectal teachers should be made aware of their own regionality in their speech. Such teachers should be told how to harness the pedagogical tools with which they are natively gifted.*

The lack of emphasis on linguistic variation that is all-too-common in many existing educational systems could result in a number of unwanted consequences:

- *the loss of aspects of the culture of minority speakers that are of inestimable value,*
- *the weakening/undermining of a minority group's identity,*
- *the acceptance of a flawed view that a linguistic variety is impoverished and inappropriate for formal schooling,*
- *language shift and even possible loss of a community language,*
- *imposing limits on students' academic achievement,*
- *generating emotional insecurity in certain students, and*
- *preventing students from participating meaningfully in the educational system.*

With sociolinguistically-informed training, on the other hand, teachers could serve as agents for fostering true multilingual abilities and multicultural sensitivities in students. The beneficial impact of teachers who are aware of a multilingual community's pedagogical assets could take a number of forms:

- *raising the status of a linguistic variety,*
- *heightening the sense of identity amongst speakers,*
- *promoting cultural and linguistic diversity,*
- *promoting development of multiliteracy,*
- *widening students' cultural horizons, and*
- *promoting successful interaction (and cultural integration) of students with the different speech communities of a multilingual society.*

Thus, consideration of the pitfalls created by ignorance of linguistic variation and of the benefits conveyed by a thorough knowledge of the issue brings an awareness that the agenda of a language policy (be it in the form of a teacher-training programme or school policy) can serve either as an instrument of cultural and linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) or a vehicle for promoting linguistic or cultural diversity. It is obviously the latter instrument that multilingual societies should aim to deploy: linguistic and cultural diversity is an enrichment, not a liability (Nieto 1992). Even if this did represent the mammoth task that it must sometimes seem, it would nevertheless be a task that is well worth undertaking.

CONCLUSION

Language is an invaluable and irreplaceable gateway to a person's culture, heritage and traditions. It is for this reason that it should be respected, valued and promoted. The power of the school as a means of linguistic and cultural reinforcement should not be underestimated. Because teachers ultimately hold a great deal of both power and responsibility, it is paramount that they are empowered to carry out their task optimally. Re-invigorating teacher-training programmes in linguistic diversity does not only result in the promotion of linguistic and cultural enrichment. Teachers have a very pragmatic task: to educate and prepare people who can function meaningfully and successfully in their community. Language-training programmes for teachers should thus be realistic and practical. If these programmes are ill-considered, they will fail to produce teachers who have the understanding and tools to cope with the gigantic task of preparing learners for real life.

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