

Lecturers and Students' Reflections on a Dual Language Instruction Pilot Course on Academic Literacy

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Presentation outline

- Background
- Research Methodology
- Findings and Discussion
- Conclusion and Recommendations

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Multilingual Policies:

- Constitution (1996), Language in Education Policy (1997)
- Language Policy in Higher Education (2002: DoE):
 - English (L2) identified as a barrier to access and success in Higher Education & backed by research
 - African languages (L1) should be developed to become efficient languages of teaching and learning (LOTL).
 - ...choice... educational alternatives... equity, practicability, & redress the past
 - Ministerial Committee Report (2005): ...preference for English , recommends...HEI identify an indigenous African language ... development ... medium of instruction
 - Attitudes and lack of development a problem in the intellectualisation of the African languages (Finlayson & Madiba, 2002)
 - Change attitudes to ensure equity Webb, 1992: & Alexander, 2000
 - Whites still outnumber blacks in engineering (SAQA, 2007)

1.2 DUAL-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION THEORY

- Bilingual education can promote literacy and subject matter knowledge, L2 development, self-image, culture preservation (Cummins, 2000; Webb & Kembo-Sure 2000; Shembe, 2003; Ramani et al 2007)
- Examine if community view bilingualism as a desirable and valuable option (Baker, 1992, Lee, 1996)

1.3 HYPOTHESES ARE:

- Lecturers and students in a DLI program would:
 - acknowledge the benefits of a primary language (L1) in a bilingual programme
 - support the development and promotion of African languages in Higher Education
 - Indicate positive attitudes towards the role of African languages education

2. METHODOLOGY

Tools:

- Quantitative: Questionnaires
- 5 point Likert scale: A (strongly agree) – E (disagree) – students 24 & lecturers 43 items (open & closed)

- Communication in Engineering Study Guide: Zulu – English (35%-65%)

Sample:

- Student sample: n300 Extended Curriculum Prg (ECP) & Pre-Tech in Engineering: Communication in Academic Literacy
- Staff sample: n10 contract & part-time (educators & lecturers)

3. Findings: Demographics

- Gender:
Students (S) – 59% male & 41% female
Lecturers (L) – 30% male & 70% female
- Language:
S – 94, 9% Zulu, 3% Xhosa, 1% Swati, 1% Venda
L – 60% Zulu, 30% English, & 10% Tswana
- Education
S – African schools – 82%
L – Honours (50%) MA (50%)

Findings: cont-

Teaching & Learning

- S: suits my learning style: s/agree: 85%
L: appreciated by students: s/agree 80%
- S: effective learning: 86%
L: effective teaching: 50%

L1 on L2 development/acquisition

- S: improve my English: 96%
L: students develop English: 70%
- S: feel free to participate in class: 73%
L: good rapport with students: 90%
L: students freely use primary language 100%
L: students freely use English: 30%

Findings: cont.

Role of L1 in HE

- S: learnt to value role of L1: 77%
- S: developed L1 vocabulary: 48%
- L: broadened perspectives on bi/multilingualism: 90%
- L: respectful to L1: 90%
- L: recommend for content modules: 70%

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Positive views on L1 in HE based on Dual Lang. Instruction experience
- Zulu dominance as L1 at MUT, province and country conducive for its use in HE
- L1 accepted if alongside L2 especially at Foundation and First-year level
- Bi-/multilingualism in HE essential to improve academic access, success and self-esteem

- Thank you !
- Ngiyabonga !
- Baie Dankie !
- Enkosi !

