

Attitudes Towards Afrikaans as a First Additional Language: A Case Study of One High School in Pretoria West, South Africa

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Abstract. This article reports on the language attitudes of sixty (60) twelfth-grade learners towards Afrikaans as a compulsory language at a high school in Pretoria West, South Africa. This English-medium school offered Afrikaans as the only other language, called First Additional Language (FAL), although an overwhelming majority of its learners came from a diverse background, reflective of South Africa's multilingual profile. Qualitative methods (a Likert-type scale) and quantitative methods (individual interviews) were used to gather data from all sixty (60) participants, and ten (10) interviewees, respectively. Whereas participants were not sure about the attitudes they held towards Afrikaans as an FAL in the analysis of quantitative data, they held negative attitudes towards the language as an FAL in the analysis of the qualitative data; their preference was that their school should introduce other languages, which alongside Afrikaans should be optional FALs.

Keywords: Language Attitudes, First Additional Language, South Africa

Language: Afrikaans

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1.0 Introduction

With South Africa having granted official status to eleven of its languages, the contention around the equality of these languages in both social and academic spheres remain an on-going one. In view of their linguistic lineages, in this article, the following languages are referred to as Black South African languages (BSALs): Sesotho sa Leboa, Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, and isiNdebele, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The research site is a former Afrikaans-medium school, which has since developed into an English-medium school.

According to the Constitution of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), the country's eleven official languages are equal in status, and the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) states that learners should be taught two languages chosen by parents: one as a Home Language (HL), and the other as a First Additional Language (FAL). In the case of this school, English was taught as an HL and Afrikaans as an FAL. According to Census 2011¹, the three languages with the highest numbers of HL speakers in the region where the school is located were Sesotho sa Leboa (20.2%), Afrikaans (19.1%), and Setswana (15.3%). While the region did not have a majority language, the Sotho-Tswana language group (*viz.* Sesotho sa Leboa, Setswana and Sesotho) accounted for the largest block at forty-one percent.

Afrikaans is the only First Additional Language (FAL) offered at this school, making it compulsory for all learners. This means that should a learner prefer to learn a BSAL as their FAL, they would have to enroll at a different school. This proves challenging because, according to the South African Schools Act (No. 84 Of 1996), in admitting learners to South African public schools, first preference is given to learners either residing near a school or whose parents work within a school's surrounding area. The protection of individual rights as outlined in the South African Language-in-Education Policy (1997) states that:

Where no school in a school district offers the desired language of learning, the learner may request the provincial education department to make provision for instruction in the chosen language.

Currently, there are thirty-seven schools listed under the same district as the school in question, five of which are within an acceptable commuting distance for participants in this study, and all five have the same language profile: English is offered as an HL and Afrikaans as an FAL. This suggests that when the demographics of the district changed (*i.e.* after the arrival of new residents who spoke BSALs as HLs), the only change that

¹ In South Africa, official censuses are released by Statistics South Africa once every ten years, *i.e.* the most recent in 2011 and the next in 2021.

was made at former Afrikaans-medium schools in the district was to offer English as an HL (instead of Afrikaans) and Afrikaans as an FAL (instead of English).

In attempting to investigate why learners at this high school are given no option to learn other official languages as an FAL, through consultation of a study conducted by PanSALB (Pan South African Language Board) at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1998, it was established that academic practitioners have argued that BSALs were considered inappropriate as media of instruction because of insufficient scientific terminology and academic literature. Contrary to these findings, there are schools in South Africa that continue to choose BSALs as additional languages as per the rulings of the National Curriculum Statement (2011-2014). Kamwangamalu (1997:234) argues that taking BSALs into account as working languages in all domains of public life must start at school – the best place for building know-how and developing knowledge – before it takes its place in other social spheres. With more people studying languages at South African universities, the feasibility of effectively employing BSALs as part of curricula at schools is in fact high.

This particular school had an overall learner population of 980, of which 129 were in Grade 12 at the time the study was conducted. Of the sixty (60) learners sampled, only two (2) were English first language (L1) speakers and three were Afrikaans L1 speakers. An overwhelming majority of learners had little exposure to Afrikaans outside the classroom setting.

Collectively considering that learners have different views, educational backgrounds, and various levels of communicative competencies and preferences, it then becomes clear that there are notable benefits to studying language attitudes across all fields that engage in any form of communication. In view of the aims and objectives of the study, an investigation into learners' attitudes was seen by the authors as an effective means towards aiding language educators, education policy-makers and planners, researchers, and curriculum designers to gain greater understanding of language learning and/or teaching practices aimed at positive interaction and/or progression in the long run.

2.0 Literature Review

Language attitudes refer to various interrelated language items when clustered together; they can be explored as cohesive representatives of language 'events'. There may be different likely associations among the attitudes with these various language items. Crystal (1997:23) defines 'language attitudes' as the "feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others". Moreno (1998:179) suggests a wider definition of 'language':

A manifestation of the social attitudes of the individuals, distinguished by focus and specific reference to both language and its use in society; and when discussing 'language,' any type of linguistic variety is included.

According to Moreno's definition, language attitudes do not strictly refer to general languages, but are inclusive of aspects pertaining to education, culture, history, tradition, and dialects.

In line with the research aims of this study, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) describe attitudes towards language as psychological tendencies expressed by favorably or unfavorably evaluating a particular language. Furthermore, attitudes are said to be closely related to motivation for learning a language. Moreover, considering that even though language attitudes are mostly covert, they are not impossible to plan for, because they are manifested in the learners', parents' and educators' behavior, and in their interaction with and through the language (Baker 1992).

Regardless of the variances noted in the definitions of attitude and attitude research planning by most of these researchers, there seems to be concurrence on some aspects of attitudes. Many agree that attitudes are learned from prior experiences and that they are not transient, but rather persistent. Furthermore, many of these researchers also agree that attitudes hold relations to action and/or behavior, either as a tendency that is behavioral in nature or as being a distinctive aspect related to behavior itself. Richard, Platt and Platt (1992:199) place emphasis on the effects language attitudes have on L2 learning, saying that the "measurement of language attitudes provide information which is useful in language teaching and planning".

3.0 Approaches to Investigating 'Language Attitudes'

Attitudes are molded by experience. They may transpire following straightforward personal familiarity, or they may emerge because of direct observation. Social tendencies and experiences tend to have a stronghold on attitudes. As with most, if not all aspects relating to sociolinguistics, attitudes are systematically categorized into various components. Baker (1992:10) distinguishes between three components of attitudes, namely the cognitive, affective and readiness for action. He explains the cognitive component as the thoughts and beliefs people have about a language. In this study, to maintain accuracy and consistency, this component is broadened by means of exploring additional variables, which include learner's opinions and viewpoints. The affective component concerns feelings towards the language (Baker 1992:10). Baker (1992:12) further states that these feelings may be based on a passion for a language, for example, the common desire to learn English because it is associated with power and prestige. The third component is action readiness, and it refers

to action regarding language-related matters based on individual, pre-existing attitudes.

In addition to the three components listed above, Dyers (2000) makes the distinction that “some attitudes have affective roots while others have more rational roots”. Affective roots are linked to sentiments, values and norms, which carry symbolic weight for specific groups. Rational roots, on the other hand, may be linked to more ‘complex’ attitudes, stemming from the learning of language for specific purposes. Rational roots are goal-oriented, as is the case with the sampled learners; they learned Afrikaans to obtain Grade 12 Certificates.

Besides the deep-seated fear that the learning of BSALs could be cumbersome, other concerns are the perception that BSALs are inferior, the lack of infrastructure, and the high cost of the development of BSALs (Chick 1992:283; Mda 2000:162-167). Desai (2001:326) mentions that:

As long as African languages [or BSALs] are not used in the legislative, executive and juridical government structures, they are not going to be regarded with pride by those who use them and will continue to have a low status.

She further warns that this could lead to the marginalization of speakers who use these languages as their HLs.

4.0 Theoretical Framework

This study, among others, used guidelines from the ‘Interpretivist Paradigm’ for the formulation and structure of its research questions. This is defined by Burton and Bartlett (2005) as the individual’s social world being created as the individual interprets and responds to events in society. In other words, the interactions of the individual shape his/her social world. In investigating learners’ language attitudes, existing views, opinions, and preferences of the sampled participants were explored. Through this paradigm, people can gain a fuller understanding of meanings, reasons, and insight into human actions (Bryman 2001). This fits the context of this study well since attitudes manifest themselves through individuals’ life experiences.

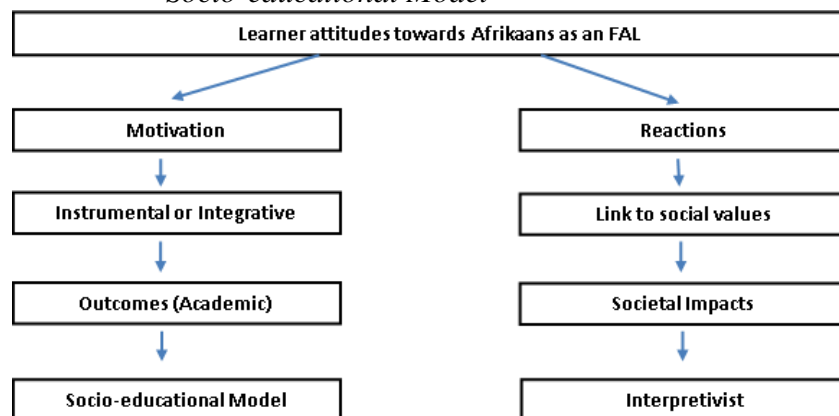
Despite all existing paradigms related to research, the two most commonly employed in relation to education are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism promotes generalizations of findings, while interpretivism is more in line with traditional case studies whose results are not meant to be generalized to larger populations – as is the nature of this study. Furthermore, positivism has its focus on hypothesis testing, and statistical approaches. Hudson and Ozanne (1998) and Neuman (2000) state that the “goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret meanings in human behavior, rather than to generalize and predict causes

and effects.” They go on to state the importance of understanding motives, meanings, reasons, and other subjective experiences that are time- and context-bound. These views fit the context of the current study well owing to the non-rigid nature of attitudes, particularly towards language. In line with this study being a case study in nature, Vishnevsky and Beanlands (2004) state that the purpose of Interpretivism is not to attempt to generalize data to the population, but to explore individuals’ experiences, which in the case of the current study refers to the learning experiences in both social and academic settings since attitudes cannot be bound solely to one context.

This study also used Gardner’s (1972) ‘Socio-educational Model’, which was initially developed in the 1960s, and has since been updated on numerous occasions. The model focuses on the role of attitudes and motivation in L2 learning (Gardner and Lambert 1972). Gardner states that he does not see how someone can learn an L2 (an FAL, in this case), if they do not like the group that speaks the language or their social standing. In the model, both ability and motivation are related to the formal and informal language learning contexts. The formal contexts refer to any situation where instruction is realized (the language classroom), and informal contexts are any other situation where the language can be used or experienced (social settings). Whereas both ability and motivation would be equally involved in formal contexts, motivation is more involved than ability in informal contexts because motivation determines if the individual takes part in informal contexts. In the model, both contexts are shown to lead to both linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. Finally, it is shown that the educational setting and cultural context influence the motivation, but not the ability.

For the purposes of this study, the ‘Interpretivist Paradigm’ and the ‘Socioeducational Model’ were incorporated. Only parts of these two frameworks that were entirely relevant to this study were used as follows:

Figure 1: Incorporation of the Interpretivist Paradigm and the Socio-educational Model



The decision to incorporate the ‘Interpretivist Paradigm’ with the ‘Socio-Educational Model’ resulted from one’s ability to reach where the other cannot. Interpretivism is rooted in the understanding of socially oriented constructs. Klein and Myers (1999: 69) state that Interpretivism assumes that people’s knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructs such as language consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artefacts. These include their views, opinions, beliefs, and perceptions and/or awareness of their ‘natural’ happenings. Conversely, the ‘Socio-educational Model’, though not entirely contrastive, has its focus primarily on L2 learning in the classroom situation. Like in Interpretivism, the learners’ cultural and social perceptions are considered. With its latest update placing focus on language anxiety and language achievement, according to Dewaele (2009), Gardner’s ‘Socio-educational Model’ falls under the category of positivist models, allowing for this model in the context of this study to reach research heights that cannot be reached with Interpretivism alone.

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Location and Sample Population

The high school in question is in the Elandspoort area, about ten kilometers west of the Pretoria city center. It falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. This school also falls under District 3 listing of the Gauteng Department of Basic Education (GDBE). It is categorized as a fee-paying public school. The research focused on Grade 12, Afrikaans FAL learners.

The sampled participants comprise sixty (60) male and female learners, as the school is a co-educational school. This constitutes forty-seven percent (47%) of the entire Grade 12 learners. According to Fielding (2007), in research pertaining to sociolinguistics, a sample size must consist of at least thirty percent (30%) of the total population under study. All the 60 participants responded to questionnaires, while ten (10) participants took part in individual interviews. The participants were aged between sixteen and twenty, as this was the reported age range for Grade 12 learners enrolled at the school. At twenty-five percent (25%) of the sample population, Sesotho sa Leboa had more HL speakers than other languages, followed closely by Setswana at twenty-three percent (23%). Permission was granted in writing to conduct research at this particular school by the Gauteng Department of Education (head office), the school’s district office (D3), the school principal, the school’s governing body, participants, and parents and/or guardians of participants (minors).

5.2 Sampling Techniques

Convenience sampling, together with non-probability sampling, were chosen for this study because the sample population did not represent any group apart from itself, and the research did not seek to generalize a wider population. The implementation of convenience sampling for this study was done by means of a general verbal announcement by the school principal. Participants were verbally informed well in advance of the nature of the study, ethical considerations, their rights, and requirements as a sample population. In recruiting potential participants (Grade 12 learners), it was ensured that the principle of voluntary participation was clearly explained and fully understood by potential participants. Furthermore, participants were then asked to complete consent forms to partake in the study.

Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003:79) highlight the two principal aims of ‘non-probability sampling’ as the assurance that all key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered, and ensuring that, within each of the key criterion, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristics concerned can be explored. Ritchie, et al. (2003:78) characterize ‘non-probability sampling’ as:

[B]eing used mostly in qualitative research where the sample is not intended to be statistically representative, and while the chances of selections for each element may be unknown, characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection instead.

According to Kothari (2004:59), ‘non-probability sampling’ is categorized in terms of element selection techniques as ‘unrestricted sampling’, with various names such as deliberate sampling, purposive sampling, or judgement sampling. This is when the researcher “purposively chooses the particular units of the ‘universe’ for constituting a sample on the basis that the small mass that they select out of the huge one will be typical or representative of the whole”, as is the case with this study.

5.3 Research Methods

Because social phenomena are so entangled, it results in the fact that triangulation increases the understanding of human nature and social reality in their full complexities (Brown and Dowling, 1998). Despite the benefits of triangulation, there are also certain limitations. The findings are, for example, not projectable in a statistical sense. However, qualitative research has the unique ability to overcome this by providing insight into the underlying issues most relevant to the population under study. Furthermore, other constraints (e.g. time, costs, etc.) may also prevent effective use. Nevertheless, triangulation has vital strengths and encourages

productive research. This brings qualitative methods to their deserved prominence and simultaneously demonstrates how quantitative methods can and should be utilized in a complementary fashion (Creswell 2009). In view of this, the researcher is then said to “obtain a clear view of observed research, because the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data is quantified” (Brown and Dowling 1998; Kaplan and Maxwell 1994).

5.4 Research Instruments

The study employed semi-structured, open-ended interviews and a 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire as instruments for collecting data. Recent South African studies aimed at investigating attitudes in the education sector that have used Likert-type scale questionnaires and semi-structured, open-ended interviews include Adam (2006), Govender (2010) and Ditsele (2014). While questionnaires can provide evidence of patterns among large populations, qualitative interview data often gathers more in-depth insights on participants’ attitudes, thoughts, and actions (Kendall 2008).

The first draft of the questionnaire was piloted on a random sample with a similar profile within the same school district. The term ‘pilot study’ is used in two different ways in social science research. It can refer to so-called feasibility studies, which are “small scale version(s) or trial run(s), done in preparation for the major study” (Hungler, Beck and Polit 2001:467). However, a pilot study can also be a pre-testing or ‘trying out’ of a particular research instrument (Baker 1994:182-3).

The data collected from the semi-structured, open-ended interviews was analyzed using content analysis revised by Lindesmith (2004). Content analysis reflects a close relationship with socio- and psycho-linguistics and plays an integral role in the development of artificial intelligence (Holsti 1969). Holsti also offers a broad definition of content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”, in this instance, language attitudes. Perhaps the most important advantage of content analysis is that it is practically discreet. This means codification and thematic representations of findings are highly feasible. For the purposes of this study, a tape recorder was used to record all ten interviews. The set of data was transcribed into a written form. The process of inductive making of meaning, which is highly interpretive, is preceded by a more technical process: the conversion of spoken exchanges into written language Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:105).

The authors adapted steps to successful content analysis that have been employed successfully by Dawson (2002), Kothari (1985) and Kumar (2005). The content analysis process involved the identification of the main

themes, assigning codes to the main themes, classification of responses under the main themes, and the integration of themes and responses into a written report.

The Likert-type scale (questionnaire) data was analyzed using the traditional method of summing up the values of each selected option to create an overall mean score for each statement based on the responses of the participants. This score was then used to represent a particular trait, which was represented by the choices made by the participants. The data collected from the Likert-type scale questionnaire was ordinal in nature. This simply means that the scores were designed to differ significantly from highest to lowest. Each specific question (or ‘item’) can have its response analyzed separately or have it summed with other related items to create a score for a group of statements.

Participants’ responses to each Likert-type scale statement were explained individually, however, not in isolation. A link will be established between the statements, their relevance to the study and to each other. Furthermore, the authors’ reasons and aims behind each statement were provided. The overall mean for each statement following the participants’ choices was calculated and noted.

6.0 Findings

6.1 Quantitative Data (Likert-Type Scale)

A total of sixty (60) participants (all Grade 12 learners who studied Afrikaans as an FAL) responded to twenty-one belief statements on a Likert-type scale. The belief statements were split into the following three categories: (1) Experiences about learning Afrikaans; (2) Contact with and/or personal communication in Afrikaans; and (3) General impressions about Afrikaans. The following scalar units were used to determine the participants’ attitudinal positions (see Table 1), and it was adapted from Ditsele (2014:146).

Table 1: *Scalar Units, Scores, and Attitudinal Positions*

Scalar Units (Mean)	Scores	Attitudinal Positions
4.5 to 5.0	5	Strongly Agree (SA)
3.5 to 4.4	4	Agree (A)
2.5 to 3.4	3	Not Sure (NS)
1.5 to 2.4	2	Disagree (D)
1.0 to 1.4	1	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Theme 1: Experiences about learning Afrikaans—belief Statements 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 21 drew out participants’ attitudes with regards to Theme 1 (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Experiences About Learning Afrikaans*

No.	Belief Statements	Mean	Attitudinal Positions
3	Learning Afrikaans is important, as it will benefit me in my future studies.	3.1	NS
4	I am satisfied with my performance in the Afrikaans subject.	3.1	NS
7	My only reason for learning Afrikaans is because it is compulsory in my school.	3.4	NS
8	I can ask questions in Afrikaans, during Afrikaans lessons.	4.0	A
9	I can respond to questions asked in class speaking Afrikaans.	3.3	NS
10	I enjoy learning Afrikaans.	3.3	NS
11	When I am unable to attend an Afrikaans class, I make it a point to ask my peers what was taught and given as homework.	3.2	NS
15	If given the opportunity, I would choose to learn a BSAL in the place of Afrikaans.	3.0	NS
21	I would strongly advise others to learn Afrikaans.	3.4	NS
Aggregate Attitudinal position for the Theme		3.3	NS

Except for Belief Statement 8, where participants agreed with it, they were not sure about the other six Belief Statements. Interestingly, participants agreed that they “were able to ask questions in Afrikaans during lessons” (Belief Statement 8), but were not sure as to whether they “were able to respond to questions asked in class speaking Afrikaans” (Belief Statement 9). One would have expected that if someone were able to ask a question in a particular language (Afrikaans in this case), they would equally be able to respond to questions in the same language. The logical explanation for participants’ responses to the two Belief Statements could be that they were more comfortable with asking questions (a more voluntary act with less pressure from educators) as opposed to answering them (a less voluntary act with potential pressure from educators).

Theme 2: Contact with and/or personal communication in Afrikaans—belief Statements 1, 2, 5, 6, 16, 17 and 18 drew out participants’ attitudes with regards to Theme 2 (see Table 3).

Table 3: *Contact with and/or Personal Communication with Afrikaans*

No.	Belief Statements	Mean	Attitudinal Positions
1	I can express myself well in Afrikaans.	3.4	NS
2	I am comfortable communicating in Afrikaans.	3.1	NS
5	I often speak Afrikaans with my peers.	2.4	D
6	I communicate in Afrikaans outside the classroom.	2.3	D
16	If I relocate to a country where there is no Afrikaans, I will greatly miss hearing and speaking it.	3.4	NS
17	I often watch Afrikaans television programs (more than one).	2.5	NS
18	I read magazines, books and newspapers written in Afrikaans.	2.1	D
Aggregate Attitudinal position for the Theme		2.7	NS

While the aggregate attitudinal position for this theme revealed a not sure response from participants, they disagreed with Belief Statements 5, 6 and 18. What is common across these three Belief Statements is that they all deal with taking initiatives to communicate in Afrikaans, which participants said they did not do.

Theme 3: General impressions about Afrikaans—belief Statements 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20 drew out participants’ attitudes with regards to Theme 3 (see Table 4).

Table 4: *General Impressions about Afrikaans*

No.	Belief Statements	Mean	Attitudinal Positions
12	I can apply the knowledge from my Afrikaans class to real-life situations.	3.1	NS
13	Knowing Afrikaans will benefit me in my desired career.	2.3	D
14	Hearing an L1 speaker of another language communicating well in Afrikaans immediately tells me that the person is educated.	3.0	NS
19	Upon the successful completion of my studies, I will apply for jobs that require	2.3	D

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	one's ability to communicate well in Afrikaans.		
20	My attitude toward Afrikaans is generally positive.	4.0	A
Aggregate Attitudinal position for the Theme		2.9	NS

The aggregate attitudinal position for this theme revealed a not sure response from participants. However, they disagreed with Belief Statements 13 and 19, and agreed with Belief Statement 20. With regards to Belief Statements 13 and 19, they did not believe that Afrikaans was going to be part of their career ambitions, while they expressed a positive attitude towards Afrikaans in Belief Statement 20.

Taken together, the mean of all three themes was 3.0, which illustrated that participants were not sure about their general attitudes towards Afrikaans, a language they studied as an FAL.

6.2 Qualitative Data (Individual Interviews)

The first author interviewed 10 participants (interviewees); they were drawn from the 60 participants who responded to the Likert-type scale. A total of 10 questions were put to each interviewee, individually. Half of the questions were categorized under Theme 1, and the other half under Theme 3. No questions were categorized under Theme 2, and the authors acknowledge that, in hindsight, at least one or two should have been posed to interviewees.

6.2.1 Theme 1: Experiences About Learning Afrikaans

Question 1: At which Grade did you start learning Afrikaans?

One interviewee (10%) started learning the language at pre-school level, while four (40%) first learned it at Grade 8. The other five (50%) first learned it at various levels between pre-school and the end of primary school (i.e. Grade 7).

Question 4: Do you think Afrikaans should remain a compulsory language in your school?

Seven interviewees (70%) stated that Afrikaans should be an optional language at their school; a common reason they gave was that they struggled in the language. The remaining 3 interviewees (30%) wanted the language to remain as a compulsory language at their school; one of them remarked that struggling in Afrikaans was normal, but, over time, learners overcome their challenges in the language.

Question 5: If Afrikaans was to no longer form part of your school curriculum, what impact would it have on you personally?

Seven interviewees (70%) stated that removing Afrikaans from their school curriculum was a good idea, as it would open the possibility of having other languages as options for learners, such that removal would have no impact on them. Three of them (30%) stated that they loved the language and removing it from their curriculum would deprive future generations of learning it.

Question 6: Has the learning of Afrikaans made any notable transformation to your life (studies, views, socially, mind-set, etc.)?

The learning of Afrikaans had made notable transformations to the lives of seven interviewees (70%) both socially and academically. In addition, they stated that understanding the language helped them in bridging the race gap because understanding a people's language enables one to also understand those who speak the language. The school is in Pretoria West where Afrikaans is generally spoken by White people, and these interviewees were mainly Black people. The remaining three (30%) interviewees offered no concrete opinion.

Question 8: If you are given the option to learn either Afrikaans or a BSAL as part of the school curriculum, what would your choice be?

Owing to language understanding, choice, and the equal status of official languages in South Africa, six interviewees (60%) indicated that if given a choice, they would learn BSALs in the place of Afrikaans. The other four (40%) argued that Afrikaans was an 'easier' language to learn, and they would still choose to learn it even if it was no longer a compulsory language at their school.

In summarizing the answers to these questions, most interviewees wanted Afrikaans to be an optional language, and that BSALs should be availed as optional languages as well. They noted that Afrikaans was an important language, which enabled them to better understand its L1 speakers and that fostered some social cohesion. Responses from individual interviews were more decisive when compared to the aggregate attitudinal position of a not sure response in the analysis of Belief Statements.

6.2.2 Theme 3: General Impressions About Afrikaans

Question 2: Do you regard Afrikaans as a language of great prestige (positive social class significance)?

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Six interviewees (60%) did not think that Afrikaans was a prestigious language, largely because they struggled in it. The other four (40%) thought otherwise and argued that it was a language spoken by people of different race groups, which allowed them to bridge the race gap.

Question 3: Besides obtaining a Grade 12 Certificate, would you say Afrikaans is of any other significance to you?

Post Grade 12, Afrikaans would not help them at all in their career options, so stated six interviewees (60%), while the remaining four (40%) were of the view that they would continue to communicate in the language after obtaining their Grade 12 Certificates.

Question 7: Would you apply for a job which requires you to have a good command of Afrikaans?

Most interviewees, that is eight of them (80%), were adamant that they would not apply for jobs which required one to have a good command of the language, while a minority of them, that is two (20%), stated that they would.

Question 9: Would you apply to study at an institution of higher learning that offers certain courses/subjects, within your desired field of study, in Afrikaans only?

A lack of good communication skills in Afrikaans was the main reason forwarded by eight interviewees (80%) who indicated that they would not choose the language as a language of learning and teaching at institutions of higher learning. Two of them (20%) suggested that they would because good communication skills in Afrikaans might increase one's job opportunities.

Question 10: How would you describe your attitude towards Afrikaans?

Six interviewees (60%) stated that Afrikaans should continue to be spoken in South Africa because it is one of the official languages in the country, and that signaled the country's diversity; this should be viewed as holding positive attitudes towards the language. Three of them (30%) held negative attitudes towards the language as they stated that they just did not like it. The remaining one interviewee (10%) offered no concrete opinion to be allocated a side.

To summarize the answers to these questions, most interviewees held negative attitudes towards Afrikaans when it came to them being users, which is consistent with the findings made in Belief Statements 13

and 19. However, they held positive attitudes towards the language if they did not have to depend on it for their survival, which is consistent with Belief Statement 20.

It is significant to note the role that ‘first exposure to language’ plays in learners’ lives. Tohidian (2009) highlights the effects of age in L2 educational progression. Noteworthy in the current study was that participants who started learning Afrikaans at later stages of their schooling often held negative attitudes towards the language as opposed to their counterparts who started learning the languages much earlier, that is, at pre-school and primary school levels. The learning of Afrikaans is said to have made notable changes to the lives of participants, in that they now understand its literature and culture. Overall, no extremities were noted because of age, and/ or gender in the current study.

6.3 Linking the Findings to the Theoretical Framework

As per the guidelines of Gardner’s (1972) ‘Socio-educational Model’, questions posed to participants were within the formal language learning context where questions ranged in-class language competences and practices to the subject content itself and, the informal language learning context, which refers to aspects such as the social associations which learners made to speakers of Afrikaans, and the use of Afrikaans outside of the classroom. The learners’ motivation towards learning Afrikaans as an FAL was more instrumental as opposed to integrative, since the scope of responses indicated that their primary purpose for learning Afrikaans was because it is a compulsory language at their high school, which would enable them to obtain Grade 12 Certificates.

With reference to Wahyuni (2012), focus remained “upon the reality behind the details, subjective meanings, and motivating actions”. This, for example, can be noted in the interview questions where participants comprehensively provided holistic feedback without much need for further prompting. Tamimi and Schuib (2009:16) in their study also found that students placed greater emphasis on instrumental reasons for learning an L2, which included utilitarian and academic reasons as well.

Norris-Holt (2001) emphasizes the importance of examining the effect of motivation on L2 learning by saying that “it is one variable which when combined with other factors, influences a learner’s success”. In language learning, integrative motivation is geared towards studying a language motivated by authentic personal concern, and/or interest in, for example, the target culture, history, and engaging in its literature, which learners in this study expressed little to no interest in. Instrumental motivation further places emphasis on the more practical values of learning, it is result-oriented, and focuses mainly on the crucial individualistic gains, which one associates with language learning. This

kind of motivation is resultative of attitudes, and is a short-term stepping-stone; for example, passing the Grade 12 final examination. Other research that has found instrumental motivation to override integrative motivation includes studies by Ahmadi (2011); De Kadt (2007) and Lennartsson (2008).

In relation to the choice with regards to the learning of languages at school, is the question of attitudes, because attitudes towards a subject, be it academic and/or otherwise, will determine whether, given the choice, one would choose to learn and engage in that subject or not. Language choice does not exist in the school in question. Kamwangamalu (1997:234) argues that taking BSALs into account as working languages in all domains of public life must start at school, the best place for building know-how and developing knowledge, before it takes its place in other social spheres.

7.0 Conclusion

This study has established that speakers of BSALs who learn Afrikaans generally do not hold negative attitudes towards Afrikaans. Their discomfort with Afrikaans may be that they view it as a stumbling block towards making BSALs available at schools that were changed from being Afrikaans-medium to English-medium; such schools only swapped the role played by English and Afrikaans and ignored considering BSALs, even when their learner population changed tremendously. Data analysis in this study shows that learners would like Afrikaans to be retained at their school, albeit as an optional language alongside BSALs, which should be introduced.

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