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Epistemological access through lecture materials in multiple modes and language varieties: the role of ideologies and multilingual literacy practices in student evaluations of such materials at a South African University

Bassey E. Antia and Charlyn Dyers

Abstract

This paper seeks to address the ways in which ideology and literacy practices shape the responses of students to an ongoing initiative at the University of the Western Cape aimed at diversifying options for epistemological access, specifically the language varieties and the modes in which parts of the curriculum for a third year linguistics module are delivered. Students' responses to the materials in English and in two varieties of Afrikaans and isiXhosa (as mediated in writing vs orally) are determined, and used as basis to problematize decisions on language variety and mode in language diversification initiatives in Higher Education in South Africa. The findings of the paper are juxtaposed against particular group interests in the educational use of a language as well as differences in the affordances and impact of different modes of language use. The paper suggests that beyond the euphoria of using languages other than English in South African Higher Education, several issues (such as entrenched language practices, beliefs and language management orientations) require attention if the goals of transformation in this sector are to be attained.

Introduction

A variety of language diversification initiatives in teaching and learning dots the landscape of South African universities. This development can be attributed to several non-exclusive factors, including South Africa's Constitution (1996), the Language Policy in Higher Education (2002), provisions in the language policies of several universities (e.g. the Language Policy of the University of the Western Cape of 2003) and the research agendas of academics (e.g. Antia 2015a, b). In encouraging the diversification of languages in Higher Education, these policies and initiatives may be seen as attempting to respond to the National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education 2001) and the Education White Paper 3 of 1997 on transformation goals for the Higher Education system (Department of Education 1997). Some of the goals include: the enhancement of opportunities for entry into the system, increased levels of participation by disadvantaged students in the system, and improvement in the output of graduates from the system.

These and related goals are clearly issues of epistemological access, a term attributed to Morrow (du Plooy and Zilindile 2014; Muller 2012), which continues to be used in a variety of ways. Granting students from e.g. previously marginalized groups formal or

institutional access to sites of learning could be no more than a symbolic gesture of accommodation, and says nothing about arrangements that are in place to ensure success. As a result, epistemological access is also used to describe how barriers to entrance (imposed or self-imposed) are addressed, so that new entrants into the educational system are able to access the knowledge on offer, and this is the approach followed by the authors of this paper. The scope of what constitutes epistemological access is of course broad, ranging from issues of curriculum delivery, the student's understanding of the content, his/her participation in creating and negotiating knowledge, and use of knowledge, to expert-like behaviour (reasoning, writing, valuing, etc.) and questions around the very nature of the knowledge offered (its relevance, how it is constituted, its intended uses). Although the data to be provided in this study speak particularly to understanding of content, there are arguably linguistic ramifications to many dimensions of epistemological access or, more generally, to access. This is particularly the case in the South African context where language was an important site and tool for perpetrating apartheid-era inequities in education. The possible relevance of language to different understandings of epistemological access can be gleaned from the following account of efforts at language diversification in South African Higher Education.

Interpreting has been trialled at the University of the North West (Blaauw 2008), the University of Johannesburg, the University of the Free State and the University of Stellenbosch (Van der Walt 2013:157). Whispered interpreting, a widespread interpreting strategy, involves the interpreter sitting among the audience and interpreting simultaneously, using "an ultra-sensitive radio-transmitter microphone" in a low voice to students who receive the interpretation via headphones. Blaauw (2008:311) provides a very clear motivation for the use of educational interpreting as a viable alternative to parallel-medium and dual-medium instruction[1]: a limited number of lecturers, limited teaching time and venues and the demands of a packed timetable. He concludes that the University of the North West "has no viable way of providing a multilingual teaching environment, other than by means of educational interpreting".

At the University of Stellenbosch, with its strong ideological commitment to the retention of Afrikaans as medium of instruction (MOI), observable language diversification practices range over several situations depending on course of study: lectures in Afrikaans (but teaching and learning materials in both Afrikaans and English); lectures and teaching/learning materials in both languages; lectures in parallel English and Afrikaans streams. Stellenbosch has recently introduced whispered interpreting (Van der Walt 2013).

The first really significant attempt to incorporate an indigenous language at a South African university in post-apartheid South Africa is normally said to be the full dual-medium BA degree in Contemporary English Language Studies (CELS) and Multilingual Studies (MUST) offered at the University of Limpopo. The MUST side of this degree is offered entirely in Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), while the CELS is taught and

[1] In the South African context, 'parallel medium' means that two languages are used as media of instruction in parallel (monolingual) streams in the same educational institution, while 'dual medium' means that lecturers alternate systematically between two languages while teaching the same class, or that some subjects are taught in one language and others in a different language to the same set of learners.

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assessed in English (Ramani and Joseph 2002:235). More recently, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in response to its language policy which commits the institution to developing and using isiZulu as a language for academic purposes, now has full degree courses like the Bachelor of Education Honours module that uses isiZulu as the Language of Learning and Teaching (Mgqwashu 2013). Another major strategy employed in diversifying the language support base of teaching and learning is the development of multilingual glossaries, which is the case at several universities (the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, among others). At the University of Cape Town, Nkomo and Madiba (2011) intimate that the choice of this method was driven by the need of first year students who are not highly proficient in academic English, as well as requests by their lecturers for this type of support. Key concepts in the curriculum of a range of courses are identified, and equivalents of the English terms identified or developed in the home languages of the students. In studying lecture and other texts in English, students for whom English is not a (first) language are afforded the opportunity of making sense of key concepts in their home languages.

Despite all these noteworthy achievements, relevant scholarship and initiatives have not sufficiently problematized the basis for decisions around languages and modes for teaching and producing learning materials. How is the determination made on what languages/varieties and modes should be employed? Whose interests are served by such a decision—institutional/managerial concerns and/or epistemological access? Where the concern is said to be the enhancement of epistemological access for students, are students' views elicited? What are the factors that could shape students' views? With exceptions such as Van der Walt (2013:147–148), these questions of interests have not really been critically interrogated, especially in relation to varieties of specific languages and the modes (written and spoken) in which multilingual teaching/learning materials are presented.

Without prejudice to the success reported in connection with current initiatives, the non-problematization of interests might be perceived as a convenient, roughshod approach that ignores legitimate concerns. Spolsky's (2007) account of the various intersections in language policy-making in the educational domain theoretically grounds the need for such problematization. Placed in the university context with its main actors (students, lecturers, support staff and managers), Spolsky's point would be that even though these actors share a domain (associated with a particular university), they all come to that shared space with different language and literacy practices. More importantly, they are also participants in other networks with entrenched language practices, beliefs and language management orientations, which they may seek to bring into the university domain.

Against the background of the different contexts, networks and divergent identities of students and other actors in Higher Education, this paper problematizes the language diversification project at universities. It is fundamentally a study of how students' responses to options for epistemological access (language varieties and modes) may be shaped by their ideologies and existing (multi-) literacy practices. The authors report here on an ongoing initiative at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town,

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South Africa, aimed at diversifying both the language varieties and the modes in which parts of the curriculum for a third year Linguistics module are delivered.

UWC was initially set up as a university college for the Coloured population in 1959, but challenged the apartheid regime by becoming the first university to open its doors to all races in South Africa in 1982. According to current statistics provided by the UWC Office for Quality Assurance and Management Information Systems, Coloured and Xhosa students form the two largest ethnic groups at the university -46.3 and 25.8 % respectively of the total current student population of 20,097. In addition, these statistics also show that English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are the home languages of the majority of the students. The status of these three languages, which are also the official languages of the Western Cape Province, is enshrined in the university's language policy as languages in which teaching and learning materials may be provided, although only English is accepted as the main MOI and language of evaluation. In this study, students' stated preferences for lecture material provided in English and in two varieties of Afrikaans and isiXhosa (which were provided both in written and aural form) were determined. These preferences were then used as the basis for problematizing decisions on language variety and mode in language diversification initiatives.

Theoretical framework

As the above section indicates, the theoretical framework for this study draws on the notions of ideologies, particularly language ideologies, multilingual literacy practices and multimodality. The authors contend that language ideologies provide a basis for problematizing linguistic options for epistemological access, because of the ways in which languages are valued differently for a range of socio-historical reasons in the domain of education, particularly in South Africa. As regards individuals' literacy practices—their previous experience of, or encounters with reading and writing in different languages—the authors argue that these determine the uptake of options for epistemological access in different language varieties and modes (e.g. speech and writing), with the corresponding skills they require (e.g. listening and reading).

According to Fairclough (2003:9), ideologies are "representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation". It is the contention of this paper that ideologies about language can underpin, determine and affect many other domains of human activity such as people's responses towards the use of particular languages in certain spaces. This can be seen in Irvine and Gal's (2000:35) definition of language ideologies as:

the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map such understandings onto people, events and activities that were significant to them. These ideologies are not only held by the immediate participants in the local sociolinguistic system but also by observers like linguists and ethnographers, who have put in place boundaries between people and languages.

Although Pavlenko (2004) argues that language ideologies are gradually replacing language attitudes as a field of research, Dyers and Abongdia (2010:123) argue that

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language attitudes and language ideologies differ fundamentally in only one main area: "Ideologies are constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group: i.e. they are rooted in the socio-economic power and vested interests of *dominant groups*". In a more recent paper, Dyers and Abongdia (2014:17) state that attitudes are held by individuals while ideologies find expression in societies as the overarching framework within which more personal attitudes are formed. They contend that language attitudes are often openly expressed by individuals, while language ideologies are made visible through language practices and policies. Ideologies are therefore social constructions, but attitudes relate more to the construction of people's individual and even group identities.

Subordinated population groups on whom particular ideologies are imposed, may gradually start to accept these ideologies as 'normal' patterns of behaviour, e.g. the use of English as MOI and also as an official language in the case of South Africa. However, it is important to note that such groups also have their own ideologies, and may develop counter-discourses to the ideologies of the powerful. An example of how ideologies are espoused or contested can be seen in the Soweto uprisings of 1976 in South Africa, when school children rose up against the imposition of Afrikaans (seen as "the language of the oppressor") as a MOI for 50 % of their high school subjects. These learners were objecting to an educational policy and related practices prescribed on the basis of a particularly divisive ideology.

As the construction of an idealised disposition, ideology can shape (and manifest in) ways in which different options for epistemological access are taken up. Three of the major language ideologies identified by Weber and Horner (2012:16–22) are especially relevant to this discussion, namely, the ideology of a language hierarchy, the standard language ideology and the ideology of language purism. Where language hierarchies exist, there is usually one dominant language, followed in order of decreasing importance by other languages or varieties. The standard language ideology places the standard variety of a language at the top of a language hierarchy, and sees other varieties as unacceptable in domains like Higher Education. This ideology is closely related to the ideology of language purism, which is concerned with preserving the grammatical and stylistic integrity of a certain variety which is imbued with emotive values. Thus the ideology of language hierarchy would construct certain languages or varieties as intrinsically ideal or suitable for use in materials development in Higher Education, while others would be seen as intrinsically inappropriate. On the other hand, the ideology of language purism, would insist on a singular acceptable norm irrespective of other intervening factors like level of education and space in constituting norms.

Another tripartite classification of language ideologies that offers a frame for responses to linguistic options for epistemological access is the one in earlier work by Ruiz (1999:11–27). Ruiz identifies three orientations towards language, namely, language as a problem, language as a right and language as a resource. Thus, the construction of language as a problem would spawn negative attitudes towards the diversification of languages in teaching and learning. In sharp contrast, viewing languages as a resource enables individuals to explore and possibly leverage the different perspectives associated with the ways in which different languages may encode aspects of disciplinary knowledge. For example, understanding the term computer in different languages, would allow one to

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have a multifaceted view of this object instead of just seeing it from one angle. Ruiz's third orientation, language as a right, can be quite compatible with his resource view of language. In affirming individuals, raising their self-esteem and celebrating their cultural or symbolic capital, this orientation potentially addresses a possible psychological barrier to gaining entrance to disciplinary knowledge.

The second pillar of our theoretical framework is literacy practices, defined by Street (2011) as those uses, values or meanings that underpin specific literacy events (situations where reading and writing are important activities) and that embed them within socially determined structures or ideological spaces. One may thus ask what ideologies and meanings undergird students' literacy views and activities, or what the issues in the broader socio-cultural environment are that inform the construction of literacy events. Interestingly, Street (2011) points out that, while literacy practices will regularly have to do with formal literacy acquisition, there will be cases where literacy practices have very little to do with reading and writing per se. Life experiences, addressees, intergroup relations, issues of symbolic and cultural capital, identity, and a host of other factors, often requiring ethnographic unearthing, may underpin literacy conceptions and activities. As Makoni (2014:367) puts it:

Since literacy practices are an important individual identity marker, and individuals are situated in fluid and dense forms of the present, and given the unpredictability of the future, literacy practices have to be understood as shaping and shaped by the contexts they are embedded in. There are no two or more individuals with identical literacy practices because each person's personal history and experience of literacies is unique even if the individuals share the same context of situation.

In discussing multilingual literacy practices, particularly as markers of identity, a useful starting point is one of the regular assessment tasks in the module taught by the authors at UWC, which is called 'Multilingualism' or LCS 311. This particular task was inspired by important work carried out by Busch and her colleagues at the University of Vienna on multilingual repertoires (Busch 2012). Every year, students taking the module are required to do a multimodal task in which they colour in an outline of a language body representing themselves. They decide which colours to use on which body parts and which additions the portrait may need to fully reflect their own language repertoire. They then write an essay based on this portrait. What we have learned from this exercise is that our students are truly multilingual and *differently literate* in each of the languages in their repertoire. They have complex communicative repertoires, applying different spoken and written language varieties in different situations, and often have strong opinions about appropriate language use in academia. The students' repertoires reveal multiple competence or proficiency levels, shaped by issues of access and opportunity. For a range of literacy events, these students creatively draw on *all* of their codes (e.g. word borrowing or discourse organization patterns) leading to a variety of linguistic and stylistic syncretism.

A student may therefore speak certain languages reasonably well, but be less proficient in reading or writing them. In the educational context in South Africa, this is particularly true as it is only in English and to some extent Afrikaans through which students have

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sustained exposure to reading and writing across all three tiers of the educational system. Currently, many users of African languages (as home languages) would in the best of cases have had such languages as media of instruction for only 3 years in primary school.

The reality of uneven skills underscores why educational policy needs to appreciate that uptake of linguistic and modal options for epistemological access may be determined by literacy cultures and exposures, as Makoni (2014) argues above. This point is clearly underscored in Hornberger's continua of biliteracy model (Hornberger 2004). In this model, language and literacy as means and goals in education are seen as developing within a space constituted by four intersecting axes of context, content, media and development. Under 'contexts of biliteracy' Hornberger's model draws attention to the need for educational policy to, among others, seek to understand and respond to the dominant cultural capital (orality or literacy) with which students come to the classroom. In its development of biliteracy component, the model emphasizes, among others, the need to attend to, and even leverage, both oral and written skills.

The need to attend to both oral and written skills is extremely valid, especially in the context of modes for accessing knowledge. Attending to listening and reading as options for epistemological access is not simply a remedial measure or an exercise in accommodation. According to Kress (2010:54), each mode (speech or writing) is a legitimate, socially shaped resource that affords unique potentials for meaning-making. Representation and communication are increasingly recognized to be multimodal, but a multiplicity of modes is not mere duplication of information. Each mode, it is argued, affords unique potentials for meaning-making. In this respect, important research on the different benefits of reading versus listening has been carried out by Brown (2011), Absalom and Rizzi (2008) and Lund (1991). Their findings can be summed up as follows: readers recall more details (thanks to the fixity of the material), but listeners (due to greater concentration) recall more higher-order ideas like abstractions; readers are often mere surface learners (probably as they believe that they can return to the text at any time), while listeners are perceived to be deep learners (probably due to greater anxiety as a result of having to concentrate so deeply on the audio text).

It is against this theoretical backdrop, then, that this project on language diversification in teaching and learning is set.

Materials and methods

To recall the overarching goal of this paper, in this study the authors are seeking to problematize the bases for decisions on language diversification initiatives that are intended to enhance epistemological access in South African Higher Education, using an ongoing initiative at the UWC as case study. To achieve this goal, a group of students at UWC who had been exposed to lecture materials offered in different modes and language varieties were asked to indicate in an assignment which modes (speech, writing) and languages/language varieties (formal, informal Afrikaans and isiXhosa) they had found to be most supportive of epistemological access. Would their responses call attention to the need for policy to engage with modes and language varieties in language diversification initiatives, and would ideology and literacy practices be relevant in explaining respondents' choices?

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Two key topics in the third year module on multilingualism at the UWC were selected for the study. The first topic was on globalisation and multilingualism, while the second was on a typology of multilingualism. Following standard practice at this university, the English-language content was mediated through a Course Reader and class lectures. These lectures were accompanied by Powerpoint slides which were made available to students on the university's electronic teaching platform (known as iKamva). To be able to give students a choice of epistemological access options, and to study the bases of their preferences, the following procedure was adopted:

- the Powerpoint slides on globalisation were translated into the standard variety of Afrikaans and isiXhosa respectively by lecturers who were home language speakers of these varieties and regularly teach the content or comparable content;
- the slides on typology were also translated, but into informal varieties of both languages by postgraduate students who had done the module as third-year students;
- recordings were made of the translated slides by competent readers who were also familiar with the content, and
- the completed podcasts, together with the slides, were uploaded onto the online pages for the course on the University's electronic teaching platform.

In effect, students were provided with the following sets of material for the study:

1. Written materials: a Course Reader and Powerpoint lecture slides in English; Powerpoint slides written in formal Afrikaans as well as informal Afrikaans; and Powerpoint slides written in formal as well as informal isiXhosa.
2. Spoken materials: Audio-recorded versions of the translated slides in formal and informal Afrikaans, as well as formal and informal isiXhosa.

Thus, for the Afrikaans and isiXhosa versions of the lectures, two different modes (written and spoken) and two varieties (formal and informal) were available. As was stated in the introduction, Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English are recognised in the Language Policy of the University of the Western Cape (2003) as languages in which teaching and learning materials may be provided.

At the beginning of the 2014 academic year, the 215 students doing the module signed letters of informed consent which would allow the authors to make use of their assignments as data. It was also discovered that 147 of the students doing the module spoke Afrikaans or isiXhosa in addition to English, and this included students who self-identified with English as their home language. It is the case at UWC that students' knowledge of either Afrikaans or isiXhosa would vary, depending on the specific variety or the South African province where the students had grown up. For instance, students claiming to know isiXhosa would either have First Language (L1) knowledge in the standard variety used in the homeland of the Xhosas in the Eastern Cape Province, or L1 knowledge in the informal urban variety encountered in the Western Cape Province. For the latter group, the standard variety could well be described as a Second Language (L2). Similarly, students reporting knowledge of Afrikaans may function at L1 level in the standard variety, but the majority would (given their geographical and socioeconomic provenance) more likely function in L1 capacity in the informal Kaaps variety of

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Afrikaans. For the majority, then, the standard variety is to all intents and purposes something of a foreign language, especially in academic contexts. Although for many Afrikaans and isiXhosa students English is a second or third language, there would be a minority for whom it is also an L1 exclusively or (as in the case of those who acquired simultaneous bilingualism from birth) one of two first languages. It is often the case at UWC that students of predominantly Indian ancestry identify with English as major home language (as they also often have languages from the Indian sub-continent in the home, e.g. Tamil and Urdu, spoken by their grandparents). But such students also have some knowledge of Afrikaans which they will have picked up at school (the formal variety) or in the community (the informal variety).

The major assignment written by the 147 students with proficiency in Afrikaans or isiXhosa in addition to English required them to reflect on their experience of learning about the two topics after making use of the learning material provided in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. Suggestions on organizing their assignment, an evaluation rubric on a provided cover page as well as a questionnaire were provided to ensure that the data required were generated. However, not all students provided all of the information required. The students were required to write the assignment in formal English, but their divergent educational backgrounds and literacy practices were clearly reflected in these essays.

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. Upon encountering the lecture materials, how many students who self-identify with/know isiXhosa found the following options for epistemological access most useful: the formal versus informal variety of isiXhosa; listening to versus reading isiXhosa course materials; English alone versus the joint use of English and isiXhosa?
2. Upon encountering the lecture materials, how many students who self-identify with/know Afrikaans found the following options for epistemological access most useful: the formal versus informal variety of Afrikaans; listening to versus reading Afrikaans course materials; English alone versus the joint use of English and Afrikaans?
3. Upon encountering the lecture materials, how many students who self-identify with English and know either isiXhosa/Afrikaans found the following options for epistemological access most useful: the formal/informal varieties of isiXhosa/Afrikaans, listening to/reading course materials in either language, English only, English and Afrikaans, or English and isiXhosa?
4. How do ideologies and literacy practices explain and influence these students' articulated preferences?

By way of illustration of the translated materials provided, Textbox 1 in the "Appendix" presents an extract from the translation into formal isiXhosa, while Textbox 2 presents an excerpt from the translation into informal Afrikaans. The English versions of these texts are also provided in the "Appendix".

Findings and discussion

As previously pointed out in this paper, there are many initiatives for diversifying the languages of teaching and learning in South African HEI's. Although there is probably

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quite a bit of hybridity, some initiatives are significant for the aural processing mode in which they are delivered (e.g. interpreting, teaching in a language other than English), while others emphasise reading in other languages (e.g. multilingual glossaries, translated teaching/learning materials). In this section, each of the research questions is addressed in a different subsection, supported by relevant data.

Formal versus informal language varieties as options for epistemological access

The analysis of the data shows that a strong case can be made for the use of informal varieties of isiXhosa and Afrikaans in delivering learning resources to enhance students' epistemological access. In the isiXhosa group, while only 40 % found teaching and learning materials in the formal variety useful, 53 % claimed the informal variety helped them to understand the material better. For the Afrikaans group, made up largely of students from Coloured rather than White communities, the disparity in the evaluations of the formal and informal varieties of Afrikaans was even more striking. While 27 % found the material in formal Afrikaans useful in understanding the content, 65 % of those responding to this question evaluated the informal variety as being more supportive of their learning. What was also striking was the response from those who self-identified with English: A staggering 70 % of this group felt that using the informal Afrikaans material helped them to understand the formal English lecture and course reader materials better—a further indicator of hybridity in these students' actual language practices as well as their exposure to Afrikaans in schools. This implies that these students understand the informal variety of Afrikaans or *Kaaps*, so common to the Western Cape, better than formal English.

Study participants also had to reflect on how they had experienced epistemological access in one language versus two languages. Here, 57 % of the students identifying with isiXhosa found epistemological access in two languages (English and isiXhosa) as being more beneficial than access in just isiXhosa. A lower figure (37 %) for a two-language access (English–Afrikaans) was recorded by students identifying with Afrikaans.

Thus far, what can be seen is distinct evidence in support of mainstreaming informal varieties of isiXhosa and Afrikaans in the provision of teaching and learning materials in this module, and perhaps in many others at UWC. This raises the question as to whose perspective is given prominence when, at this and other institutions, language policies (practices, documents and attitudes) do not accord a role to these varieties or are openly contemptuous of them. In the UWC case, the space of the Province in which the University is situated is one of broad cultural hybridity, which is amply reflected in language use. Research carried out by Dyers (2008, 2009) and by Deumert and Masinyana (2008) show that there is a considerable amount of mixing and merging of languages, particularly among the youth. According to Dyers (2008), there is a close identification among the Coloureds with the vernacular variety of Afrikaans (known as Kaaps) that they use every day, which McCormick (2000), Malan (1996) and others regard as a mixed code which incorporates many English loanwords. In addition, as the region attracts speakers of isiXhosa and Afrikaans from other parts of the country, who then interact with large numbers of other language speakers, local varieties of Afrikaans

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and isiXhosa (especially in youth speech) tend to differ from the varieties in less culturally diverse provinces.

A striking aspect of the study's findings is the participants' construction of epistemological access, specifically how they construe the bases of such access.

This construction, which was particularly striking in some of the comments on the informal variety of Afrikaans, revolved around the ludic nature of this variety, lexico-grammar and semantic motivation. One respondent wrote that "informal Afrikaans made the material on typology come alive". Another claimed it was "easier to grapple with English terms in Afrikaans context". A student who had difficulty understanding the term, 'truncated multilingualism' (defined as topically organised or varying competence levels in the languages of an individual's repertoire), underscored the cognitive benefits of the informal variety of Afrikaans in comparison to formal English:

"The typology translation was much easier to understand in Afrikaans than in English. I thought this to be odd as I always felt I understood academic work better in English than in Afrikaans, even though I have a better level of competency in English. … I had difficulty with understanding what "truncated" meant. The Afrikaans translation called it 'afgekapte'". In my knowledge, "iets wat afgekap is, gewoonlik iets wat in stukkies is" (to my knowledge, something that is truncated means that it is in pieces). This makes senses as truncated means the different levels of competency one might have in different languages. In other words, bits and pieces of a language.

Speech versus writing as modal options for epistemological access

This subsection looks at the findings on modes (spoken vs written). In respect of student evaluations of the lecture materials presented in spoken form (the podcast), the positive scores (31 %) were the same for the Afrikaans and Xhosa groups. However, the positive scores for reading the Powerpoint slides were higher than for the podcast: 38 % for the Xhosa group and 46 % for the Afrikaans group. With respect to simultaneously using both modes, the figures were generally low: 15 % for the Xhosa group and 21 % for Afrikaans group. Regrettably, especially regarding isiXhosa, the study design did not make room for capturing data on whether respondents were based in the Eastern Cape (but only studying at UWC in the Western Cape) or whether they were actually from the Western Cape. For respondents in the latter case, chances are perhaps that their specific literacy conditions (refer to the sub-section on ideology and literacy practices below) may have tilted the scales in favour of listening.

Even without the above speculation, it seems noteworthy that as many as 31 % of the students identifying with Xhosa and Afrikaans preferred listening to the podcast. It is likely that, as the use of African languages in Higher Education increasingly comes under scrutiny, views such as the above will be widely encountered and will require attention. Clearly, within any given language, modal competencies may differ, and the ability to speak and process aural input does not necessarily translate into or correlate with the ability to read and write. This raises the further question as to whose viewpoint is foregrounded when language diversification projects in Higher Education only address the written word. The point was made earlier about standardised or formal varieties of

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Afrikaans and African languages used in schools being a foreign language for many learners, which therefore may severely restrict their understanding of what is being taught through such varieties. Thus, a language diversification initiative should pay attention to the spoken mode, and/or have mechanisms for ascertaining and developing literacy competencies in the target language.

It is also interesting to observe how epistemological access is constructed from a modal perspective. Xhosa students report that in order to recall certain terms in their English text materials they not only have to be able to pronounce them, but do so in 'xhosalised' style. 'Xhosalisation' is the phonological adaptation into isiXhosa of English terms as a mnemonic device (Paxton and Tyam 2010:255). Echoes of this manner of processing information may be seen in the following view from a student in the current study. The student is justifying the preference for the podcasts as option for accessing the content:

the voice of the speaker in the podcast was clear and loud and the pronunciation was more understandable than when I read... In typology and globalisation slides I was unable to read and pronounce some words until I had to listen the podcast.

Many of the 31 % who preferred the podcasts to the Powerpoint slides similarly alluded to their capacity for listening being better than their reading. The podcast was also preferred because it allowed for multitasking and required less effort. With respect to the provision of simultaneous access to both modes, 15 % of the students identifying with Xhosa and 21 % identifying with Afrikaans found both modes useful in accessing the content. A student commented as follows:

Having materials in Xhosa had really made me feel very positive towards completing this assignment... since there was not only a written Xhosa but also an audio or podcast of Xhosa. So the experience of doing this assignment had much been easier and enjoyable more than others I ever done because they were never like this one: that is, they had not my mother tongue involved.

On the other hand, even without necessarily articulating any specific preference for the Powerpoint slides, some students were dismissive of the podcasts. For some in this group, the podcasts were no more than a mere oral rendering of the Powerpoint slides, and they represented an unnecessary layer of work. Placed side by side with the more positive views, these dismissive views betray inattention to some of the affordances of the podcasts.

The ideologies and literacy practices shaping choice of options for epistemological access

The central question for this paper is how ideologies and literacy practices shape students' uptake of particular options for epistemological access. In this study, a range of different ideologies could be seen in students' stated preferences. These ideologies variously position students as custodians of perceived pristine forms of language use, as pragmatists primarily interested in access to knowledge and for whom languages are resources, and, as a more extreme form of pragmatism, as individuals guided by *realpolitik*.

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For the student whose understanding of 'truncated multilingualism' was only enhanced when this term was encountered in informal Afrikaans, language at that point was first and foremost a resource for meaning-making. It seemed immaterial whether in the process certain linguistic canons were flouted. The same tendency of not valuing language for its own sake is articulated by another student regarding epistemological access:

One of the things I did not like about the powerpoint slides on globalisation was that they were too formal, which made it difficult for me to understand, because in their formality they did not include any English terms it was pure Xhosa throughout and at times they tend to use deep Xhosa, with deep terms and concepts that I could not understand at all.

What this student underscores is the epistemological resource that linguistic hybridity represents. The interests of this student are clearly not served when cultural custodians complain that increasing linguistic hybridity is a sign of declining standards of language use.

But there are also contrary ideologies that are aligned to, or promote, the ideologies of purism and standard language varieties (Weber and Horner 2012). In this view, only certain languages or varieties are acceptable in the educational space, and they need to be used in their pristine forms:

I definitely regard English as the language of learning and it was almost as if I unconsciously shut down any form of understanding when reading or listening to the Afrikaans translations. This then created a negative language attitude towards Afrikaans in a learning/educational context.

I assumed that the standard variety of isiXhosa would be used. To my surprise, this was not the case but instead, a more colloquial variety was used. Yes, it is the manner that most university students speak but it holds less professionalism. To those that struggle with the English language, perhaps having the lecture in the standard variety of isiXhosa would be their only means of clear understanding.

The student referring to isiXhosa in the above quotation is commenting on the Powerpoint slides and podcast on the topic of 'a typology of multilingualism', which was delivered in informal isiXhosa. Interestingly, the view below (on the use of the formal variety of isiXhosa for the material on globalisation and multilingualism), when taken together with the one above, illustrates how language ideologies can be shaped by space.

The most important thing with regards to my understanding of these isiXhosa podcasts and powerpoint slides is that they use the standardised Xhosa variety which is the variety that is used in my region in the Eastern Cape.

The question this latter view poses is whether the standard of isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape should be foisted on other isiXhosa-speakers in an institution in the Western Cape Province for whom the Eastern Cape varieties could very well be a foreign language.

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Very significant findings were revealed regarding different literacy practices among the students in this study. When they are admitted, students typically include information on their home languages in the admission forms they have to complete. As some studies (e.g. on census data) have shown, data from such context-blind or blunt instruments may sometimes be of limited use in planning for the provision of services (e.g. Mohanty 2009; Garcı´a et al. 2013). This study suggests how inattention to literacy practices can easily undermine otherwise well-intentioned language diversification initiatives. In other words, the study repeatedly shows the potential of students' literacy practices in shaping their uptake of lecture materials.

Consider, for instance, the data on speech versus writing as modal options for epistemological access. Although the percentages for Xhosa and Afrikaans students positively evaluating the written materials were higher (38 and 48 % respectively) than the figures preferring the spoken materials (31 % for both groups), it is nonetheless striking that as many as 31 % of students in either group found the spoken material more beneficial. The need to take into account students' literacies when options for epistemological access are being determined is evident from a view such as the following: "The podcasts were very helpful because they helped me understand better. The translated Powerpoints did not help me because I can hardly read Xhosa".

The following figures were presented in respect of students who preferred to have epistemological access in a combination of their home language and English: 57 % (for students identifying as Xhosa), 38 % (for students identifying with Afrikaans) and 25 % (for students identifying with English). The literacy exposure of students just might explain this pattern. The higher the figure for English is, the less likely such respondents would have been exposed to their home language in academic contexts. On this reading, then, the respondents' literacy experience is least in isiXhosa, followed by Afrikaans.

It becomes quite clear from the above that, as a topic in language policy, ideologies are not only relevant at a macro level of national/institutional language choice, but also at the micro level of what language varieties should be used in producing support materials. But besides ideologies, literacy practices also appear to shape students' evaluations of different options for epistemological access.

Impact assessment: cognition, emotion and readiness for action

The analysis of the data also enabled the authors to determine the students' overall experience of receiving lecture materials in several languages, language varieties and modes. These subjective accounts are framed within Baker's (1992) threecomponent analysis of language attitudes, namely, cognition (i.e. belief), emotion (i.e. feeling) and readiness for action (i.e. what one is prepared to do). It was rather striking to see how the mere fact of using isiXhosa and Afrikaans to deliver curricular content changed the cognition of some of the students, as can be seen from the following two views:

Having lecture notes (in isiXhosa) made me acknowledge firstly how languages are not different at all, just the colonialism has installed the idea that there are better languages than others. Having lecture slides in my language made me not feel helpless.

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The Afrikaans materials had a great effect on me as it had made me realize how important the concept of multilingualism is. Being able to read in another language, other than English has allowed me to understand the concepts easily in Afrikaans.

The Afrikaans-speaking student now appears to realise that multilingualism is a useful resource in learning, a point that had presumably been missed prior to the exposure in this study. Besides the reference to emotion (i.e. the feeling of empowerment), we read into the isiXhosa-speaking student's view something of a mental catharsis that is explained to some extent by South Africa's discriminatory past, especially the positioning of English and Afrikaans as the only languages of access to sophisticated knowledge and opportunity.

There are also positive emotional dimensions of attitude, as seen in the feeling of empowerment reported by the isiXhosa student above. Other students expressed positive emotions as follows: "This endeavor has certainly lifted my spirit", "Having materials in Xhosa had really made me feel very positive".

From the standpoint of the authors as lecturers of the module, it was interesting to see statements of readiness for action communicating eagerness to promptly complete the assignment:

Having this joy of having an Afrikaans lecture boosted me and motivated me to have this assignment completed long before due time.

Having materials in Xhosa had really made me feel very positive towards completing this assignment… since there was not only a written Xhosa but also an audio or podcast of Xhosa. So the experience of doing this assignment had much been easier and enjoyable more than others I ever done because they were never like this one: that is, they had not my mother tongue involved.

Even for one student who did not feel that her understanding had necessarily been enhanced, the exposure had a different consequence: a motivation to develop relevant academic literacy in isiXhosa:

Having had access to the materials made me feel appreciative and motivated to learn more isiXhosa even though it did not improve my understanding.

This student appears to realise that while she may self-identify with isiXhosa, the kind of competence required to use this language in Higher Education is one that has to be developed because it does not come simply by using it as a main home language.

The failure of many mother-tongue programmes has in part been attributed to a refusal to recognise that the standardised variants of languages used in education are in fact foreign languages to many learners and in competition with home variants (Makoni and Pennycook 2007:7; Spolsky 2007:9). Unlike known foreign languages, however, there is in this case an assumption among powerful role-players that no support initiatives (e.g. academic literacy in students' home languages) are required. What inevitably happens is

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that solutions proffered for inequalities and inequities turn out to sustain and even deepen these disparities and injustices.

Conclusion

In terms of our ongoing work at the UWC, the responses of the students have shown us that there is a broad support base for informal Afrikaans in formal teaching arrangements; yet there is a need to maintain both formal and informal varieties of isiXhosa. There is also some motivation for offering a choice of modes, and possibly expanding the range of modes currently being offered. As has been argued at other universities, it is also imperative to evolve initiatives on reading and academic literacy development in languages other than English in order for students to benefit from the use of their home languages in academic contexts.

The study suggests therefore that beyond the euphoria of using languages other than English in South African Higher Education, there lie a range of issues that require attention if the goals of transformation in this sector are to be attained. In taking an untypical, more granular, view of the language diversification project in Higher Education, this study has attempted to foreground issues that have been treated with less attention than they deserve and has also problematized a range of assumptions. The data presented underscore four main arguments:

1. There are a diversity of legitimate interests and ideologies in the language diversification project: apart from raising their own issues of epistemological access, we have seen students presenting views that would typically be associated with cultural custodians, university administrators, lecturers and workplace managers.
2. Depending on the geographical location of an institution and the student demographics, there may be a need to mainstream informal varieties of a language in teaching and learning. In the context of the UWC, the informal variety of Afrikaans appears to have more currency than the formal variety for the student respondents in our study.
3. Self-identifying with a home language, as students are expected to do on registration, does not reveal their academic language proficiency in such languages and therefore literacy competence in these languages cannot be assumed.
4. Depending on their level of exposure to academic literacy, student competencies in a language can be modally distributed, with some students being able to process aural material better than written material.

In sum, the findings confirm the relevance, in a pedagogical context, of studies around language ideologies and literacy practices, particularly when it comes to the choice of languages of teaching and learning in the macro and micro language policies of different HEI's. Within the broader macro language policy of UWC, which stipulates that Afrikaans and isiXhosa can be used as languages of learning and teaching, our work on using different varieties and modes can be construed as explorations of micro-policy issues, particularly in our analysis of the attitudes and ideologies that are linked to students' stated preferences.

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Appendix: The original English versions of the textboxes

Textbox 1 Translation into formal isiXhosa

Ukutshintsha iindawo kunye nokusetyenziswa kweelwimi ezinizni

Ukufuduka nokusetyenziswa kweelwimi ezininzi. Ubugcisa bale mihla bonxibelelwano kunye nothutho "buye benza ukuba kubekho ingxinano nobuninzi beendlela zonxulumano ebezingazange zabonwa ngaphambili" (nguChinchilla ngo-2005:iphepha 175, ecatshulwa nguAronin noSingleton ngo-2012:iphepha 37)

Abafuduki abangena kwamanye amazwe ngoku bagcina unxibelelwano ngokulula kunye nemimandla yamakhaya abo, nto leyo ithi ikhokhelele ekugcinakaleni kweelwimi zaloo mimandla jikelele; ukufuduka kudala amathuba okuhlangana kweelwimi

Olu fuduko luthi lukhokhelele ekumanyaneni kweelwimi ezixubeneyo, ezintsha okanye ebezifudula zingananzwa, ingakumbi kwiimeko zasezidolophini, nezithe zaba ziilwimi zasekhaya kulutsha oluninzi olufudukele ezidolophini

Mobility and multilingualism

Migration and multilingualism. Today's technologies of communication and transportation "have made possible a density and intensity of links not seen before" (Chinchilla 2005:175, cited by Aronin and Singleton 2012:37)

Migrants to other countries now easily maintain contact with home regions, leading to the maintenance of the languages of the home region even in the diaspora; migration creates opportunities for languages to come into contact

These migrations are leading to the emergence of new or previously unrecognized mixed languages, especially in urban settings, which have become the home language of many of the urban migrant youth

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Textbox 2 Translation into informal Afrikaans

Skyfie 5: Truncated (afgekapte) Multilingualism

Truncated multilingualism word ge-link aan "dialogic places" of domains (Blommaert et al. 2005). Dialogic places kan bestaan uit die familie, werksplek en die hof. Al hierdie voorbeelde kan bestaan uit meer as een "interactional regime" met sy eie ree¨ls oor hoe om te kommunikeer. 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is die familie. In die familie opset is daar verskeie "interactional regimes". As kind in die familie kommunikeer jy verskillend met jou broers en susters as wat jy met jou ouers en grootouers kommunikeer. Met jou broers en susters sal jy 'n meer informele variety gebruik, maar as jy met jou ouma praat, sal jy 'n bietjie meer formeel wees en miskien nog die standard variety ook gebruik. Jy sal nooit vir jou ouma groet "Awe masekin, what's up" nie, maar jy sal dit in jou vriendekring of met jou siblings gebruik.Truncated multilingualism word gedefiniee¨r as "linguistic competencies which are organized topically, on the basis of domains or specific activities". Om hierdie definisie beter te verstaan kan men seˆ dat truncated multilingualism diemense se linguistic competencies is om oor verskillende topics te kan praat en in verskillende domains te kan kommunikeer

Truncated multilingualism is linked to 'dialogic places' or domains (Blommaert et al. 2005) and allows for a large degree of communication across language boundaries in multilingual societies. Dialogic places can be the family, place of work or the court. 'Dialogic places' can consist of more than one 'interactional regime' and of more than one language. In other words, a domain like the family can utilize more than one language or language variety depending on the topic being discussed and the person to whom one is talking. Truncated multilingualism is defined as 'linguistic competencies which are organized topically, on the basis of domains or specific activities' (Blommaert et al. 2005). This does not mean that all people are fully competent in all the different languages they use. Instead, their linguistic competencies may vary greatly across different domains. For example, a teenager may have picked up urban slang in one language from his peers, but be unable to interact in that language when talking to an older family member

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Bassey E. Antia is a professor of Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape. Antia's research interests include language policy and multilingualism in Higher Education, terminology, and health messaging. He is the author of Terminology and language planning (2000) and the editor of Terminology and indeterminacy (2007), both published by John Benjamins Publishers.

Charlyn Dyers is a professor of Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape. Dyers' research interests, as shown in several journal publications, include language policy, language attitudes and ideologies, the impact of migration on language and identity, urban multilingualism and the literacy practices of adult women. She is the author of Drama (Oxford Resource Series for Teachers, Oxford University Press, 1987).

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