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Language Programme (Setswana): Theoretical Framework

Chabaesele Oaitse

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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*LANGUAGE PROGRAMME (SETSWANA):
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK*

*BY
CHABAESELE OAITSE*

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INTRODUCTION

The most obvious importance of language resides in its use as a conventionalized system of social communication. Social organization is formed through communication, and its stability depends on facility in communication. To human beings, words are more than symbols - they are ideas and bonds of relationships. Language not only provides a vehicle for communication, but it aids in the acquisition and preservation of new ideas. Through usage and custom, words came to mean precise and specific things. At home, in school, at play and at work communication is an integral part of the situation.

Our mother tongue is a part of our natural heritage, a personal possession no less our own than the geography of our birth place. The mother tongue is quite adequate to our needs unless we wish to travel, whether in space or in thought, beyond the frontiers of the speech community in which it is current. It is only then that we feel its limitations sharply and find ourselves in need of another vernacular. It is therefore, most important for formal education in schools to train children in the understanding and use of language. The mother tongue of a particular country and the language used for social, commercial, legal and literacy purposes in that country should be taught in the schools. Children should learn to read quickly and with comprehension, to speak fluently and accurately, to listen with understanding and to write intelligently.

Most mother tongue teaching concerns itself with the promotion of literacy and oracy, the former being concerned with reading and writing, and the latter concerned with effective oral activity. Mother tongue has concerned itself with learning about literature, sometimes as an end in itself, but more often as a way of developing critical and analytical abilities. It is certainly true, however, that the ability to read with discrimination is a necessary one, both for an appreciation of literature, and of participation in the modern world. So at the higher levels of teaching - there is a happy identification between the demands of the subject and the social needs of the community. A basic competence in the mother tongue is essential. People survive quite satisfactorily without any knowledge of other subjects like physics, e.t.c. and may lead fulfilled lives taking an interest in activities which do not appear in the school curriculum at all. But as, with basic numeracy, not to be able to read, write and talk appropriately to people from various groups in society, is to be hindered in the options available. However, difficult it is to define literacy, we all know more or less what it means.

A school system which sends out students who are unable to operate in the official language of the country (which is usually the mother tongue of most of the inhabitants) creates political and social instability.

All normal students, therefore, should be able to read effectively any material which is likely to come the way of all citizens, should be able to write as well enough to deal with all normal personal and public situations, and should be able to talk confidently enough not to be afraid of any normal conversation. A school system, which does not offer these essentials, is stealing life - chances from its pupils.

One other most important aspect of language is that it is a tool used to transmit culture. People's culture should be taught in schools. In Africa, there are many virtues embodied in African culture. For instance, many traditional societies in Africa emphasise good character which to them embodies acceptable behaviour, decent speech, respect for law and order, desire to help the needy, the infirm and old people, hospitality, kindness, honesty, humility etc. When the formal schools were introduced into many African countries, however, attitudes, such as individuality and competition, were introduced which can counter to the way of life of traditional Africans.

Although a school has enormous advantages, education, if it is to be meaningful and relevant, cannot stand from the society which it is supposed to serve.

Education should draw inspiration and nourishment from society, in turn, it should contribute to the growth, renewal and development of the society. It is one of the responsibilities of teachers of languages to show which areas of culture can be included in the formal school system.

There are also many valuable traditional practices, such as breast feeding, elaborate child care and communal responsibility for training children. Many Africans abandoned these practices when Europeans came to Africa. Today, especially in urban centres, delinquents, vagabonds and unemployed youths, who were unknown in traditional society, are becoming common. That stronghold of the child rearing system, the elaborate extended family, is breaking down. Many people now disregard age and constituted authority. Africans must restore the dignity that was in their cultures in order to cope with youth crisis that has hit many of their countries.

Lastly, despite scepticism expressed by opponents to mother tongue teaching, research has indicated that second language learners are more successful academically when they are first encouraged to develop concepts and literacy in their mother tongue. The following authorities indicate the importance of mother tongue instruction in the linguistic and cognitive development of limited - English proficient students. Success in learning a second language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the mother tongue.

The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possess in his own (vygotsky 1962 p10).

The native literacy approach is theoretically and logically appealing because

1. By teaching in the mother tongue reading instruction can begin at an earlier age than if standard language has to be taught first.

2. The child's cultural heritage is recognized and honoured and learning to read is undertaken in the language with which the child is most comfortable (CHING, 1976, P7). From a theoretical perspective, learning to read in one's language will be easier than learning to read a second language, particularly an unfamiliar one. The learner brings to the task of learning to read his or her mother tongue a syntactic and semantic knowledge of the language which makes it possible to predict the meaning of the written form. (Goodman, Goodman and flores 1979, p19).

The purpose of this paper is therefore, to look into how best the mother language can be taught in schools at a secondary level. Some aspects of language teaching that will be mentioned here will focus on the role of the teacher, some factors to be considered when teaching the first language and how best a language programme can be designed to suit the needs of teachers, students and the society at large.

The discussion will be based mainly on the current language theories.

LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES

The approaches and methods used in teaching today have been based on one or the other of the two major theories of learning; behaviourist or rationalist. Behaviourist, of whom B.F. Skinner (1957) and Bloomfield (1933) are the predominant proponents, maintain that the learning process is essentially a stimulus - response - reinforcement process. Language learning is like any other learning. Language is considered to be no more than a set of learned habits, the acquisition of which requires no thinking or analysis. In fact, behaviourists do not accept the notion of mind and thinking, since they cannot be observed, measured, and described.

Another tenet of behaviourists that seems quaint today is that 'Language is speech, not writing.' This led to language that concentrated on speaking and pronunciation, almost to the total exclusion of instruction in reading, writing and grammar. Methods of language teaching based on the behaviourist theories of learning became known as 'mimicry - memorization'. Children learn language by mimicking what they hear, believe the behaviourists. If they receive positive reinforcement for it, they will repeat the behaviour i.e. sound, word, sentence. If there is negative reinforcement (or no reinforcement, which is seen as negative) the child will not repeat the behaviour.

Behaviourists also stress memorization of dialogues and practice pattern drills.

The surface structure and form of the language, as well as pronunciation, are emphasized. Since meaning and comprehension cannot be observed, described, and measured, they are not considered.

Rationalists as exemplified by Chomsky (1965) maintain that human beings learn language because they are innately, and uniquely capable of doing so. They are in effect, biologically programmed to learn language. Chomsky coined the phrase Language Acquisition Device (LAD). He claimed that humans are innately and uniquely equipped with an ability to acquire language. The fact that all human beings, even retarded children learn a language is given as evidence of the theory.

Rationalists declared that language learning is a creative activity governed by rules. Children analyze, categorize and evaluate language and develop rules for how it works. They cannot possibly be mimicking and memorizing since it is almost possible that they will hear the same utterance twice. In addition, say rationalists, children say things that they have never heard adults say, e.g. 'two sheeps'. It is obvious they have learned the rule for plurals and overgeneralized. They usually correct themselves later in their language development.

A rationalist approach to language teaching stresses meaning and content instead of structure. Instead of mimicry - memorization and drilling, they use natural, meaningful communication. Dependence on memory only, without learning any rules, can make the language learning process impossible, since every single structure would have to be memorized. Grammar is taught explicit since grammar can help the language learner apply what has been learned to new language situations.

In summary, behaviourist theories led to the structural or descriptive school of linguistics, which led to approaches of language teaching that stresses repetition, memorization, positive reinforcement of correct responses, and emphasis on the surface structure of language. The surface structure of language deals with the words and sentences of language, disregarding the meaning. For example, in the sentence, visiting grandparents can be boring, the utterance can convey two different meanings depending on which words are stressed. This is of particular significance to the second language learner who may learn the words and their placement in the sentence and still misunderstand the meaning.

Language teaching approaches based on rationalist theories stress comprehension and meaning of the deep structure of the language as illustrated in the sentence "visiting grandparents can be boring." Grammar, rules, and analysis are all part of rationalist approach.

But on the other hand we have Chomsky who rejects Skinner's behaviourist model as inadequate to account for the complexity of human language and the creativity of the speaker - listener, though it should be noted that stimulus - response modes can probably explain some of the facts of language behaviour (Lyons, 1970) and that equation of this creativity with the ability to produce and understand an infinite number of novel sentences, with theoretical possibility of infinite length of sentence, does not bring out the important point that in the majority of cases this novelty lies not in the grammar, lexis, or phonology, but in a novel concatenation of non-novel meaning components (Hasan, 1971). In this discussion the major drawback of skinnerian theory's refusal to consider anything that is not observable is its inability to handle the now generally accepted notion of two levels of language, one underlying the other.

Chomsky's view of what it means to know a language is reflected in his distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. (This distinction has a psychological orientation and it is not the same as deSaussure's 'langue' and 'parole'). In aspects of the Theory of syntax (1965) Chomsky writes. linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker - listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

The perfect knowledge referred to here is the mastery of the abstract system of rules by which a person is able to understand and produce any and all of the well-formed sentences of his language, i.e. his linguistic competence. The actual use of language, affected by what he terms grammatically irrelevant conditions, and identified with the criterion of acceptability, not grammatically, is the domain of linguistic performance. Having said this, I would like to turn my attention to some of the ways of teaching mother tongue in England rather than to dwell on the neutral and stronger definitions of competence.

TEACHING THE MOTHER TONGUE IN ENGLAND TODAY

In England the last 20 years or so have seen a big change in the approach to the teaching of English. There is today a growing tendency away from the traditional emphasis on formal grammar, on the written word, on correctness at the expense of naturalness and vitality of expression, on teacher-dominated instruction, and on compartmentalization. 'Growth through-English' by John Dixon (1967) is regarded as one of the most important and influential statements of the new movement.

The approach advocated is uncompromising child-centred.

In English, pupils meet to share their encounters with life, and to do this effectively they move freely between dialogue and monologue between talk, drama and writing, and literature, by bringing new voices into the classroom, adds to the store of shared experience.

Based on the pupils' life experience, a new model for English studies is emerging; English is to be regarded as a

series of activities unified not by a programme of training in specific skills and techniques, nor by an overall commitment to literacy study, but by the end kept continually in view, the personal growth of individual pupils ... The structure of the English Curriculum is unitary, flexible, and with regard to specific lessons and activities, relatively unpredictable.

There is a strong feeling that we need to break illusion of separate subjects: (quotations from Saunders, pq, 10 & 11).

The whole approach is based on the assumption that every child has a knowledge of language, and what the teacher should do is

Introduce his pupils to a coherent series of activities and exercises designed, in the light of his knowledge of language development, to build upon the command and competence they already possess. (ibid. p27-28).

Saunders goes on to describe how this 'progressive' approach is put into practice by three 'real' schools, all large day-schools with a non selective entry. In one, English is taught with an integrated humanities curriculum, with a broadly thematic approach, in another, the curriculum is seen in terms not of content, but of skills to be taught. Team teaching and block time tabling are employed. The third school mentioned by Saunders is chosen because of its approach to the teaching of fiction.

It will be immediately obvious that most of what I have just been saying has, on the surface at least, very little relevance for the teaching of the mother tongue in Botswana. We need not to be too discouraged about that. Even in England, the approach is only gradually gaining ground, and schools are faced with the problem of reconciling this way of developing their pupils' use of English with the demands of public examinations.

Already some steps have been taken to modify the examination but it is likely that, for many years to come, examining bodies will continue on more or less traditional lines.

In the meantime, without any radical upheaval, some of the most important and significant features of the 'new' approach can be incorporated into our teaching of Setswana.

Before suggesting some ways in which we might do this, however, I want to mention two vitally important general principles, valid not only for language teaching but for all teaching. The first is the need to have clear, definite objectives, both long-term and short-term. We should for example, have specific answers to such questions as the following:-

(a) What do I want/expect my pupils to be able to do (linguistic) at the end of this 3 years, 5 years, course? etc.

(b) What do I plan to do in the short term to achieve these long-term objectives? (Yearly/termly/weekly/daily programmes of work) spell out your instructional objectives.

The second basic principle is the importance of pupil motivation.

How to teach is determined by how learners learn. The learner learns by taking what he is taught and attaching it correctly and meaningfully to his experience. He calls upon his experience and then tries to fit into it what he is taught ... No one can learn anything without a basis of experience specially called up, or if need be, provided. This experience must be looked at, turned over, filled out, made specific and caused to work forward to what teacher intends to teach. (W.A. Dodd, p13-14)

In other words, if an item is not seen by a pupil as relevant to his experience, he will not be interested in that item. If he is not interested no learning will take place, certainly no lasting learning.

Let us now look at how these basic principles should be applied in the actual classroom situation. First, the question of instructional objectives. Instructional objectives state, in terms of pupil achievement or pupil 'behaviour' what the teacher wants the class to have learned at the end of a given period of instruction e.g.

'By the end of the lesson the pupils should be able to give instructions orally to someone as to how to get to certain places.

All languages can be considered in terms of language elements i.e. sound, vocabulary and meaning, structure and language skills, e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The syllabus and the course book has to indicate what ground has to be covered in each of these areas over a specific period, in a general way, but the teacher may have to be selective especially if the class is slow or mixed ability.

The important point is that the teacher should have a set of instructional objectives, prepared well in advance, of what he plans to teach over a stated period - a single lesson/a week's lessons/a month lessons /a term's lessons. This gives the teacher confidence in himself, provides a sense of direction to his lessons and both these factors in turn build up the confidence of the pupils and gives them a sense of security which is very important in a learning situation.

It might be objected that such detailed preparation and breakdown of a syllabus or scheme of work is far too time-consuming to be realistic proposition. One can make several replies to that:

- (i) It could be shared by all Setswana teachers in the school.
- (ii) Once done, it is valid, with minor adoptions, indefinitely.
- (iii) It makes setting of tests much easier, since what is expected to be known over a given number of lessons is clearly set down.

The setting out of objectives, no matter how expertly done will not, of itself, produce a learning situation. The what without the how is incomplete. This brings me to the vital question of motivation.

H.E. Palmer suggests six rational and reasonable factors calculated to produce interests if not enthusiasm... in the teaching of language:-

- (i) The Elimination of bewilderment
- (ii) The sense of progress achieved.
- (iii) Competition
- (iv) Game-like exercises
- (v) The right relation between teacher and student.
- (vi) Variety (the principles of language study p87-91)

These are self-explanatory, the point I would underline about them is that they add up to the single most important ingredient in pupil motivation, namely pupil involvement. The approach implied is pupils centred and pupil activity is catered for:

To learn a language is to learn how to use it, to respond to situations by saying appropriate things in it, to understand what others say in it, and, ultimately, to read and write in it ... (quoted by Byrne from C.F. Hockett, p19).

Herriot makes the same point:

... Children only acquire skills by practising them.
Thus, they acquire skills of language behaviour only
by engaging in it ... (p39)

Herriot goes on to make a further most important point:

... Such practice should occur in a variety of
meaningful contexts. The child should be engaged in
behaviour which requires the use of language to ensure
its success ...(ibid).

This demands that the language teacher not only make extensive use of the situational approach in the classroom but also ensure that his model structures drill, etc, should be closely as possible directly related to, or linked up with, the pupils' life experience. The pupils must learn to use their language with fluency, correctness, competence and confidence in the context of their own familiar experience before they can be expected to do so in the handling of material that is culturally alien.

Pupil centred language teaching, as described here, with a judicious use of appropriate songs, games, dramatization activities, visual and audio visual aids, will directly stimulate pupil interest and promote efficient learning.

Indirect motivation is, however, a very powerful agent in stirring up enthusiasm for one's mother tongue.

It must be noted that though English language is a medium of instruction from standard 5 up to the University level and Setswana taught as a subject, it must not be forgotten that, at the same time that we are teaching our children English, we must do all we can to help them maintain their mother tongue and culture. Those are treasures which should not waste; they are gifts from which our nation can benefit. Students need to learn English as well as quickly as possible, but they also need to learn to value their mother tongue and heritage.

Another approach to language teaching which is coming into being is the whole language instruction. The whole language approach is viewed not as a method but more of a philosophy of teaching that encourages students to listen, speak, read and write. It stresses the importance of the children's own language productions a bridge from oral to written language. In other words, whole language emphasizes the importance of approaching reading and writing by building the language and experiences of children (weaver, 1988). The curriculum is learner - centred and it is based on the immediate interests of students. The concept of whole to part learning is basic to the philosophy.

The whole language approach draws upon the child and the strengths and background the child has. A whole language program helps children make sense of their own world through the curriculum. It is a program in which students and teachers engross in reading, writing and oral discussions that make sense, are satisfying, and are related to their worlds. Teachers and students reflect on the curriculum, their work within (Newman, 1985, weaver 1988). Students first develop global understanding and gradually come to understand the parts.

Reading and writing are related to meaningful activities which are centred around units of interest to the students. Language, reading and writing are seen as an enriching experience, not a process of skill mastery.

The traditional method for teaching native language, emphasizes a word approach and reduces the teaching of reading to a series of exercises that present language from part to whole. Today, rather than a 'part to whole' approach to teaching native language, a whole language approach is recommended. It is believed that, language functions as a basic means to fulfil the human need for communication and social interaction. The students native language plays an important role in terms of self-image, self-identity, categorising social reality, and communicating as well as shaping students knowledge and values.

Thus, materials and approaches used to teach native language reading and writing need to focus on language in context, student interests, and content areas rather than on decoding and skill building. When children are encouraged to read for meaning, they are able to use their background knowledge and experience (Carrasquillo & Segan, 1984). children not only listen to books being read to them, they also read books, discuss books.

The following are some of the strategies that can be used to invite students in whole language classroom through the native language.

USE OF WORDLESS BOOKS

Wordless books are an invitation for children to become authors. After discussing the story, based on pictures, individuals or small groups of students may want to write a story to accompany the illustrations. (wordless books written by English - speaking authors can be used).

THE USE OF PREDICTABILITY

Here, the teachers select materials for all students, especially for those who are insecure or non proficient readers. When language is predictable, it supports the writers intensions and readers expectations, thereby making the text easier to read.

Predictable language means that the text supports the reader in a variety of ways; repetitious lines, cumulative lines, rhyming or alternative words, etc. The students classroom needs to be full with literature, reading and literacy, reading and literature that make sense to those who are in the classroom.

USE OF ALL TYPES OF LITERATURE

Whole language classrooms use literature as often as possible. Literature appears in many forms and serves diverse functions in the lives of students. A strong motive for learning to read is the opportunity books provide for students to move beyond their scope and reality by entering many different possible worlds (Bruner, 1984). But one of the most exciting approaches to building literature appreciation and respect for literature is through group discussion about student writing. Poetry is very important in whole language classrooms. Students read poetry, write poetry, and copy favourite poems. Short stories, drama, songs and novels are daily learning tools.

LITERATURE WRITING

Extended literature writing is a way of responding to literature by using professionally authored materials as an impetus for future writing. One of the most basic ways of extending literature is by using its format, content, or both in order to create a personalized story.

After students hear or read the language of the story, they are eager to write their own versions.

USE OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH TO READING

The students begin by having an experience worthy of writing about, they think about and discuss the experience, they decide how it is to take form, they dictate the story to a scribe (usually the teacher or another student), and they reread and edit their story. Writing as a group provides an opportunity to talk about both the writing and reading process. Children of all ages need to be invited and expected to do their writing, using the language experience approach could be one of many ways of producing their own writing.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Setswana as a subject in the secondary school includes the following activities: reading, writing, speaking, literature, short story and essay composition and grammar study. The objectives of the Setswana teachers in this situation are to encourage accuracy in expression, to develop in his students correct habits of speech, which means choice of words, pronunciation and clarity, correct use of grammar, and appreciation for literature written in Setswana.

Teaching techniques involve evaluation of the students compositions for originality in style and quality of expression, and the presentation and discussion of grammar, works of literature, and historical narrative of the lives of men of letters.

The student who is given a 'high grade' is usually the student who has expressed originality in his/her composition has become familiar enough with assigned readings in literature to answer examination questions, and who, in general 'knows' grammar and express himself well. It is therefore necessary that the language teachers be competent users of the language, so they will be good models. A good knowledge background leads to a sense of confidence and facilitates creative teaching. The ability to conceptualize the structure and function of language enables teachers to identify the knowledge and skills children need and to break complex concepts and abilities into lesson sized experience.

The way teachers interact with students is also important. Teachers need to know how to diagnose, plan and instruct in consistent and meaningful ways. But that is not enough. They also need to be able to stimulate children's interest in language and to motivate them to learn the skills they need. Successful teachers show genuine interest in children and notice how children respond to specific learning situations.

By getting to know the children in their classroom well, they can fine tune their teaching strategies for maximum effectiveness. This is emphasized by H.E. Palmer (1968, p237) when he says,

In every individual there are to be found latent capacities of intense interest and enthusiasm, in the case of children these capabilities become active in strange ways, often manifested by the mania of the collector and the curiosity of the investigator. It is for the teacher to develop these latent capabilities, to direct them into useful channels and to utilise them.

Teachers must make it a point that students interact with others as they learn. As we plan for individual needs, we must be aware that students will achieve much more if they have opportunities to interact with the teacher, and their classmates. The level of positive interaction in a classroom correlates highly with student achievement. The learners must be active in their approach to learning and practice. This has been espoused by Naiman et al (1978:103).

In classroom language learning, the use of carefully prepared cause materials and the great number of question - answer exercise, exclusively directed by the teachers, somehow disguise the fact that the learner should play a part in making decisions and be allowed to exercise personal choice ... The present study suggests that too close, step by step direction of language classes may not always produce the desired effect because the learner has too little chance of developing his own learning strategies.

There is another aspect of teaching that is sometimes overlooked. It has to do with the teachers attitude towards all or part of the language curriculum, the content of laage arts. What the teacher thinks and feels is clearly communicated even when it is not spoken. Teachers need to realize this and to deal with it consciously. To bring language teaching alive, teachers need to show an interest in the fascinating world of language and to indicate by their attitude that the study and use of language is both challenging and satisfying.

In order to perform effective work, the teacher should have at his/her disposal an adequate number of the right sort of instruments. We must have the right sort of material and the right sort of tools.

These will consist of books, diagrams and charts containing the units themselves and all the explanatory matter which will help us to understand and assimilate them. It is difficult to work with insufficient or inferior material, and it is not good to study a language without a variety of tools to enable us to learn or to teach something more easily or better.

The following are some of the contents to be considered for setswana language room.

1. A complementary Setswana - English dictionary.
2. A phonetic chart of the Setswana sounds
3. A detailed list of all the Setswana sounds (vowels and consonants each sound to be described, represented by a diagram showing the position of the organs of speech, and illustrated by a list of some of the more important units into the composition of which it enters)
4. Literature books by various authors
5. Display a good map of Botswana and refer to it constantly
6. Have a small table for interesting objects found by members of the class. (Students should be encouraged to bring material for display). The general aim here, is to build up pride in their own country, its heritage and culture.

Effective teaching requires that the children should be stimulated by the teacher towards growth and development.

Effective teaching, however, also includes making use of the materials available in the cultural setting, basing children's growth on foundations provided by their natural experience in their own environment. It involves bringing the home and the school together by recognizing the need for enlisting the co-operation of the home in the educational process. If the native language is badly taught, it seems to discourage native children from any interest in their ancestral language.

The success of the native language classrooms depends greatly on the teacher. Thus, their native language preparation, beliefs and attitudes about language and reading learning.

The whole language approach facilitates certain activities and procedures in the classroom. Teachers need to convey to students the value of learning through the native language, that bilingualism is an educational asset and not a handicap, that bilingual individuals may actually possess a certain cognitive flexibility and intellectual advantage over monolingual peers (Carrasquillo & Segan, 1984).

The mastery of two languages does not produce a deficit or disadvantage. The native language instruction does develop and enhance communication skills in the students' native language as well as in English. Teachers need to read to students, tell them stories, and enhance students listening and oral language skills everyday.

By reading and telling stories, teachers convey the message that authentic literature has a place of respect and importance in the curriculum. Students make connections to literature they have heard before, and can relate the messages, settings, and characters presented. Students are encouraged to learn from the experiences presented through the literature to become better readers and writers.

Teachers promote opportunities for students to participate in authentic writing everyday. One of the most powerful influences in becoming a proficient reader is writing stories. Proficient readers and writers make students better listeners, speakers, writers, readers and thinkers. They (teachers) also provide opportunities for students to read real literature everyday. Classrooms need a wide range of literature varied and suitable for all students in the classroom. The school and the community's library are frequently used by students and teachers.

Whole language classrooms promote interactive learning processes in which students help other students in their learning tasks. All members of the classroom use communicative work transactions to make connections with the learning task or problem. It is evident from the above discussion that a good mother tongue class will help children develop their own use of language, through creative writing, project work and group activities which involve a lot of pupil-pupil talk as well as pupil-teacher talk.

It will also make sure that all children are able to produce appropriate writing in all areas in which writing may be demanded by society, and be able to read whatever may be demanded of them by society.

A LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

A syllabus is a document which ideally describes:

- (a) What the learners are expected to know at the end of the course, or the course objectives in operational terms.
- (b) What is to be taught or learned during the course, in the form of an inventory items.
- (c) When it is to be taught, and at what rate of progress, relating the inventory of items to the different levels of stages as well as to the time constraints of the course.
- (d) How it is to be taught, suggesting procedures, techniques, and materials and lastly how it is to be evaluated, suggesting testing and evaluating mechanisms (Fraida Dubin and Elite Olshtain, 1986, p28).

From the above definition of a syllabus, one understands that a syllabus must be goal directed. Its main justification must be good to enable a learner to achieve certain objectives - that is why learners pay money, or governments make education compulsory, because they believe that experience of an organised educational process enables learning to occur more effectively than through disorganised experience. Since a syllabus implies movement, it must contain a starting point as well as an end point. The starting point must relate to learner behaviour, for whatever the goals of the syllabus is an important tool, because it involves us in making generalizations, for it is directly, a device for teaching with, not far learning from, and teaching is rarely addressed to individuals. A syllabus only specifies a way of offering materials to people, so that they take it up. It cannot specify how they take it up, because each person has slightly different needs, motivation and learning style, and because each person varies in commitment to learning from lesson to lesson.

Having understood what a syllabus should be, I feel obliged at this moment to pause and take a closer look at the Setswana syllabus. Paying attention to some aspects of the Setswana Syllabus, one could say it fails to supply the necessary information for both the teacher and the learner. As the syllabus does not have any general objectives it is very difficult for the teacher to know how to conduct his lesson hence complicate his/her efforts to carry out his/her duties.

The teacher does not know what to be accomplished and achieved at the end of the program as the syllabus does not, in any other way reflect the philosophical and educational approach that guided the policy-makers. If it does, it is because the philosophy is being inferred by the teachers and the society only because they are the native speakers of the language and they are aware of the culture embedded in some of the topics chosen.

The current Setswana syllabus is an inventory of items which to my knowledge does not suit current thinking in language pedagogy. For example, the approach advocated by educators today is the learner centred approach. The Setswana syllabus lacks this aspect as it does not reflect any activities for the learner to be engaged in.

The Material in use: Most of the materials used in Setswana teaching do not provide alternatives for teachers and learners. That is, there is no indication of how the learner can be involved or engaged - no learner tasks, does not consider the fact that learners have different learning styles, presentation techniques, expected outcomes e.t.c. There is need to consider the above mentioned factors when choosing the materials to be used because not all types of learning routes are suitable for all learners. When there are no built in alternatives which allow teachers and learners to choose what suits them in their particular situations, then the materials might be seen to be imposing and restricting rather than allowing for expansion and enrichment.

Ideal materials should enable experienced teachers and learners with a jumping off place, a stimulus for learning process at each point. It is unfortunate for Setswana teachers, because their teaching is governed by the examinations used within the system therefore restricted to the teaching of content whilst on the other hand students are expected to absorb the information as delivered and later reproduce it during examinations.

Effective materials should enable experienced teachers and learners to develop their own alternatives according to their needs and personal preferences. One other factor to be taken into consideration when developing the materials is providing teachers with teacher's guide, up to this day Setswana teachers do not know what a teacher's guide is. This really complicates things and demoralise some teachers especially the newly employed who do not know where to look for help. To some extent a teacher's guide helps a lot especially when you are still new in the field of teaching as it can give you a good picture, ideas, on how to go about teaching some of the difficult topics. I must be understood here, I am not saying that teachers must solemnly rely on the use of teacher's guide but to allude the fact that it does help a lot. It can also help in establishing uniformity on the information to be communicated to the students.

Resources: Availability of equipment such as tape recorders, slides, films, pictures, poster and other such as visual and audio pictures may be of great use. But it seems like planners neglected this when designing the learning program. This has been demonstrated by teachers not showing interest in the use of some of the equipment even if it is at their disposal.

TYPES OF SYLLABUSES

There are four types of syllabuses, mainly the Structural-grammatical syllabus, the Semantico-notional syllabus, the Functional syllabus and the Situational syllabus.

The Structural-grammatical syllabus is centred around items such as tenses, articles, complementation, adverbial forms etc. The notional syllabus is organised around themes relating to broad areas of meaning such as space, time, obligation.

The Functional syllabus is concerned with elements such as invitations, suggestions, apologies, refusals etc.

All four illustrate different realizations of an organisational approach based on discrete units. Recently, however, within the communicative approach to curriculum and syllabus design, the idea of presenting an organizational concept which is not based on separate units but rather on a continuous process of communication has gained popularity.

In this approach, the communicative needs of the learners are the basis on which various linguistic, thematic or functional elements are selected. The role of the teacher here is to facilitate the learners participation in these communicative exchanges. Ideally there should also be scope for learners to take responsibility to analyse their own needs and accordingly seek help from the teacher or the materials.

My model: Theoretical Frame Work

The most popularly accepted of language acquisition are krashen's five hypothesis, namely: Input hypothesis, The affective filter hypothesis, the acquisition-learning Distinction, the monitor hypothesis and the natural order hypothesis.

(a) The input hypothesis: Tells us that we acquire language in very simple way. Language is acquired through exposure to comprehensible input, this is language data that is understandable and contains structures a little bit beyond the current competence of the learner. Input must not only be comprehensible but interesting and relevant to provide a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. This is the atmosphere conducive for acquisition. Comprehensible input is provided by modifying our speech, speaking slowly, providing contextual clues with body language and so on.

(b) The Affective filter hypothesis: Tells us how we utilize input for acquisition. It tells us that the learners feelings have a role to play in whether input will or will not be utilized. When learners are tense, fearful they get on the defensive, this raises their affective filters hence not allowing input to pass to their Language Acquisition Device hindering acquisition.

On the other hand when learners are psychologically comfortable their affective filters lowers down allowing input to pass to the LAD hence facilitating acquisition and learning. Affective variables such as motivation and self-confidence facilitate language acquisition while anxiety hinders it.

(c) The Acquisition - Learning Distinction hypothesis: Tells us that learning is a conscious process acquisition is subconscious. In the case of language, we acquire most of the language competencies. The only competence we consciously gain in linguistic competence, that is we only learn grammatical rules. Even then, not all rules can be consciously learned, we can only learn those that are simple, portable and easy to recall. This means that the rest of the more complex language rules are acquired. therefore, classroom activities must encourage the acquisition process. Language classrooms must create acquisition conducive environment since the acquisition process helps us gain most of the competencies we need.

(d) The monitor hypothesis: tells us about the role of grammar in language learning and acquisition. It tells us that our utterances are initiated by the acquisition processes and not the learning process. When such utterances have errors we use the rules that we have learned (that is, we appeal to our learning process) to repair such utterances. So we learn grammar rules in order to repair our incorrect utterances. But as the Learning Acquisition Distinction hypothesis tells us, such rules are very few, most of the complex rules we acquire.

(c) The natural order hypothesis: tells us that for every language there is an order in which grammaticized morphemes are acquired. Until such an order is established, the order in which we teach such morphemes may be completely incompatible with the natural order of acquisition for that particular language. The only order studied at the moment is that of English. We therefore, need to know the order in which setswana morphemes are acquired in order to facilitate the order in which we teach them.

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Language teaching methods have changed from structural or grammatical to natural-functional, to situational, to communicative methods (yalden, 1983).

Grammatical syllabuses were based on the understanding that language is of structures and can be better learned when it is broken into its components and analyzed (savignon, 1983). National-functional and situational syllabuses were based on the understanding that language is used to perform certain functions in certain situations (Valden, 1983:28-39). and therefore to learn language you need to learn such functions as appropriate for situations. This indicates a change of focus from the structure of the language to language as meaningful and functional.

the current beliefs about conditions appropriate to language learning stress the learner's need to use language to meet his/her communicative needs in various situations in real life.

The evolution of communicative syllabuses was sparked by the debate between Noam Chomsky and Dell. I. Hymes; (1972). For Chomsky all that linguistic theory has to inform us about is how rules of grammar are learned in an ideal homogeneous society. For Hymes, a child would be regarded a monster if he or she knew all the grammatical rules of the society in which they live, which is in reality a heterogeneous one. For hymes therefore, it is not enough to know the grammatical rules, but also important to know the cultural rules or norms of the society, that is, what is socially appropriate, when to say what to whom and how.

Only then can the child use language to meet his communicative needs and only then the child be said to have "communicative competence", a term Hymes coined in 1971.

Since this debate, communicative syllabuses, have designed and the meaning of the term communicative competence in language teaching has come to mean different things to different people, perhaps depending on their communicative needs. Knowledge of language is now understood not only as the knowledge of grammatical rules but also of the appropriateness of utterances to meet communicative purposes (Widdowson, 1978:3). Savignon (1983:36-41). States that communicative competence includes, linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge about the rules of grammar, it is sometimes referred to as grammatical competence, the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. The Acquisition Learning Distinction has told us that most of the grammar rule we acquire and only learn those that are simple, portable and easy to recall.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the social rules of the language in its social context. This is the ability to know what is socially acceptable according to the cultural norms of the society, knowing when to say what to whom and how to say it, so that it is culturally acceptable.

It also includes knowledge of when to remain silent. Sociolinguistic rules depend on factors such as the role-relationship of the participants, their purposes, topics and their norms of social interaction. In a classroom situation, sociolinguistic competence enables students, for instance, to know when to take a turn, when to volunteer a response, when to wait for the teacher's call and how to address the teacher. It also helps student to discover the purposes of various texts. (I. Pica, 1988:3).

Discourse competence refers to the use of language in a holistic manner, so that meaning is not derived from isolated sentences but from 'a series of sentences or utterances to form a meaningful whole' (Savignon, 1983:38).

In a classroom situation, discourse competence allows students to follow the structure of arguments and relationships that functional units such as generalizations, exemplifications, and conclusions hold with the text. It intersects with grammatical and sociolinguistic competence to enable the reader to infer meaning and function from grammatical structures and lexical items which have less than obvious surface cues (Pica, 1988:10-11)

Strategic competence takes care of the imperfect nature of the human mind which sometimes produces the not so well-formed utterances, and our strategic competence helps us repair them by using our monitoring system. Strategic competence is the ability to cope with a communicative situation, it is a communication survival skill to deal with our errors whether they are grammatical, factual or those dealing cultural appropriateness. It helps us to deal with situations such as 1. What to do when you cannot think of a word, let us say you are giving a speech? 2. How do you let your interlocutor know that you do not agree with them without hurting their feelings? 3. What are the ways to keep the channels of communication open while you pause and collect your thoughts (Savignon, 1983:40). In a classroom situation, it helps the learners, for instance, to use the available knowledge to guess an answer, or to work out the actual task they have to perform if they did not initially understand it. In other words, it helps the learner to cope with the demands of the learning situation.

A communicative syllabus must provide the above competencies in order for the learners to be communicatively competent. According to this approach the learner's communicative abilities are developed not so much by the 'time they spend rehearsing grammatical patterns but on the opportunities they are given to interpret to express and to negotiate meaning in real life situation:

This approach emphasizes exposure to language as a communicative tool rather than on conscious knowledge of the rules. Knowledge of a rule is demonstrated by using the rule in a communicative situation rather than by stating the rule (Pica, 1988:3). In a communicative approach rules of grammar are discovered as language patterns as the child interacts with the language. Examples of methods that have been described as communicative are: the Natural Approach, Total physical response and the silent way, while methods such as Audiolingual and Grammar Translation are non-communicative methods (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

THE HOSTILIC APPROACH TO LITERACY

This approach is mainly concerned with integrating reading writing and oral communication across the curriculum. That is, its aim is to connect these language processes with the learning of content. The approach is concerned with teaching them as isolated sub-skills. This approach defines learning as, (a) meaning based, that is we learn things that have some relevance to our lives. (b) as human, that every individual have their own peculiar ways of gaining knowledge. (c) as social, that is learning/acquisition takes place in a social context and through social interaction as opposed to isolation, and (d) as language based, that is the acquisition of any form of knowledge requires the skill to communicate.

Therefore, whatever subject one is teaching, they are imparting some knowledge which may itself not be language content per se.

The idea of 'wholeness' is critical in this approach and it is manifested in the following beliefs:

1. Language is learned/acquired better than when presented in a hostilic way, that is language skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and grammar should not be isolated and taught as isolates, but integrated to reinforce one another. The isolation takes away the meaning hence makes learning difficult.
2. Because learning is meaning based, language would be better learned/acquired when used to learn subject context in a hostilic manner. Therefore language teachers must use real context from other subject matter syllabuses to teach language skills. This will not only facilitate the acquisition of the skill but will be more meaningful to the learner.
3. Context and meaning are everything to learning including language learning and/or acquisition, hence the need to emphasize the experiences of the child as providing better context and conditions for gaining language competence.

4. Developing a literature-based reading programme is basic to this approach, with the belief that when children read many books, talk about what they read and write a great deal, they develop language abilities in a meaningful and holistic way.

A programme based on this approach has been developed at the University of Pennsylvania called the Pen Framework. It is meant to teach children to read, write and communicate orally in their mothertongue. It provides five critical experiences, to language learning. These are:

1. Reading: As transacting with text: This experience exposes children to reading as not a passive activity. Readers are not only extracting meaning from the text but predicting and confirming meaning on the bases of their previous experiences and their knowledge of how the word works. This experience encourages children to read a great deal and react to what they have read on the basis of their own experiences. Children share what they read and write with others. A teacher who understands the reading process as transacting with text would ask his/her students question 'what does this text mean to you? as opposed 'who is the main character? The first question brings in the students experienced and assumes the reader is interacting with text to create meaning while the second question assumes that reading is simply absorbing text and to be reproduced.

2. Writing: As composing text: This experience stresses the fact that the skill or the art of writing actually occurs during writing. The writer starts off with the idea of what they are going to write about, but without any idea of the exactly how the text is going to read in the final stage. The 'how' part comes along during the writing process. As the writers make meaning and formulate and reformulate their ideas, new communicative writing devices are employed and they are also revised, reformulated and re-thought especially during the revision stages.

This experience stresses that in order to become writers, students need to write a great deal and take risks in exploring the language. They need to experience writing as a process not only as a product and the teacher's encouragement and naturing is crucial. A teacher who believes that writing is composing text would not only be interested in the end product of the student's work but in the whole writing process to help them walk through it. Writing activities must reflect this process.

3. Extending Reading and Writing: This experience is an extension of the first two experiences. In this experience children make their own selections of the books they would like to read. They write reports, book reviews and summarize these books on their own. By so doing, not only do children explore the language but also gain a sense of maturity as literate citizens who are participating in the literacy world.

The above three experiences foster discourse and sociolinguistic competence.

4. Investigating language: This experience describes how elements of language (such as grammar rules) can be investigated, explored and analyzed without decontextualizing or isolating them. The necessity of context is critical and has to be maintained even when we are looking at the specifics of language, for it is context which will facilitate the understanding and therefore, the analysis of grammatical structures. It stresses the fact that language is not learned in any sequence as structural approaches suggest, rather, language is learned as a whole through a language rich environment, a literature based environment. Sequencing language elements is only good for teachers to know how much of the syllabus is left for them to cover and test but not necessarily how it is learned by students. The result is less learning, faster coverage of the syllabus and testing what children were supposed to have learned and not what they have learned. This experience may be thought of as fostering linguistic or grammatical competence. It deals with how best to teach grammatical structures.

5. Learning to learn: This experience helps students to be conscious of their learning strategies. It is very important for learners to be able to reflect on their idiosyncratic learning strategies. This way they are able to control their learning and thus learning is not just an accident or a misery.

If students are aware of how and when they learn best, then they will be able to apply the appropriate strategies to appropriate situations and contents. This way students are masters of their learning and are aware of their potential and weaknesses and will capitalize on their best learning strategies and improve on their weakness. This experience fosters strategic competencies.

6. Evaluation and selection of materials: Each of the experiences should have appropriate evaluation procedure to ensure that the competencies each is supposed to foster is actually achieved. Developing congruent testing devices is critical to this approach. The teaching learning materials must be carefully selected and/or produced. Such materials must be relevant in order to foster sociolinguistic competence and they must be interesting to cater for the effective domain.

RATIONALE FOR SETSWANA SYLLABUS

The Setswana syllabus need to have a clearly defined approach to language teaching. It must adopt both the communicative approach and the hostilic approach for the following reasons:

1. The two reinforce each other. The communicative approach is mainly concerned with competencies learners need to communicate in the real world while the hostilic approach fosters the academic skills which in turn are not only useful for the classroom but for the outside world as well.

They both encourage the teaching of grammar in a more contextualized, meaning based manner. In other words the approaches are not opposed to the teaching of grammar since it teaches rules which we need to edit our incorrect utterances, but only against how it has been taught under the influence of the structural approach.

2. Breakthrough to setswana/literacy is based on both the communicative and the hostilic approach hence the rest of the setswana syllabus must continue to reinforce the skills gained at the lower levels. Language skills are used. At each level each skill is enhanced and further developed. Without reinforcement at higher levels therefore, the skills acquired by students at lower standard would be lost.

3. Recommendation number 18 in the report of the National Commission on education calling for the use of English as a medium of instruction at standard one by the year 2000 has a lot of implications for the teaching of Setswana. For students to gain competence in language skills in English such skills must be gained first in Setswana for easy transferability. This means strengthening the teaching of such skills in Setswana as early as possible to reinforce their acquisition in English is critical. This makes the continuity of the hostilic approach to upper standards more imperative. The rest of the accepted recommendations 31,32,46,70 and 100 also require a strengthen setswana syllabus.

4. The Setswana syllabus should be able to stand the test of time, irrespective of the type of programme the policy stipulates. Transitional, maintenance or immersion. The fostering of language skills and competencies are always critical to all academic activities. The two approaches provide for such an all weather syllabus.

5. The language policy may be promoting the use of English over Setswana at any point in time, but Setswana Society would continue to exist hence the use of Setswana. The Setswana syllabus must therefore provide skills needed on and off the job market. Setswana society will continue to need radio announcers, receptionists, salespersons, court interpreters, public speakers, writers and a general setswana literature society which can read road signs, health messages and commercial messages written in setswana. The communicative and the hostilic approaches would provide all these skills

SAMPLE

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	STUDENTS WILL LEARN THESE POINTS IN DETAILS	ACTIVITIES
The substantive	Students should be able to identify nouns in sentences and their changes & function.	Form, syntax & semantics Types of nouns e.g those derived from qualificatives e.g. bontsho, verb & sound.	Writing reports Creative writing & write original sentences which include nouns.
The Qualificance	students should be able to tell the different types of qualificative and identify them when used as part of a sentence.	Form, syntax & semantics. How these can be reflected and used in sentences.	Writing reports Creative writing & write original sentences which include qualificatives.
Modern Literature (Novel or short stories)	students should be able to tell & identify the following aspects of a novel setting, theme, plot, e.t.c.	Place & time setting, main major and minor characters. Different types of plots, exposition, flashback	Oral presentations, debate, Do a critical analysis of a novel/short stories, write a response, demonstrate the use of figurative language in both oral & written work.

Poetry	students should be able to identify figures of speech used.	Theme, mood/ attitude feelings aroused by poem, diction syntax, imagery and sound qualities. Alliteration e.t.c.	Critical analysis, write a response, Demonstrate the use of figurative language in both oral & written work, compare and contrast traditional poetry and modern poetry, debate.
Oral Literature (Proverbs & idioms)	Demonstrate the use of proverbs & idioms in oral & written language.	How to interpret proverbs and idioms.	Creative writing orally/spoken language essays, responses-written.

In conclusion I would like to say, although the language policy may be promoting the use of English over Setswana at any point in time, but Setswana society would continue to exist hence the use of Setswana. The Setswana syllabus must therefore provide skills needed on and off the job market. Setswana society will continue to need radio announcers, receptionists, salespersons, court interpreters, public speakers, writers and a general Setswana literate society which can read road signs, health messages and commercial messages written in Setswana.

It is evident that the survival of the individual is dependent upon a language, and perhaps even more important, language in culture provides for the possibility of the development of individual consciousness and awareness of self, for the formulation of concepts, and for the creation and transmission of man's spiritual values, his art and his literature. However, people must be taught that as they destroy one thing, they must suggest an alternative. The child must have adequate knowledge of the various aspects of his culture so that he/she knows which areas need improvement or modernisation, and do something about them.

To educators and policy makers I would say, at the same time we are teaching our children English, we must also do all we can to help them maintain their mother tongue and culture. These are treasures which we should not waste, they are gifts from which our nation can benefit. Students need to learn English as quickly as possible, but they also need to learn to value their mother tongue and heritage.

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