THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF DEMOCRACY: LANGUAGE POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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1. INTRODUCTION

My brief is to explain South Africa's language policy as a "positive model of language policy and planning" against the backdrop of the focus on maintenance of linguistic diversity.

Ten years ago, on 27 April 1994, a new democracy was born when Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as first president of the "new" Republic of South Africa. The world's attention was focused on a small country on the southern tip of Africa where a "political miracle" ensured a remarkably peaceful transition of power. Judged against other well-established democracies, ten years down the line, ours is a vibrant but still fledgling democracy grappling with the realities of effecting radical social transformation, securing economic development and building a united nation where peace and stability are sustainable.

In terms of the United Nations' definition of "development", South Africa has, since the demise of apartheid[1] a decade ago, made significant progress in effecting a radical break with the past and improving the social well-being of those citizens who were previously relegated to the "underdevelopment zone" (Chumbow 2003). Since 1994:

- a total of 780 new laws have been passed to create a platform for reconstructing and developing the country;
- an average of about US$7.1 billion has been spent on education (the largest budgetary item in South Africa);
- an average of about US$5.7 billion has been spent on public healthcare;
- expenditure on fighting HIV/Aids has increased from about US$4.2 million to about US$48.9 million;[2]
- housing has been provided for more than six million people;
- households' access to electricity has increased from 32% to 70%;
- households' access to clean water has increased from 60% to 85%;
- households' access to sanitation has increased from 49% to 63%; and
- 1.8 million of hectares of land have been redistributed (*Sunday Independent,* 25 April 2004).

From the above, we may deduce that the first decade of liberation has given South Africans much to celebrate; numerous important issues relating to standard of living have been addressed, resulting in improved conditions for those who were disadvantaged by apartheid. Many of our young democracy's hatchlings have indeed started "testing their wings". However, some hatchlings have remained bound to their nests, lacking the maturity to test their wings for long haul flights! A case in point is our much acclaimed multilingual language policy.

A retrospective view on our decade of democracy offers a good opportunity to look back and take stock of the successes and failures of policy developments and implementation. I will begin by presenting an outline of language policy in South Africa and recent policy developments, then subsequently attempt a discussion of South Africa's success (or lack thereof) with a view to the practice of multilingualism.

2. A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Before discussing South Africa's language policy it is important to contextualise our language diversity. The southern tip of the African continent is home to a great variety of language and culture groups. Our diversity is the result of the influx of various groups of people to that region over the centuries. The very first groups to inhabit the southern African region were the Khoe and San people who lived there for millennia. Some time around the 12th century, our Bantu ancestors started to move across the huge continent to its southern extreme and, in about the 17th century, other ancestors began to sail to our shores from Europe (Portuguese, Dutch, French, Germans, and British) and also from the East (Malaysia, Indonesia and India). Small wonder then that South Africa boasts such a diversity of cultures and languages. In many respects, the country is indeed a rainbow nation, as former President Nelson Mandela so often referred to it.

Some 25 languages are used in South Africa on a daily basis by more than 44.8 million people (Statistics South Africa 2003). The majority of South Africans, almost 80% of the population, use an African language as their home language.

Distribution of Languages

8% 1% 13%

78%

- Afrikaans
- African languages
- English
- Other
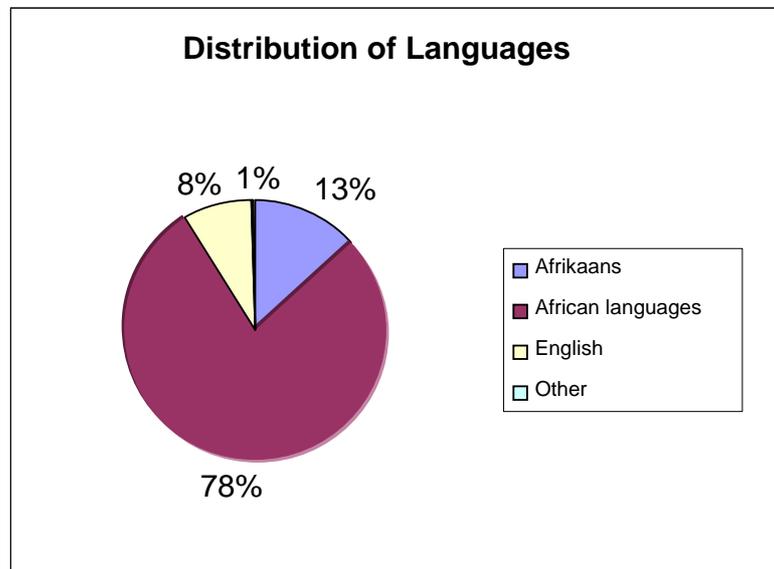
According to the latest available census statistics (2001), the main home languages[3] of South Africa are as follows (regrettably, the statistics do not indicate the range of language proficiency among South Africans):

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	Black African	Coloured	Indian or Asian	White	Total
Afrikaans	0.7	79.5	1.7	59.1	13.3
English	0.5	18.9	93.8	39.3	8.2
IsiNdebele	2.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	1.6
IsiXhosa	22.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	17.6
IsiZulu	30.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	23.8
Sepedi	11.9	0.1	0.0	0.0	9.4
Sesotho	10.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	7.9
Setswana	10.3	0.4	0.0	0.1	8.2
SiSwati	3.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.7
Tshivenda	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Xitsonga	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4
Other	0.3	0.2	3.8	1.1	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Home language by population group (percentages) - Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003)

The most commonly-spoken home language is isiZulu, which is spoken by 23.8% of the population, followed by isiXhosa (17.6%) and Afrikaans (13.3%). English is used as a lingua franca across the country, but is the home language of 8.2% of the population (Census 2001).
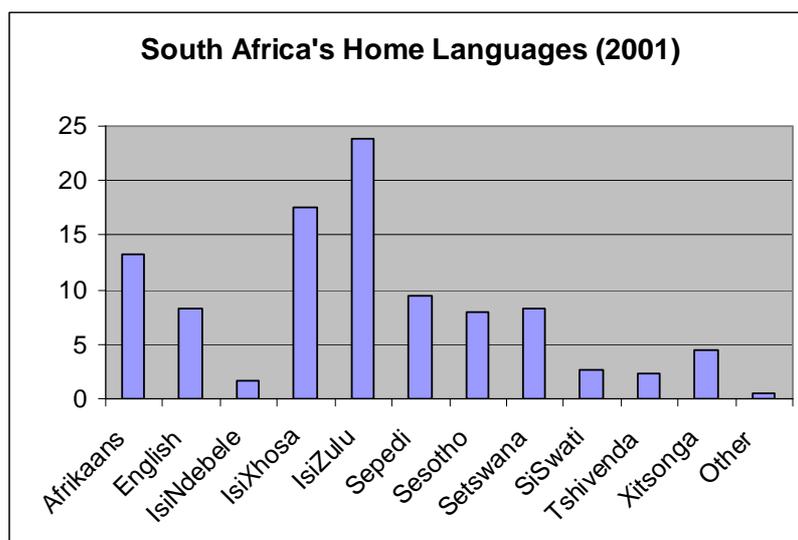
3. SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON LANGUAGE

South Africa's language diversity is supported by arguably the most progressive constitutional language provisions on the African continent (cf. Bamgbose, 2003: 5). The Constitution enshrines plurilingualism: the former language dispensation based on official bilingualism has been replaced by official multilingualism. Equal rights are entrenched for the 11 languages used by 99% of the South African population. These languages are the two former official languages, English and Afrikaans[4], and nine African languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. The Constitution prescribes affirmative action for the African[5] languages that were marginalised in the past: these languages "must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably".[6]

In addition to providing for the status of the 11 official languages, the Constitution also addresses the transformation of the historically marginalised languages. Language development is afforded high priority: "practical and positive measures" are to be put in place to advance these languages. The high priority is reflected in the provision for the establishment of a dedicated language development agency, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) which is charged with developing and promoting the use of all the languages of South Africa, including the ancient indigenous languages of South Africa's "first people", the Khoe and San.

The language clause is supported by the Bill of Rights which recognises language as a basic human right:

> "Everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights" (section 30).

In spirit, the Bill of Rights clearly echoes the Freedom Charter's position on language that was adopted some 50 years earlier during the struggle for liberation: "All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages".

In line with the liberal, rights-based paradigm of the South African constitution, the Constitution furthermore –

- prohibits discrimination against anyone on the grounds of language;
- prescribes that everyone has the right to education in any official language(s) of their choice;
- enshrines the right of linguistic communities to use their cultures and languages;
- prescribes that every person has the right to access to interpreting during a trial, and arrested and accused persons to information in a language that they understand.

4. RECENT LANGUAGE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

From the above exposition it is clear that, at the macro level, the context for managing language diversity in South Africa has been captured in a key document, i.e., the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Although the table has been set for addressing both status and corpus planning aspects, the how and what of operationalising constitutional multilingualism are not (and cannot be) addressed in the Constitution. The Constitution's directives have paved the way for government and its executive arm (i.e. designated government departments) to translate the document's status and corpus planning intent through a systematic process of policy development and operationalisation.

The management of language policy in South Africa takes place at three levels of governance against the backdrop of the enabling framework for all language policy as entrenched in the Constitution.

- At *national* level, language management responsibilities are shared by four ministries. The Minister of Arts and Culture takes responsibility for macro language policy matters while the Minister of Education is responsible for language-in-education policy, which includes language(s) of learning and teaching in public schools, school curricula, language-related duties of provincial departments of education and school governing bodies and policy for higher education. The Minister of Communications is responsible for language policy in respect of the public broadcaster and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development for language matters in the courts.

- At *provincial* level, each of the nine provincial governments is required to manage its own language matters. This involves customising language policies to regional circumstances, needs and preferences.

- At *local government* level, which forms the broad base of the language management hierarchy, municipalities must develop language policies that are compatible with the relevant provincial policy, taking into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.

I will subsequently describe the main features of policy development in South Africa in terms of the main milestones of the past decade. Mindful that Fishman argues that "very little language planning practice follows language planning theory" (in Heugh 2003: 3), language planning processes in the new South African democracy did by and large follow the "classical" approach:

> The broadest authorization of planning is obtained from the politicians. A body of experts is then specifically delegated the task of preparing a plan. In preparing this, the experts ideally estimate existing resources in terms of development targets. Once targets are agreed upon, a strategy of action is elaborated. These are authorized by the legislature and are implemented by the organizational set-up authorized in its turn by the planning executive … In these ideal processes, a planning agency is charged with the over-all guidance … (Jernudd & Das Gupta, 1975 in DACST, 1996:10).

Authorisation of planning from the politicians

The process of devising a coherent policy and implementation plan based on the enabling constitutional provisions on language started soon after the new democratic government took office. The Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology convened a Language Task Group, known as LANGTAG, to advise government on developing a policy and implementation plan based on the constitutional language provisions. The LANGTAG Task Group represented a fundamental break with past practices in the sense that it provided a vital point of contact between government and language stakeholders, experts and interested persons across the board. A participatory and accountable process of consultation took place during which aspects such as language equity, language development, language in education, literacy, language in the Public Service, so-called Heritage languages[7], South African Sign Language(s), augmentative and alternative communication, language services and language as an economic resource were examined.

The Task Group presented government with a comprehensive report, the LANGTAG Report, providing a clear framework for the development of a language policy and plan in 1996. Authorising a consultative approach to devising a policy and implementation plan in the first years of democracy signalled Government's commitment to the promotion of constitutional plurilingualism and the protection of language rights as a vehicle to push for social transformation.

Body of experts delegated to prepare a plan

A small Language Policy Advisory Panel consisting of experts and a representative of the Pan South African Language Board was appointed by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to draft a language policy and plan, drawing on the framework provided by the LANGTAG Report. In a remarkably short period of time, this body of experts, in collaboration with Government's language planning agency, the National Language Service, produced the first draft of the Language Policy and Plan for South Africa and the South African Languages Draft Bill.

Subsequent to a protracted consultation process involving government departments and the Cabinet, and including convening a mega consultative forum of language

stakeholders, the Language Policy and Plan and the Draft Bill were revised. In 2003, nine years into democracy, the Cabinet finally approved the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF). The NLPF is designed as a package that will eventually consist of a Policy Statement, an Implementation Plan, the South African Languages Act and the South African Language Practitioners' Council Act (DAC 2003b: 5).

The aim of the NLPF is to -

- "promote the equitable use of the 11 official languages;
- facilitate equitable access to government services, knowledge and information;
- ensure redress for the previously marginalised official indigenous languages;
- initiate and sustain a vibrant discourse on multilingualism with all language communities;
- encourage the learning of other official indigenous languages to promote national unity, and linguistic and cultural diversity; and
- promote good language management for efficient public service administration to meet client expectations and needs" (DAC 2003a:13).

The policy targets all government structures (national, provincial and local government) and institutions exercising public power, as well as the national legislature and the nine provincial legislatures (where regional circumstances determine the configuration of languages used). The private sector is not bound by the policy, but government has expressed its intent to encourage and support the development and implementation of language policies by private enterprises.

The provisions for language use in the state administration are as follows:

- Each government department must designate a *working language(s)* for both intra and interdepartmental communication.
- *Communication with the public* via official correspondence must take place in the language of the citizen's choice.
- *Official documents* by national government departments must be published in all 11 languages where the effective and stable operation of government would require such

action (e.g. information campaigns on government supported HIV/Aids treatment). In cases where the use of all official languages is not required, documents must be published according to the principle of "functional multilingualism". According to this principle, a selection of languages may be used by government, depending on the intended function or purpose of a document and its target audience. In accordance with this principle, a minimum requirement for government was set: official documents must be published simultaneously in at least six languages:

- o English;
- o Afrikaans;
- o Xitsonga;
- o Tshivenda;
- o At least one language from the Nguni group (isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and SiSwati); and
- o At least one from the Sotho group (Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana).

The language from the Nguni and Sotho groups must be selected according to rotation.

It is important to note that a four-language formula was originally recommended by the Ministerial Advisory Group following a process of consultation with language stakeholders. This formula was based on the premise that it would encourage active multilingualism since languages would share "space" in each of the four categories: English with Afrikaans, Venda with Tsonga and each of the Nguni and Sotho groups respectively. The four-language formula was, however, criticised for unfairly discriminating against the two small minority languages, Tsonga and Venda, as a result of which government rejected the recommendation and insisted on the current six-language formula.[8]

- *Communication at international level* will be in English or the preferred language of the country concerned.

A strategy of action elaborated

Following the announcement of the NLPF, government published its Implementation Plan. Recognising that the efficient management of linguistic diversity poses many challenges, the plan envisages building up human capacity in translation and interpreting, phasing in implementation "over a reasonable period" (DAC 2000b: 7). Since implementing the policy would require a major shift from apartheid language practices, strategies for policy implementation and mechanisms and structures to ensure equitable access to government services, knowledge and information for all citizens have been outlined in the Implementation Plan. The coordination of implementation by these structures and the utilisation of mechanisms will be the responsibility of the Department of Arts and Culture.

In addition to existing structures such as the Pan South African Language Board (including its substructures) and language offices in the national and some provincial legislatures, three new structures have been proposed to support policy implementation:

- *Language Units* in each government department and province to manage translation, editing and interpreting services with a view to the envisaged increase in the demand for these services and also for terminology development in the indigenous languages.
- A *National Language Forum*, a collaborating network of representatives from government and non-government structures, will monitor the implementation process, prioritise language-related projects and drive policy advocacy campaigns under the leadership of the Department of Arts and Culture.
- The *South African Language Practitioners' Council* will be a statutory body established through an Act of Parliament to manage the training, accreditation, and registration of translators and interpreters to raise the status of the language profession and improve the quality of language products. This body will set and maintain standards.

The Implementation Plan envisages a broad range of mechanisms to facilitate implementation, i.e. terminology development, translation and editing, language technology, a language code of conduct, a directory of language services, language audits

and surveys, language awareness campaigns, the Telephone Interpreting Service for South Africa, an information databank, the development of Sign Languages, language learning and budgeting.

Estimate existing resources

Prior to finalising the NLPF, the broad financial implications of implementing the draft policy and plan were assessed in a study convened by the National Treasury and the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, under the guidance of the Minister's Advisory Panel on Language. The study began with an analysis of the priorities as envisaged in the policy and planning for implementation of the use of a four-language model for official documents and with available budgetary resources.

The study clearly demonstrated that the costs of implementing the proposed policy by government departments were sustainable and could be accommodated with minor adjustments to planned options. The study identified various options for implementation and phasing in of the policy with clear targets. The impact of implementation on all national government departments was estimated at less than 1% over 10 years (cf. Emzantsi 2001). In the final Implementation Plan, in which the use of the four-language formula for official documents was extended to the use of a minimum of six languages, it is estimated that implementation costs would not exceed 2%.

Authorisation by the legislature

Simultaneously with the publication of the Implementation Plan, the South African Languages Bill was published for comment in April 2003. At the time of writing, a year later, the Bill has not yet been tabled in Parliament but is reportedly still being scrutinised by government departments.

The objects of the Bill are to -
- give effect to the constitutional provisions on language;
- promote the equitable use of the official languages;

- enable all South Africans to use the official languages of their choice as a matter of right to ensure equal access to government services and programmes, education and knowledge and information; and
- provide for a regulatory framework to facilitate the implementation of official multilingualism.

The Draft Bill provides for the publication of official documents in all 11 languages and where this is not possible in at least six languages as laid down in the Policy Statement. It also allows for the establishment of language units and measures for the development of the indigenous languages and SA Sign Language(s).

Planning agency charged with overall guidance

The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), in particular its National Language Service, has been charged by government to develop language policy and coordinate its implementation. PanSALB is the "strategic partner" of DAC in language matters and its role in language development and promotion is acknowledged in the NLPF (DAC 2000b).

5. PLURILINGUALISM IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA: A DELUSION?

Developments over the past decade have resulted in a language policy process that has in essence been exemplary in nature, the milestones of which ranged from the widely acclaimed LANGTAG process of consultation to a progressive Policy Statement. Add to that a detailed Implementation Plan and the South African Languages Bill which were announced in 2003. At the same time, questions pertaining to the how and what of translating this progressive policy into practice will, regrettably, not be answered in the affirmative but would rather suggest a gap and clear tension between the development and institutionalisation of language policy (cf. Heugh 2003).

Language planning experts and language stakeholders alike are increasingly arguing that recent language practice in South Africa has been decidedly retrogressive in nature (Moodley 2000, Kamwangamalu 2000, Alexander 2000 & 2002, Heugh 2003, and Brand 2004). An overview of the flurry of analyses on South Africa's first decade of liberation confirms the low priority of "the language issue" on the national agenda (cf. *Time*, 19 April 2004, *Sunday Independent*, 25 April 2004 and *Financial Mail*, 7 May 2004). An exception is to be found in a cautionary note from South Africa's best selling newspaper, the *Sunday Times*, advising against the country's mother tongues being silenced:

> "We find that our 10-year-old democracy has been the greatest enemy of indigenous languages. All the lofty pronouncements made in the early days of transition seem to have been thrown out of the window and the authorities have paid token attention to the issue." (*Sunday Times*, 25 April 2004).

The situation analysis presented to the Minister responsible for language by his LANGTAG Task Group[9] almost a decade earlier, reverberates profoundly in this warning note:

> "The work of government is conducted virtually entirely in English and the language of our culturally diverse Parliament is almost exclusively English. Many senior politicians stay away from African language radio stations, presumably because they perceive those audiences as not sophisticated enough. …. Universities are battling to keep African language departments open as student numbers dwindle, … book publishing in indigenous languages is on its deathbed, and … the use of these languages among native speakers is becoming unfashionable." (*Sunday Times,* 25 April 2004).

The renowned Nigerian language planner, Ayo Bamgbose, rated South Africa's language policy as not "conforming to the ideal", but at least "better designed and formulated than those of most African countries" (Bamgbose 2003: 7). South Africa's NLPF is indeed in many respects an exemplary attempt to address the slow and somewhat fragmented implementation of policy in South Africa. This has resulted in a retrogressive situation which, notwithstanding the admirable aims of the NLPF, has delivered the following outcomes in the first decade of democracy:

(a) Language domination with no delivery in respect of language equity for the indigenous official languages.

(b) Inequality of opportunity as regards access to government services, knowledge and information, and

(c) The marginalisation of the indigenous languages and (arguably also increasing marginalisation of Afrikaans).

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The critically important Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), established in 1996 on the basis of a constitutional directive to manage language development and the protection of language rights, has been criticised widely for slow delivery, for becoming "a docile body" (cf. Heugh 2003) and, in the view of language rights activists, for being "a toothless watchdog". The Board's all important language development mandate is being crippled by inadequate funding from government (the Board reports to the Minister of Arts and Culture). Inadequate resources and financial support to facilitate PanSALB's language development mandate has, for example, delayed progress in the national lexicography units established by PanSALB, which are responsible for compiling dictionaries for the indigenous languages. This is seen as a serious indictment of government's commitment in its Policy Statement to meet its goals to "ensure redress for the previously marginalised official indigenous languages" (DAC 2003a).

A brief overview of the main provisions of the NLPF indicates that delivery in respect of the other structures and mechanisms that were envisaged have been equally sluggish. Of the three new structures proposed to support implementation of the policy, only one, the National Language Forum, has been established and is functioning. This structure meets quarterly and serves as a vehicle of deliberation for provinces and national government departments on policy matters. At this stage[10] only one of nine provinces, the Western Cape, has devised and implemented a language policy and plan based on provincial legislation, the Western Cape Provincial Languages Act, 1998 (Act No. 13 of 1998). Other provinces are reportedly awaiting the finalisation of the SA Languages Bill (published more than a year ago) and are in the process of devising draft policies, others have no policy processes in place. The situation as regards language policy in the key domain of the provinces has thus, with the exception of one pace-setting province, remained static for the entire first decade of democracy.

As far as the twelve mechanisms proposed in the NLPF are concerned, the terminology development and translation and editing services that have been on offer in the National Language Service of the Department of Arts and Culture since 1994, and are in place and ongoing. The remaining mechanisms involving language technology, a language code of conduct, a directory of language services, language audits and surveys, language awareness campaigns, the Telephone Interpreting Service for South Africa (TISSA), an information databank, the development of Sign Language(s), language learning and budgeting, have not materialised.

The listless pace of delivery in this regard is most pronounced in the Telephone Interpreting Service for South Africa. This project, emanating from the recommendations by the LANGTAG Task Group in 1996, as in fact almost all the other mechanisms proposed in the NLPF, has not been brought to fruition. A trial service to facilitate equitable access to services and information in some 40 police stations across the country in all official languages was launched by the Minister of Arts and Culture in collaboration with the South African Police Service and PanSALB in 2002. After a trial period of eight months, bureaucratic constraints and indecision resulted in a failure to manage the transition to a fully fledged service, and a potentially useful implementation mechanism was abandoned.

Clearly, the promotion of multilingualism and the fostering of our linguistic diversity in support of the very social transformation that we have achieved in other domains, as well as the role of language policy in "promoting or retarding economic growth and development" (Alexander 2002: 86), have not been integrated into the national planning agenda. And yet, as Brand (2004) points out, "a thorough analysis of developments over the last decade, against the background of 300 years of colonialism, segregation and apartheid, suggests that language is one of the pivotal factors that will determine the direction in which our society will develop".

Central to a discussion of language policy implementation in South Africa is the "complex" - if not paradoxical - status of English. English played a pivotal role as the "language of resistance and liberation" in the run up to the establishment of the new democracy in South Africa: the liberation movement "chose" to use English as a cross-ethnic lingua franca. However, in the post-apartheid era, the promise of "liberation" through English has paradoxically not materialised. On the contrary, English has remained "unattainable" for the majority of South Africans and has instead become part of the "cultural capital" of the new elite (cf. Alexander 2000 & 2002). The first sociolinguistic survey of post-apartheid South Africa, a study commissioned by the Pan South African Language Board in 2000, found that "the comprehension of English seldom exceeds 30% among speakers of African languages" (PanSALB, 2000: 187).

It is precisely this dilemma that concerns language planners and many others claiming a stake in the "language question" who caution against a neo-apartheid situation where only one language is *de facto* being promoted as the language of power in high-status functions, largely excluding the vast majority of South Africans from important decision-making processes (Alexander 2002, Heugh 2000, Brand 2004). Brand (2004) warns against a situation where the dynamics of injustice shifts from race as a boundary marker of privileges such as job opportunities and mobility to English as "a marker of opportunity and privilege".

The usefulness of English as a lingua franca in South Africa is indisputable. The sociolinguistic survey by PanSALB confirms the position of English but also points to the potential usefulness in this regard of other languages. According to Heugh (2000), the survey suggests that about 36% of South Africans can understand English, 30% understand isiZulu, 29% Afrikaans and 21% isiXhosa. Thus Heugh argues that four lingua francas are in fact emerging. She further deduces that since there is considerable overlap of communication between isiZulu and isiXhosa, about 50% of South Africans probably understand isiZulu /isiXhosa (Heugh 2000: 25). These findings give more weight to the need for encouraging the use of our indigenous languages, not least in their role as lingua francas.

6.   CONCLUSION: WILL SOUTH AFRICA "LIVE MANDELA'S DREAM"?

At the adoption of the Constitution, then President Nelson Mandela reiterated the intention of government to address the exploitative hierarchy of the previous undemocratic language dispensation: "we are extremely proud that the new Constitution asserts equality among South Africa's languages, and that, for the first time, the languages particularly of the Khoi, Nama and San communities will receive the attention they deserve, after years of being trampled upon in the most humiliating and degrading manner" (*Sunday Times*, 25 April 2004).

Some 10 years down the line, we are still awaiting the authorisation of the pivotal South African Languages Bill into an act of Parliament, and we are still grappling with the paralysing tension between the legitimisation and crucial institutionalisation of language policy. There is little doubt that, in the words again of the *Sunday Times* editorial, "it may well be time to start pressing the panic buttons".

In order to effect social transformation and nurture South Africa's rich linguistic diversity to comply with our progressive constitutional language clause, we have to ensure that "perceptually valuable linguistic capital" (cf. Kamwangamalu 2000: 59) becomes accessible to speakers of the indigenous languages. On other words, in addition to being vehicles of cultural heritage, these languages must also become vehicles of opportunities for advancement. They must be perceived as "fashionable", and associated with high-status functions: "work of government", "the language of Parliament", "book publishing in indigenous languages", to name a few possibilities. In this way South Africa will truly "live Nelson Mandela's dream",[11] ensuring that his rainbow nation does not become a delusion.

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[1] "Apartheid" is an Afrikaans word which means "keeping apart or separate".

[2] An estimated 5 million South Africans are infected with the disease (*Sunday Independent* 2004).

[3] Home language refers to "the language most often spoken at home, which is not necessarily the person's mother tongue" (Statistics South Africa, 2003: vii). No question on language proficiency was included in Census 2001.

[4] Afrikaans originated from a 17th century Dutch dialect, but owing to Khoe and other influences, it became Africanised over a period of some 300 years. This hybrid nature of the language, together with the fact that Afrikaans is only spoken in Africa, has led to the language being considered an "African" language.

[5] The African languages are Bantu languages and are categorised in four language groups: IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, SiSwati and IsiNdebele belong to the Nguni group, and Setswana, Sepedi and Sesotho to the Sotho group (the languages in each group are mutually intelligible to a large degree), and Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

[6] It is necessary to point out that the decision - at the time of the constitutional negotiations - to adopt 11 official languages was an unequivocal political response to a situation where neither the retention of the two former official languages, English and Afrikaans, nor a single official language (English) would have been accepted by the population. Official status to nine African languages, in addition to retaining the two former official languages, was a compromise defended at the time by the constitutional negotiators as a "route … meant to restore the dignity of South Africans whose languages had been degraded by the apartheid system" (*Sunday Times*, 2004).

[7] In the South African context the term refers to non-indigenous languages used by particular communities such as Dutch, German, Gujarati, Mandarin, etc.

[8] Heugh (2003: 11) criticises this decision arguing that the six-language formula "defaults to an inequitable ethnolinguistic paradigm" which is bound to "engender division".

[9] The LANGTAG Report (1996) points to the general flouting of language equity from the national parliament down to all three levels of government. As regards the public service, the Report points to a lack of political commitment to implementing a multilingual policy and moreover to "a discernible trend towards unilingualism among the leadership of the political, business and educational elite" (DACST 1996: 156). In addition, the Report found evidence of ongoing legitimisation of the monolingualism trend: arguments regarding the "international status" of English, its access to "technological advance", the "trade benefits" of English and "the 'cost advantages' of communicating in a language 'which all South Africans understand'" were widespread (DACST 1996: 156).

[10] At the time of writing, 15 May 2004.

[11] Cf. *Time*, 19 April 2004.