

STUDENTS' POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SETSWANA SUBJECT: SOME CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

Eureka Mokibelo

Communication and Study Skills Unit

University of Botswana

mokibeloeb@mopipi.ub.bw

Abstract

This paper examined the factors that contributed to poor academic performance by student-teachers in the Setswana Language Teaching programme in Colleges of Education who train for primary education in the years 2005-2006 in Botswana. The study used the qualitative approach to interrogate lecturers on why the poor academic performance was prevalent amongst students in the Setswana Language Teaching programme. Data were collected through interviews, individual discussions, meetings and previous moderation exercise reports from 2002 - 2006. The findings indicated that there were contributory factors towards students' failure such as irrelevant training programmes by lecturers, lack of suitable professional staff, negative attitude, work overload, unrevised syllabus, non-reflective situations, limited knowledge in research and the use of both English and Setswana concurrently in projects. The study concluded that educational authorities need to reflect and review the Setswana Language Teaching programme which then proved to be deficient in several significant respects.

Introduction

Students' poor performance academically cannot be ignored in any teaching and learning situation. It is a product of many circumstances that can be internal and external to classroom situations. However, teachers are an integral part of teaching and learning in the classroom and the entire education system. They can build or destroy learning, they drive the boat and in control of the learning environment. The way they are trained and the way they deliver their services as teachers is critical for acquisition of knowledge and skills. The Botswana's Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) emphasizes quality of teaching that determines quality education and also argue that teachers who implement the curricula cannot be overlooked. The policy acknowledges the importance of pre-service and in-service training for to improve and develop quality teaching. Quality means different things to different people in different situations. In this paper quality refers to a degree of excellence done in the form of a habit (Six Sigma Publications, 2007). Quality has to be elevated in the teaching and learning processes as well as other institution and organizations to improve processes and services to prevent defects, Setswana Language Teaching included.

In the context of this paper, the skills and knowledge students learn and acquire in the Setswana language classroom should satisfy the goals of education nationally and internationally. Employers should be satisfied with the educational products supplied to them from college. It has been observed that students perform poorly in the Setswana subject and although this pattern prevailed for years, it was not clear why students

performed poorly consistently. For example, marks allocated to students' works such as tests and assignments were persistently low and ranged from 0-13 out of 20-25; students could not analyze linguistic and literature concepts and they presented sketchy work. Further, students did not justify their argument with examples and their essay answers lacked argument (Moderation Reports, 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006). Comments articulated by previous external examiners from 2002 to 2006 repeatedly echoed similar concerns that students perform poorly because of limited knowledge on literature, professional studies and linguistic concepts. This poor academic performance in Setswana is raised as a concern in this paper because it was persistent throughout the years. This issue is a concern because when students perform poorly in the Setswana subject, they are going to complete their education with inadequate skills and knowledge. Despite failure from college, the student-teachers have to demonstrate that they have been trained and therefore can confront difficult situations in Setswana classrooms. The students' poor performance in Setswana will go beyond training, they could still underperform as professional teachers of Setswana because their training was weak. Therefore, the paper focuses on the contributory factors to students' poor performance in the subject.

Background to the study

Primary Colleges of Education

Initially, the education system had four colleges of Education that trained primary school teachers. The colleges of education were strategically placed in different regions of Botswana for accessibility: Central, North East, South East and South. All four Colleges of Education originally trained primary school teachers and offered courses such Primary Lower Certificate (PLC) and were upgraded to Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC). Under the recommendation of the Revised National Policy on Education (1994), the colleges were again upgraded to offer Diploma in Primary Education (Revised National Policy on Education, 1994). Every year the number of student-teachers studying English and Setswana fluctuated between 30 – 47. However these numbers were far too low as compared to the approximately 750 number of primary schools in Botswana. Each college had about two language educators for Setswana. Currently, two of the Colleges of Primary Education have been closed down and the government is operating with only two.

The Setswana Language Programme is divided into four categories: Grammar and Language, Literature, Professional Studies and Cultural Studies. Grammar and Language component focuses on the teaching of linguistics and grammatical aspects. Literature deals with literary aspects in all the literature texts prescribed. Professional Studies offer teaching pedagogy and learning styles while the Cultural Studies explore some cultural concepts that are common and unique to some cultures in Botswana. Lecturers teaching Setswana are required to teach all the four components.

Lecturers' educational backgrounds differ. Some lecturers were Junior Certificate holders and were admitted into degree programmes due to their experience to upgrade them while some of them have first or second degrees. Some lecturers teach in the department of Setswana because there was shortage of Setswana lecturers and may not have adequate content knowledge of language and linguistics in the subject. Just because they speak the national language as a first or second language they were persuaded to teach the subject.

With this anomaly in mind, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development makes effort to upgrade lecturers by sending them for further studies to major in supposedly language related courses. Given this opportunity for further training, lecturers take advantage and major in courses that are not related to the teaching of languages. This alone is a defect because lecturers do not pursue courses that are language related and therefore would not be trained to teach language, linguistics and literary concepts in Setswana. These lecturers are expected to teach Setswana upon completion of training and yet they have majored in irrelevant courses. Besides, they could have lost interest in the subject they did not train for and therefore look for other opportunities that could be relevant to their training.

Setswana Language

Setswana is a local language in Botswana spoken by 90% of Batswana either as a first, second or third language (Ramahobo, 1999). At primary, secondary and tertiary level it is taught as a first language. It is regarded as a national language and therefore used as a lingua franca in most parts of Botswana (Ramahobo, 1999; 2000). At primary school level Setswana is used as a language of instruction from Standard One with a switch to English at Standard Two (Revised National Policy on Education, 1994). As compared to English, Setswana is given a low status and hence most authorities, educators and students have a negative attitude towards it due to various reasons such as: not being regarded as a passing subject, not a requirement for further education and limited professional occupation (Ramahobo, 1999; Molosiwa, 2000). In addition, Setswana is the language used in church sermons especially in African Independent Churches. The native speakers use it in the market place. Contrary to the prevailing situation, Setswana is taught as a first language to all school going children at primary and secondary school despite the fact that it is a second and third language in some regions of Botswana (Botswana Government Certificate in Secondary Education Setswana syllabus, 1999).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) foster education for all (EFA) policy (Millennium Development Goals Status Report, 2004). The paper will address two of the EFA goals and such as promoting learning and skills development for young people and adults and also improving quality education. Firstly, the EFA emphasizes that learners should be given the opportunity to develop their potential, strength and personality. This means that the language classroom should not only focus on the subject content but it should also assist learners to acquire skills they can use in the world of work to meet everyday challenges. It is expected that when the learners graduate they should have acquired skills they can pass on to the students they are teaching. This goal recognizes the importance of transforming and educating students for them to realize their potential. This can be achieved if teachers are given training and in-service training to revive their knowledge on teaching and learning styles and approaches so that whatever knowledge and skills they pass on should be of quality.

Secondly, the MDG points out that quality education must be provided in the classroom. When this happens the teaching and learning must provide tools that learners can use with confidence. It is also vital that the outcomes of education should be meaningful. The goal asserts that for education systems to achieve these goals they have to train and empower teachers to improve their performance and motivation and also look

into the relevance of education by continually adjusting learning processes, reviewing the curriculum to contextualize learning. The Setswana Language classroom is of no exception to this, if it fails to provide appropriate knowledge and skills to the students, it means students leave the classroom empty or half-baked. The success and quality of students in the language and linguistic classroom decodes on the lecturers ability to set up appropriate demands of the subjects for the benefit of all. The central task of the teacher is to foster development of teachers who are able to reflect critically and make a difference in students' lives Rogers (2003). Therefore, the quality of education imparted by the Setswana language lecturers in the classroom goes a long way to affect the students who are going to be taught by their products. If the teaching and learning in Colleges of Education does not dispense excellence and also not meet the educational expectations then the Setswana language classroom in colleges has a long way to go to meet the Education for All goal.

One of Botswana's Vision 2016 principles articulates that Botswana should be an educated and informed nation by the year 2016 (Republic of Botswana, 1997). However, such a goal plays a prominent role in the Setswana Language classroom in Colleges of Education. Like in other subjects, students should acquire skills in reading and writing that will keep them informed. This is important because reading is a complex process that requires the readers' contribution in the form of interpretation, evaluation and interacting with the meanings of the text. As such, to achieve this goal requires being educated to be able to navigate through knowledge. The language classroom is expected to provide the reading and writing techniques to help them become independent learners and readers who are well rounded. Therefore, this vision requires much more to happen in terms of teaching and learning in Setswana Language Programmes in colleges.

In essence, for Colleges of Education to achieve Education for All goals, it should deliver appropriate and relevant education to achieve excellence. In the end, their products will be desirable and fit in the world of work. It would be appropriate to look at the quality of teachers of Setswana and evaluate a programme's effectiveness and quality because these affect the type of product the system is going to have in the end. If the training of Setswana language educators does not satisfy the systems 'expectations then it could be important to reflect on it. If this is done, it would be a sign of accountability on authorities (Lynch, 1996).

Theoretical framework

This study was based on the teaching notion of reflective teaching influenced by John Dewey (1933). Carol Rogers's (2003) fresh look at reflective thinking is used in this paper because it articulates concepts that are related to the teaching of Setswana Programme in Colleges of Education. Rogers discusses reflection using four criteria as: a meaning-making process; something that is community based; rigorous thinking and lastly as a concept that is influenced by attitudes.

Dewey (1933) argues that reflection is a complex, rigorous, intellectual and an emotional enterprise that takes time to do well. He uses four criterion to explain what reflective teaching involves. First, Dewey (1933) argues that reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience to another, but with deeper understanding of its relationship with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It's

a thread that makes continuity of learning possible and ensures progress. In this process of meaning-making education plays an integral part. According to Dewey (1933) education should give the individual a personal interest in social relationships and control and habits of the mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. In the process of education, individuals must encounter interactions, habits of the mind, fullness and freedom. There must be interaction between a person and his social environment. He further introduces experience as an important aspect through which individuals reflect. According to Dewey, experience is not an experience unless it involves interaction between self and another person, the material world, the natural world and an idea. Through interaction with the world, we both change it and are changed by it. Therefore, education in its broad sense is the means of this social continuity of life. We make sense of each new experience based on the meaning gleaned from our past experiences, as well as other prior knowledge we have about the world.

Without interaction learning is sterile and passive and cannot change the learner. Dewey differentiates between educative and mis-educative experience. A mis-educative experience can also be one that leads someone into a routine action and thus limiting the horizon of the individual. An educative experience is the one that broadens the field of experience and knowledge, brings awareness to bear and leads to constructive direction towards an intelligent action. According to Dewey, experiences alone, even educative ones are not enough, they must be accompanied by the ability to perceive and weave meaning amongst the threads of experience. Therefore, a reflective teacher does not only seek solutions, nor does he do things the same way every day without awareness of both source and the impact of his or her actions. The teacher has to seek meaning and create from this a theory to live by, a story that provides structure for growth of the students and the teacher.

Dewey (1933) also talks about reflection as a rigorous way of thinking that is systematic and disciplined. He sees reflection as the road to learning and invention that requires the thinker to draw on past experience. Also, the individual must believe. For example, Christopher Columbus concluded that the world was round rather than flat based on his experience as a navigator. This impulse was generated by an encounter with and the potential significance inherent in an experience. Not everyone is able to perceive his potential. Reflection is the bridge of meaning that connects one experience with the other and give direction to growth. It has to move the learner from a disturbing state to a harmonious state. It is a yearning for balance that in turn drives the learner to do something to resolve it, to start the process of inquiry or reflection. Also, the individual must be curious because it bespeaks a positive, wide-eyed attitude towards both one's own and others learning. In this regard, reflection can be broken into six phases: an experience; spontaneous interpretation of the experience, naming problems that arise out of the experience, generating possible explanations for the problems; dividing the explanations into full-blown hypotheses and experimenting or testing the selected hypothesis. Therefore the first step is to note or perceive.

The third concept in reflection is reflection in community. Dewey (1933) argues that this requires collaborative reflection and it could bring about positive results such as affirmation of the value of one's experience, seeing things newly and support to engage

in the process of inquiry. When one is accountable to a group of people, one feels a responsibility towards others. According to Dewey, teachers and students need both the support of the community and the ability to act independently within the larger world. No teacher outgrows the need for others' perspective, experience and support. To do the latter, language is critical, it allows the individual to transform his/her own inchoate understanding into a form that is more conscious and rational, thus serving the self. It allows individual to share insight and understanding with others, thus serving the community.

The last criterion is reflection as a set of attitudes. Dewey believed that the attitudes that the individual brings on the act of reflection could either open the way to learning or block it. Awareness of our attitudes and emotions and the discipline to harness them and use them to our advantage, is part of the work of a good thinker. Dewey emphasizes that reflection is guided by wholeheartedness, directness, open-mindedness and responsibility. Further to the issue of attitude, curiosity and enthusiasm are necessary in teaching, without them a teacher has no energy, no fuel, to carry out reflective inquiry. If a teacher has an attitude of wholeheartedness yet works in a context that beats it out of the teacher, such as having too many students, a curriculum without flexibility, tests that must be administered and no time to share with others, let alone to reflect, wholeheartedness obviously suffers and withers to resignation and bitterness.

Dewey's reflective action is two folded, it is directed to the teachers as well as learners. First, Dewey sees a teacher as an influential person in the classroom. They can build or destroy. Dewey argues that reflection requires the teacher to confront the complexity of students and their learning, of themselves and teaching, their subject matter and the contexts in which all these operate with accountability and responsibility. Dewey challenges the teacher that any action the teacher takes should be based on deep knowledge of these elements and their interaction. Second, Dewey sees reflection as something that requires cognitive and emotional discipline on the part of teachers. In this regard, the teacher must have mastered the subject matter in advance. It demands that the teacher be alive to observe students mental responses, dawn of an idea, tendency to show off and to dominate discussion. This would indicate that the teacher is open minded. The teacher plays a pivotal role in the classroom. Third, Dewey cautions teachers that reflection demands growth and development through experience and taking responsibility for their actions. In addition, teachers need the community, they need to apply collaborative reflection so as to absorb other people's thinking and see things from a fresh perspective. Therefore, teachers need interaction with other teachers locally and regionally as well as with the communities they are serving. Four, Dewey advises teachers that education has to go beyond the classroom; it is something that is continuous. It is a process of creating lifelong learners by developing the desire to learn, by being active learners who are always motivated to learn. Students must be prepared to expand and grow. In these circumstances the teacher must help the students to be receptive, adaptive and develop interest by being exemplary.

In addition, Dewey points out that learners must reflect and evaluate new knowledge in the light of their own understanding. In this process teachers are the role models, they

have to set standards. Teachers' attitude should be uplifting and nourishing as they guide students towards achieving knowledge. In the end students will acquire new skills and information and transform their approach to thinking and learning. The emphasis on students' development in the classroom cannot be emphasized.

In conclusion, Dewey highlights critical points that demand the teacher to use their experiences, to work collaboratively, to work with the community and advocate for change and also believe that they can make a difference in students.

Purpose of the study

The central idea controlling this study was to explore why students performed poorly in their linguistic, literature, professional and cultural studies every year without any improvement in Colleges of Education in the Setswana subject. Therefore, data collected determined whether the classroom practices in Colleges of Education promoted teaching and learning of Setswana to achieve educational goals.

Significance of the study

This study is significant in that: Firstly, the study could benefit students learning Setswana subject in Colleges of Education to acquire quality knowledge and skills through a reflection on how their learning programme is delivered. Secondly, lecturers in Primary Colleges of Education could also benefit because they could rethink the courses they read for when they go for further training to address the inadequacies that prevail in the Setswana Language classroom. Thirdly, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development could benefit from the study because it could further reflect on the way it trains lecturers who teach Setswana language and also review the Setswana Language Programme offered and this could further table decisions made on the teaching of Setswana. Further, research in the Setswana Language Programmes could be necessary to see what is happening in the way Setswana is taught at primary school level.

Research methodology

The qualitative approach took precedence in this study as it was found to be suitable to find out the contributory factors to students' persistent poor performance in the Setswana subject in Colleges of Education. The qualitative approach uses words to interpret individuals' social environment. The approach also intended to unfold data in detailed descriptions using the respondents' responses and words (Neil, 2007). The rich, thick descriptions were used to provide accounts of a particular culture prevailing at colleges of education for making judgments about the findings (Bryman 2001). Thirdly, it was important to attach the meaning of what the respondents say to their actions (Taylor 1993). The lecturers' feelings, expressions and emotions contributed and gave substance to what they said. Fourthly, the qualitative approach was trusted for its authenticity in terms of fairly representing differing view points amongst members of a social setting.

The study also used desktop material and employed other techniques such as action research. Information was discovered from interactions with lecturers at different levels and supervisors. The following key research questions were used: a) What could be the contributory factors to students' poor performance in all the four components in the

syllabus in colleges of education?; b) What strategies do lecturers use to teach Setswana Language Programme in Colleges of Education?; c) What challenges do lecturers encounter in teaching the Setswana Language Programme?; and d) What could be the solutions to the challenges above? These questions were used to tease out information from participants. Although the study interrogated lecturers on all the four questions, this paper focused only on the contributory factors to students' failure.

The population of the study were lecturers teaching Setswana subject, hence, there was no sampling involved. All the 8 lecturers took part in this exercise. In each college, there would be two lecturers of Setswana and their views about teaching the subject were heard in a collective manner. Data were collected through interviews, meetings, intensive discussions, students' artifacts and moderation reports at all the four primary Colleges of Education in Central North East, South East and Southern Districts. The lecturers were interrogated for a week and there were lots of interactions as regards the students' artefacts, the tests and examination papers set. Follow ups were made on the previous reports which orchestrated basically similar problems without changes even if external examiners suggested some changes in various aspect of the subject. In this regard, interviews and intensive discussions dominated the data collection methods.

Also, there were some students' artefacts who upgraded themselves through distance learning from all the Colleges of Education. These artefacts were scrutinized together with the examinations papers they were examined on. A report was written on the findings from distance learners. Their report also painted a picture about how assessment was carried out as well as the students' responses to the questions.

Data were coded according to Colleges of Education and their individual reports. Each college was given a pseudo name for confidentiality. Data were read and re-read to tease out emerging issues from the each college. Comparison of data were done to observe the trends and patterns emerging from each college of education. Data were analysed according to thematic statements to represent the themes that were developed from the data. All the four Colleges of Education were represented in the study hence, information provided here could represent all the primary Colleges of Education.

Interpretation and analysis of data

The focus of this paper was to find out the contributory factors to students' persistent poor performance in the Setswana subject in Colleges of Education and below were some of the revelations.

Lack of relevant professional qualifications

The findings indicated that six lecturers out of eight who teach Setswana Language Programme in Colleges of Education lacked relevant professional qualifications in languages, they had not done language related courses. In this regard, it was difficult for these language educators to influence classroom teaching in the Setswana subject as Dewey (1933) argues. The lack of qualifications impacted negatively on the educators' ability to uplift and nourish students who were learning Setswana towards new knowledge. Lack of relevant qualifications by lecturers affected students' performance. For example, students failed to provide relevant examples to justify their answers, they

lacked analysis skills in linguistic and literature components. When Setswana language educators do not have the expertise and content to teach Setswana subject then learning cracks. As Alcorn, Kinder & Schunert (1970) point out, lack of content in the subject area makes the lecturers not accountable for what the students learn. Again, it could further contribute towards lecturers' failing to address students' needs and abilities academically. *"Educational authorities do not monitor what we do when we go for further education, therefore I did something that I thought I would be marketable in and not language related subjects,"* stated one lecturer ... *I was asked to teach Setswana because it is my first language, otherwise I did Setswana at form three..."* said one lecturer. This is a cause for concern if we are to have lecturers teaching a subject they did not develop their knowledge and understanding in. Students cannot gain competence in the subject area because the lecturers themselves were not competent to teach the language. As a result, the lecturers could produce students who are functionally illiterate in Setswana. Kyriachou (1986) points out that lecturers should be well equipped with craft knowledge for effective learning to take place. Krashen, (1987) argued that lecturers should teach students such that they use grammatical rules with accuracy and also apply them consciously. The fact that students were unable to analyze linguistic, literary, professional and cultural concepts was an indication that teaching was not influential and has no effect in learners' cognitive skills (Bruner, 1966). The importance of knowledge in the Setswana subject matter that could contribute to effective teaching was irrelevant. *"I do not have linguistic background, I was asked to teach Setswana because there was a shortage in the subject, which is why I am stuck here, in addition, I did not major in language related courses."* On the same note, the notion of inconsistency in marking could be a sign of not being sure of what to do and how to do it due to inadequate knowledge in the subject area and lack of skills in assessment procedures. Therefore, this lack of knowledge in the subject matter demeans the outcomes of the learning objectives in Setswana.

Limited knowledge in research

The findings of the study indicated that lecturers lacked knowledge in research skills and yet students were assessed in research projects. Lecturers were expected to supervise research projects in language related topics. The lecturers had a problem of supervising students research projects because they were not knowledgeable in the key aspects of research. This however, resulted in students choosing inappropriate topics, unfocused arguments, and most of the key concepts being ignored or wrongly interpreted. For example, students chose research topics such as: "Teaching Methods at Gabane, Lobatse and Moshupa Primary Schools" and or Discuss Characterization in Marara," The first topic is too broad for a mini project to be conducted in one month. It requires a lot of bureaucratic research ethics procedures for the study to be conducted in the city and neighbouring villages. The second topic is a literature aspect from a literature text (Marara) which does not require research work. The student could read the literary text and then made an analysis. Brookfield (1990) argued that if lecturers work under such situations they may end up being frustrated that their training did not equip them to handle complex situations. One lecturer said, *"I hate projects because I do not have an idea in research aspects yet I am expected to supervise a group of students in their projects, this is frustrating."* To avoid such frustrations, Setswana language lecturers

should advance in professional expertise and knowledge throughout their career and this should be within their teaching routine (Ur 1996). Again, Katz & Coleman (2001) argued that educational research improves and informs practice. Teacher research as individuals has positive effects as reflective practitioners and can facilitate collaboration. The way research projects were structured lacked rigorous thinking from the teaching and learning process (Dewey, 1933). The MDG report of 2004 suggests that for education to achieve its intended outcomes teachers must be well trained, highly motivated and in serviced otherwise quality is compromised.

Negative attitude towards Setswana subject

The findings also indicated that students have a negative attitude towards Setswana subject. This issue was reported by lecturers as a concern that students' negative attitude towards Setswana contributed towards their poor academic performance in the subject area. Lecturers had reasons for this argument. For example they said, "*Students think learning Setswana is a waste of time, they did not like the subject from secondary school,*" echoed one lecturer...*the students said the subject is too demanding with too many subjects in one...* said one lecturer. One contributory factor for the negative attitude could be that, because Setswana language lecturers themselves do not have the competence and confidence to explain issues in linguistics, literature and professional studies made them not to understand and comprehend the subject. They could also develop the negative attitude towards the subject (Dewey, 1933). Students can lose confidence in their lecturers and themselves because of the inadequate material presented in class and this can brew the negative attitude. As (Corcoran, 1995) perceived, lack of subject matter in the language classroom makes the teachers unable to clarify or explain a particular concept can contribute to the negative attitude. Again the negative attitude may come about because students are able to note that they cannot achieve the desired outcomes. Although this negative attitude towards Setswana has been observed even at secondary school level, Ramahobo (1999); & Molosiwa (2000), it can be further brewed by the lecturers' lack of content in the subject matter. Gardner (1985) asserts that students want to learn a language because they can benefit from it socially and economically. But because Setswana is given a low status in Botswana as compared to English students could think studying it is a waste of time. Besides, Dewey (1933) argued that a student cannot be judged by his or her negativity, it has to start with the instructor by developing receptivity in the discipline.

Lack of reflective practices

The findings revealed that lecturers did not reflect on their teaching. Reflective practices are part of teaching and learning in every educational set up. In three of the colleges, lecturers lamented over lack of reflective practices that aggravated the problems of negative attitude, inconsistency in marking assessment tasks and lack of confidence in the language classroom. Ur, (1996) cautions that teaching can be very stressful if not handled properly and teachers may end up leaving the teaching profession due to frustration. Some lecturers said, "*we do not meet regularly as college lectures to reflect on our practices because we are told there is no money,*"... *even internally we do not meet to talk about the teaching of Setswana generally...*" ...*the way we assess our students depends on individual lecturers because we do not sit as a groups and decide which tasks*

could be assessed and why...? said some lecturers. The verbatim indicate lack of cooperation, lack of motivation and also it could be that lecturers are not sure about what they should say. Education is expensive and therefore governments should be prepared to spend if the outcomes are to be good. Therefore, it is essential for lecturers to always reflect on their work for personal growth (Richards & Nunan, 1990; Kyriachou, 1986). From the reports and students' artifacts, weaknesses such as inadequate responses, retelling the story instead of making an argument, lack of analyzing linguistic concepts, failure to identify key points in poetry, failure to structure their essays have been identified and it is necessary to work on those weaknesses through reflection. Moran & Dallat (1995) argue that the reason why teachers should be trained is that they should be capable of playing a full part in the training of their recruits. However, this seem to be the opposite with Colleges of Education, lecturers seem incapable of playing their part in training their students for them to gain valuable knowledge and skills to use in the field. Schon (1983) advocates for developing reflection in action by providing students with technical training, helping them think professionally and enabling them to understand (see Dewey, 1933). Lecturers should reflect on their constraints, materials and teaching methods for self-directed growth. Garavan (1998) purports that professional development should be a continuous process and should last a lifetime. Further, Garavan (1998) believed that responsibility for professional development of teachers should be jointly shared by stakeholders and teacher educators. However, Garavan (1998) observed that practice does not always match this idea. This remains a challenge to the Setswana language educators at the colleges of education to equip students with such development during training. When Setswana language educators do not reflect it will be difficult to transform their students' thinking to absorb new information.

Unrevised Syllabus

The findings of the study also revealed that the syllabus used by lecturers for teaching Setswana subject has not been reviewed since 1997. For learners to improve academic performance, effective teaching must be extended to all aspects of the curriculum. As McNeil (1985) highlights, the common goal in education is to make excellence a reality. He emphasizes that it is vital to improve textbooks used by students and also to organize programmes to achieve high standards. An 'old' syllabus might not be addressing the needs of the students and society, in general, it might be too costly. The need to improve the quality of education is reiterated in the national vision 2016 document. In spite of the above, the quality of the materials, content and teaching methods determine the performance of students and quality of education Revised National Policy on Education (1994). Since EFA is forever striving for quality education, it is suggested that in the education system there should be relevant and useful curriculum that will develop learners' competencies and apply them to real life situations. Reviewing the syllabus and the materials used could contribute towards quality education. The concern that syllabuses go for a long time without being revised says a lot about the educators and their education systems. Also, the issue of negative attitude towards the subject cannot be ruled out.

The use of Setswana and English concurrently in projects

There was also a revelation from the lecturers that students discuss their Setswana projects in both Setswana and English. The concern is that these projects are marked by lecturers without showing concern on the use of two languages in their students' projects. This exercise classifies and characterizes Setswana as being disabled. Heller (1982) argued that a particular language plays a symbolic role in our lives and therefore the choice of a language has cultural connotations. She sees the use of a language as political. The fact that learners use both languages to write Setswana projects could be that they want to use English for the status it is alluded. This situation needs to be addressed by the lecturers themselves in order to achieve better educational goals. Probably, learners need to be decolonized to come to terms with their national language Setswana. Again, learners should be taught to take pride in their culture such that they are able to embrace it. Good teaching should challenge learners to know and care about their culture Burke (1999). If students are using two languages simultaneously in one piece of writing, the code switching will impact on their reading and writing skills and hence poor their performance in the subject.

Work Overload for Lecturers

The findings of the study indicated that lecturers are overwhelmed by the work load. For example, in all the four colleges lecturers complained that they teach four components of the subject: Grammar and Language, Literature, Professional Studies and the Cultural component. This combination is rather "unique" to Setswana subject. Teaching all the four components could be demanding. For example, a combination of Setswana Language and Literature taught by the same lecturer is like teaching two subjects in one. If the lecturer is not interested in teaching one of the components, the other would suffer. Again, if the same lecturers are to teach Professional and Cultural Studies of the same subject, it is an additional burden. All the lecturers in the colleges had these verbatim to say, "*we are overwhelmed by the amount of work in teaching Setswana... I do not like the language aspect, I enjoy teaching literature only... professional studies could be taught elsewhere and in most cases I fail to complete the syllabus... we are teaching four subjects in one and we have not mastered the content of some of the components we are teaching...there is too much work that is unbearable...*" These verbatim were a plea on the work load lecturers were supposed to teach. It would be interesting to find out how English is taught. The work overload could undermine the lecturers' profession especially if they volunteered to teach the subject and have not done it at tertiary level.

Setswana is a neglected subject

The findings of the study indicated that Setswana is a neglected subject. There is evidence that students do not want to learn Setswana and lecturers do not want to teach the subject because it has been a neglected subject for a long time. For example, there is evidence that other lecturers who have not studied the subject intensively can be called in to teach the subject when there is a shortage. This could be interpreted as anybody can teach Setswana without training. Some lecturers said, "*I was asked to teach the subject using background information from lower levels of education, I have not been trained to teach the subject.*" This was an indication that there are no or limited number of lecturers trained for the subject. Further, the fact that educational authorities do not monitor what

lecturers study when they were sent to train in language teaching is food for thought. This could be interpreted in so many ways, nobody cares about the subject, whether there are teachers or not and whether teachers are trained or not. Therefore, the situation in colleges shall remain unchanged because the subject is neglected by the top authorities to the bottom personnel. Again, the fact that the syllabus has not been reviewed for decades could be a clear message that lecturers who have been called in to assist with teaching Setswana may not be accountable. These lecturers may not even not take the trouble to lead in the review of the Setswana curriculum because it is not ‘their subject,’ they have been forced to teach the subject because there was a shortage.

Implications

This study had implications. First, the study had implications on the beneficiaries of the Setswana Language Programme – the students. Students were not effectively benefitting from the classroom teaching and learning, hence, their poor performance. This could further have negative impact in primary school teaching especially where the language-in-education policy is implemented. Students may be unable to implement the policy because they have limited knowledge on the teaching of languages.

Secondly, the study had implications on lecturers. Lectures were not effectively teaching Setswana subject as they were not qualified or they used knowledge from lower levels. Their training did not match what they were teaching. Hence, the scenario made them failures. They taught students to fail because they themselves were not trained for the subject.

The study also had implications on the Ministry of Educations and Skills Development. They seem not to monitor what they train their lecturers for. Further, the lack of monitoring and supervision undermined the teaching of Setswana because, had the stakeholders inspected or monitored the teaching and learning in colleges, they could have found out that there is need to train lecturers in relevant language related courses to enable them to teach Setswana subject.

Conclusion

The findings from this study indicated that there is need for reflection in the Colleges of Education. Students perform poorly in the Setswana Language Programme due to a number of factors that are partly attributed to who the lecturers are, lack of subject matter and the attitude of both lecturers and students towards Setswana. Under the conditions and situation at the Colleges of Education, there is need for collaboration to address Setswana language education problems affecting quality teaching of the subject. It is evident that Setswana language educators in all the colleges lack relevant professional qualifications to teach the subject confidently. Reflective practices could be fostered to see where things go wrong and could be improved. It was evident that there were no reflective practices done. Therefore, the language problems in Setswana lessons have been going on unattended and without reflection, such practices will continue to be stagnant and impede on personal or academic growth in both the students and lecturers. Again, educational authorities should monitor lecturers’ training such that if one teaches languages then they should train in language related areas. Otherwise, quality teaching

and learning will not take place in the Setswana language classroom. Lecturers are left to do as they please and yet they are paid for by the government to train in the subjects they are teaching. Since the government is the funding body it has to make sure that relevant, quality education is achieved in the end for students to benefit from.

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