



2016 HSRC
SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY:
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HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

22-23 SEPTEMBER 2016
INDABA HOTEL, CONFERENCE CENTRE
JOHANNESBURG

Perceptions of staff and students on the implementation of
the Language Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Howard College Campus.

by Balungile Shandu

Aim

- The Language Policy that has been implemented at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is to promote the IsiZulu language by making it compulsory for 1st year students to take up the IsiZulu module. The Language Policy introduces numerous changes that both the staff and the students need to adapt to. The implementation of the Language Policy needs to be supported by the recipients of the policy – these are both the students and the staff of the University. For a policy to be successful the affected groups should be aware of the implementation of the policy in order for positive results.

The reason for this study

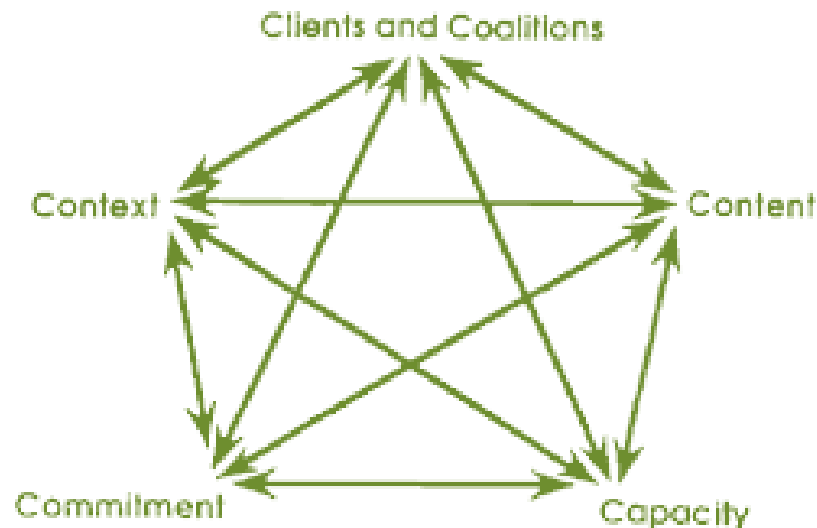
Students are normally excluded in policymaking but they are the ones that end up being affected by implemented policies in regards to education. Their voices are often ignored in decision-making in educational matters, as it is referred by Ruddick that ignoring students' views is one of "our blind spot" (Ruddick, 1991 cited in Starks, Knock and Barkhuizen, 2007).

The UKZN Language Policy

In 2006 the University of KwaZulu-Natal introduced a policy which is to promote the IsiZulu language at the University; however the policy was revised in 2014 for the execution of the policy.

The Framework

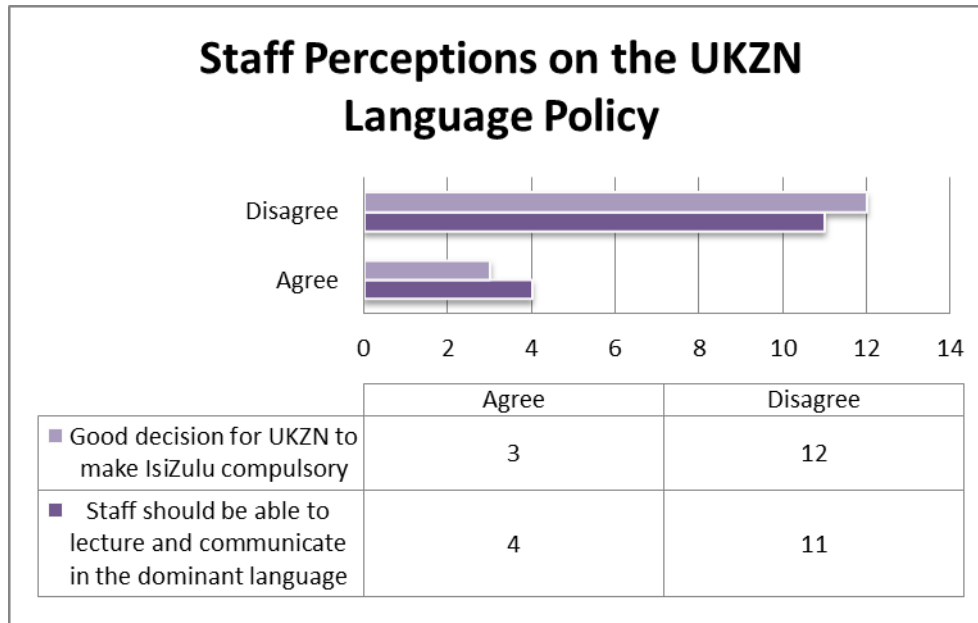
- Brynard identifies 5 critical variables which act as a base for an effective implementation. He called his model the 5-c Protocol Model.



Language Attitudes towards the language

- There were **11** staff members who believed that studying **IsiZulu is important as it will assist in communicating with the majority of the population; 1 staff member** stated that it was important to study the language since **it is one of the official languages in South Africa (SA)**; and the **1 staff** member stated that they **loved the language**. However, there were **7 staff members** who believe that studying **IsiZulu is not necessary**. There were **5 staff members** who stated that they do not see the need to study the language; **1** stated that they **already know the language** and **1** stated that studying the language would not help them get a job.

Perceptions on the UKZN Language Policy



Contd.

The survey questionnaire that was conducted on the staff members showed that there were **75%** of staff members who were aware of the Language Policy before its implementation, whereas, there were **25%** of staff members who were unaware.

BUT

The staff survey questionnaires show that **65%** of the staff disagreed in being inclusive in the decision-making of the policy and **35%** agreed in being inclusive in the decision-making.

Recommendations

The recommendations provided from the Deans:

“It will not be easy to accept this change. It is never easy to accept change or transformation. But, I am sure that students will get used to this and they will begin to accept this. I do think that this policy should be at all levels and not just 1st years.”

“Those who do not have to do the IsiZulu module because they have been credited for it should be given something else, maybe another language to learn. Then for those who do know the other languages should do more like learning a language outside South Africa.”