

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Historically determined tensions and discrimination in Limpopo Province.

The Limpopo Province, like all other provinces in South Africa, inherited some historically determined tensions from colonialism, missionary work and the apartheid government which instituted the Bantustans. The Province is the confluence of four of the previous homelands governments, viz. Venda, Lebowa, Gazankulu and a section referred to as 'South Africa' because its inhabitants were directly governed by the South African Government and were mostly white people. Each of these homelands had its own language even though they all used English and Afrikaans as official languages. The languages were Tshivenda for the Venda homeland, Northern Sotho for the Lebowa homeland, Xitsonga for Gazankulu and English and Afrikaans for 'South Africa'. These divisions created social inequalities which may hinder the young democracy created by the present government.

Languages were not equally privileged and those with high statuses like Afrikaans were elevated to the disadvantage of the other languages.

Language has always been a central issue in South Africa. (Even though the study is based on the Limpopo Province, I will sometimes refer to the country as a whole when discussing language issues which are not necessarily specific to the Province, but also nationally present. There are of course problems in the country as a whole which may not necessarily be present in the province). One remarkable national incident was 16

June 1976, a day called "Youth Day" in this country which is a holiday, celebrated for the first time in 1995. This holiday was established by the Government of National Unity, which came into power on 27 April 1994. It was on this day in 1976 that Soweto schoolchildren went on riot against the government policy on language matters. This political reaction was caused by a decision by the ruling National Party that Afrikaans be a compulsory medium of instruction in secondary schools of the then Department of Education and Training, along with English. This decision was rejected by most teachers, pupils and parents. Teachers had very little knowledge of Afrikaans, there were also not enough textbooks written in the language, and parents and teachers were not consulted when this decision was made. The government did not take heed of these objections and pupils embarked on a strike and people were killed. This day remains an important one in the sociolinguistic history of the country because even though it erupted in Soweto, it spread out even to rural areas, also of the Limpopo Province. It is an important date in the political history of this country.

Like everywhere else in the country, language played an important role in the political life of the people of the Limpopo Province. It was used, for example, in identifying people and in defining groups of people and by so doing strengthening the apartheid system of government. This led to the division of people, based on the languages they spoke, into homelands. Language was also used as an instrument for gaining access to certain privileges like job opportunities in the former government of the country and this clearly served as an instrument of discrimination (Webb 1996:139).

The knowledge of English and Afrikaans, by the black people of the province, is

inadequate as a resource for social transformation and nation-building. Intergroup communication is difficult through the two languages as the linguistic competence of the people is not adequate to enable meaningful communication. Moreover, by observation very few whites and coloureds in this province know any of the African languages. This might be so because before 1994 it was emphasised in this country that people should be bilingual. The term multilingualism was very rarely used. Bilingualism in South Africa meant knowledge of English and Afrikaans and not of other languages.

The indigenous languages of this province, most of which are official languages, are still not fully developed for use in all social functions. The selection of an official language usually comes with strong government support concerning the development of such selected languages. Obviously English and Afrikaans, which were co-official languages previously, received adequate attention with respect to corpus and status development. The autochthonous languages, through their language boards, received very little support, which was mainly directed at terminological development and standardisation. This was not enough to render the languages adequate to serve most or all social functions a language may be used for.

Some language-related scenarios have been politicised. Since the association of language with Apartheid, the mother-tongue instruction principle has become stigmatised as well. Most schools for black people have opted for English as medium of instruction from the first day of school attendance. This is happening against the background that most teachers in such schools have a limited competence in English and most rural pupils have an even weaker knowledge of English, and they mostly only

get exposed to it in school.

The province has a diverse distribution of home languages as shown in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1. The distribution of home languages within the province as a % .

N.Sotho	Xitsonga	Tshivenda	Afrikaans	Setswana	isiNdebele	Others
52.7	22.6	15.5	2.2	1.4	1.5	4.1

Source: Statistics in brief RSA from STATSSA. 2000

Compared to the total South African population, a large proportion of the Limpopo Province's population is African/Black - 95% compared with 76% for Africans in the whole country. For society in the Limpopo Province to transform, the dominant Bantu languages must be given specific social functions at government level based on the present demography, constitutional stipulations and historicity of the languages. For people to have genuine participation in the economy and all government sectors language planning in this province should be directed at addressing some of the problems which make it difficult or impossible for the people to be empowered and united.

The creation of homelands indirectly contributed to the language situation prevalent in the province now by politically grouping people into the so-called self-governing states, which were associated with specific languages. We presently have numerous languages in the province with a conflict potential because of the unequal statuses of the languages and their speakers. The former homelands each had an African language which it used in most of its social, political and civil functions. For example,

the so-called “Republic” of Venda had its own legislative assembly with laws written and executed in Tshivenda. The language was also used for political discussions within the Republic and was also developed and taught in schools and tertiary institutions. The same thing happened with Xitsonga language and Northern Sotho. The present situation is that all the capital towns of the former homelands are no longer used as capital towns, and Pietersburg (a Northern Sotho area) is used for all government purposes as the capital city. This may be felt as marginalisation by the speakers of minority languages like Tshivenda.

The struggle between “English” and “Dutch”, which dates back from the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806 still remains in the minds of the English speakers and the Afrikaans speakers in this province. After the Anglo-Boer war the Afrikaner language movements (to be discussed further in Chapter 4) culminated in the recognition of Afrikaans as one of the three official languages of the Union of South Africa in 1925. The effects of this conflict are still discernible in the language treatment even in this province. Afrikaans, which in my view is an African language since it started in South Africa and is not spoken anywhere else, competes with English in the province. A few black people use either Afrikaans or English to speak to one another where and when their indigenous languages cannot be used for communication and they do the same when speaking to white people in general.

Black people lack economic power and their languages are not used in the economic activities of the Province. The languages of business are either English or Afrikaans as whites still control most of the economic sectors. Practically, languages are not yet

accorded equality of use as expected by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996.

Alexander (1989) provides information on the anglicisation policies of the British governors of the Cape at the time of Sir John Cradock and Lord Charles Somerset in the 19th century, through to the beginning of the 20th century in the time of Sir Alfred Milner. British imperialism aimed at indoctrinating its subjects - by means of English literature and teaching - into a uniform loyalty to the British crown. The authorities saw the importance of language for indoctrination and therefore compelled the public to use English. This put pressure on schools, courts and parliament as they had to learn and use English for official purposes. English became the language of public discourse while Afrikaans was pushed back into private and religious spheres. (Alexander, 1989:6).

The role of missionaries with regard to language cannot be ignored. They spread a knowledge of English among African people in this country. The few black teachers and preachers who were produced in this country were competent and became what Alexander (1989:6) called 'Black Englishmen'. Beside the introduction of English to African people, the desire to spread the Gospel among the heathen made it necessary to reduce the indigenous languages to writing and to teach those written languages as widely as possible (Alexander 1989:8). Although some Africans became literate in Nguni and Sotho languages, missionaries helped to train people as preachers and interpreters in courts and in other government institutions. They wrote in the indigenous languages, and translated Bible passages and hymns into these languages. This was

the initial attempt at increasing the social functions of these languages. Gradually these languages were transformed into written languages and also taught in non-religious contexts.

British colonial policy was one of preferring basic schooling in the relevant indigenous languages and promoting subsequent English medium of instruction well before the Anglo-Boer war. This remained the policy even of the Union of South Africa until the National Party came to power in 1948. After this date the Apartheid language plan was put into practice . The education policy in South Africa was closely tied to the government's policy of Apartheid. Under this system schools and universities were racially segregated. There were different education departments, each with its own objectives according to what the government had determined as the social, economic and political needs of that group (Mmusi, 1987:7). Black education was administered by the former Department of Bantu Administration and Development; the coloureds fell under the Coloured People's Representative Council; Asians were controlled by the Department of Indian Affairs and whites by the Department of National Education, which was run by four provincial education administrations of the country: namely, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, the Cape, and Natal. Under this system teachers had to teach only those of their own race. This system was undermined by political developments emanating from the urbanisation of black workers and the growth of black nationalist movements. (Alexander, 1989:8).

The Apartheid language policies strengthened ethnic divisions. Afrikaans replaced English as the language of domination . In cases where replacement was difficult both

Afrikaans and English were used. The policy of Apartheid resulted in the breaking up of the black people into large numbers of conflicting and competing ethnic groups (that really gave rise to this policy) in which Africans who spoke different “languages” were made to live in separate regions, as already mentioned.

Afrikaner nationalism and the National Party policy was met with rejection by black people across the entire front of social issues. The language situation in South Africa was one sensitive area of rejection. This led to a situation in which most African schools rejected Afrikaans as medium of instruction. The Soweto uprising of 1976 ended the language policies of the National Party government in Black schools.

1.2 Current tensions between language groups.

As indicated, languages in this province have acquired socio-political attachments. For example Afrikaans is strongly stigmatised as it is regarded by some people as a language of oppression and is directly associated with Apartheid. The Afrikaners on the other hand see Afrikaans as a symbol of cultural identity. English is rated rather highly as most black people see it as the language of liberation. Some people still regard autochthonous languages as low status varieties with no real meaning in public life.

Intergroup communication in the two former official languages is difficult and this in general affects development and transformation. “It is necessary that people be able to switch to the most appropriate languages demanded by a particular situation” (Alexander 1989:9). The Province, like the country as a whole, has difficulties in practising multilingualism. This is so despite the fact that the Constitution of the country

has given multilingualism a central role. The province is experiencing a gradually increasing practice of monolingualism in their preference for English.

Currently, there are fears and tensions between language groups in the province and these might be encouraged by the present government language treatment that does not explicitly state which languages should be used by whom in which situations. The constitution only states that:

Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, Siswati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu shall be the official South African languages at national level, and conditions shall be created for their development and for the promotion of their equal use and enjoyment. (Act 108 of 1996).

This declaration may have contributed to the following language related tensions.

“Potgietersrus has long been controlled by the Afrikaners, many of whom believe that mixing racial groups is a sin” (Bryson 1996:1). Potgietersrus Laerskool has about 700 students, most of them Afrikaans-speaking, and parents fear that admitting black learners would erode Afrikaner culture. It also has facilities like a swimming pool and art and music classes, previously unheard of in black schools. This is one privilege given to people as a result of language politics as indicated in 1.1 above.

Bryson (1996:1) points out that under Apartheid the government spent up to five times more on white students than on black students, and black schools continue to show the effects of decades of neglect. When Alson Matukane, who recently moved to the town as a provincial water official, tried to enroll his three children in Potgietersrus primary

school in January 1996, he was told that his children could not be admitted because the school was meant for white people. Matukane sent the children anyway, and they were turned away. The family home was spray-painted with insults and they moved to a hotel for safety.

Together with the parents of two other children, Matukane sued. In his decision, Judge Theo Spoelstra quoted liberally from the Constitution that took effect in April 1994 when democratic elections ended white minority rule. The judge said that the constitution prohibits schools from barring children on the basis of race, ethnic or social origin, culture or language. The verdict was that the five black children must be allowed to attend any school. The black pupils were ultimately re-admitted to the school in an unfriendly atmosphere. This demonstrates that to an extent people in this community and the province need to change their attitudes and conduct. Expectations of people in the province need to be revisited and changed for the better. The social values like respect, patriotism and fraternity need to be respected and people should learn to accommodate others in this diversity. The people's religious and cultural beliefs also need to be transformed so that the linguistic diversity becomes a source of wealth in the country. Language can in many ways effect this social change, as I will explain in the following chapter. Social transformation is necessary to enable easy transition towards nation building. The Potgietersrus incident above reflects conflict occasioned by racism within a community and this affects the education in the province adversely and the attempt at nation-building in general. This type of behaviour reflects either ignorance of the constitutional stipulations, or defiance of the statutory principles of the country.

The school's lawyer, Mr Danie Bisschoff, said that Afrikaners were the victims of reverse discrimination.

"They try to make it acceptable by telling us we are racist and we are not," he said.

"Why force any school to accept any child? It's not reasonable, I think" (Bryson 1996.3).

But Spoelstra's ruling rejected the school's contention that allowing black children would swamp it with English speakers, eroding its Afrikaans language identity. The view taken by the school clearly shows that people are not commonly satisfied with the constitutional stipulations of the country. The Potgietersrus incident exemplifies signs of tension between people, which are language-related .

A second incident concerns the treatment of immigrants. Limpopo Province serves as an entry point into South Africa for immigrants from African states like Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique. These people are received with different feelings in the Province. They are referred to as 'Makwerekwere' or 'Magrigamba' which refers to the unintelligible languages they speak. Even though this problem appears to be political, it involves issues pertaining to policies around language treatment in a way. Most towns and rural settlements in this province are inundated with immigrants who speak languages very few inhabitants can understand. The influx of foreigners causes tension in the province since most foreigners use English as a lingua franca to speak to even the illiterate people of the province and by so doing adding to the complexity of the language situation. When some of them appear in courts English only can be used since the interpreters have no knowledge of their mother-tongues and this increases the dominance of English and negatively affects the constitutional plans of promoting the African languages. These conditions may be catered for by the language policy as

there is no language policy in the world which is not intertwined with politics, culture, the geography and the socioeconomic conditions found in that particular country. It is for this reason that Rubin (1968) recommends a thorough understanding of all these aspects of society, in order to guarantee an effective language planning policy. Language policy always involves language legislation. According to The South African Migration Project (SAMP, 1997) there was a project to this effect undertaken by Maxine Reitzes and Nigel Crawhall on African immigrants and language policy in the new South Africa. The report of their findings can help exemplify the inadequacies of the constitution as it makes no reference to the immigrants and their languages.

All people in South Africa have constitutionally-guaranteed language rights. To what extent are these rights actually observed by the various state departments and officials? Reitzes and Crawhall investigated this question by focussing on the rights and treatment of foreigners in South Africa, particularly foreigners from other African countries. Their report was commissioned by SAMP as part of a broader programme to understand the reception and treatment of non-South Africans in the new South Africa. Their aim was to encourage government departments and NGO's to continue to work towards policies which guarantee the multilingualism enshrined in the constitution, and which should enable marginalised black constituencies to be recognised and heard. This issue is difficult since many disadvantaged and insecure South Africans feel differently about it. Some see the immigrants as foreigners and become xenophobic, some see them as fellow human beings who must be accommodated in all countries where human rights are respected and must be accommodated even in the constitution, and the report shows that a constitution should not be 'silent' about

immigrants (Reitzes and Crawhall 1997).

Two assumptions informed the report. It was assumed that the interest of structures like the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) as well as NGO's are distinct from departments within government and state structures. These bodies are expected to actively defend the constitution and advance a progressive and inclusive approach to language policy that benefits everyone. "In a country where language has been used to divide and undermine certain political, social, economic and cultural interests, it would seem necessary for language policy to become central in the elaboration of democracy and human rights" (Reitzes and Crawhall. 1997:2).

Second, the researchers assumed that it is in the long term interest of the new political order in this country to use sensible language planning to maintain peace (by promoting tolerance of diversity) and prosperity (by using linguistic resources effectively). It should be possible for non-governmental interests to forge a consensus with government on the use of language policy to promote and sustain democracy (through promoting diverse voices, in an inclusive and participatory political system).

Multilingualism, which refers to a situation in which people know and use more than one (and usually more than two) language(s), is sometimes viewed as a problem by people in the Province. There are no provincial arrangements to encourage people to learn other African languages for creating a smooth communication system. Even the provincial education department does not encourage the learning and teaching of African languages as second languages to African and non-African learners of the

province. This might be the reason for the dominance of English. At times people speak in languages not understood by others, for example, a Northern Sotho-speaking senior official may speak to his Tsonga or Venda subordinate in Northern Sotho. This affects working relations badly and the provision of services slows down and the general political ideology of nation-building fails as there are no sound social relations (that may allow easy interaction in resolving conflicts). The language treatment in the province needs to be addressed for the population to transform socially. I will explain in the next chapter what social transformation entails and how language policy affects the change.

Building a nation implies among other things fighting racism and fighting against institutionalized ethnic divisions or ethnic consciousness. People need not necessarily speak one language to be united as one nation, as Alexander (1989:9) argues. Individuals who make up a nation have to be able to communicate with one another. There is an over dominance of English in the province and the result is that most people do not participate in the governance of the province fully. This was and is still a problem in this province.

According to Statistics South Africa 1995 about 27% of adults in the province has had no formal education and about 19% only attended school up to grade 7. This implies that their knowledge of English is not adequate for using the language for communication as English is mostly learned in school in the Province. A few who know English command the type of respect given to a special group of elite. This elitism may replace the racial classification this country experienced and it is possible that a new

class struggle is eminent, basically between those who can speak English and those who can't. To transform socially people need to feel free to use their languages for all social functions and should not be compelled to use only the international language to survive in their own country.

Once African languages are revalorized, people will be able to use them for whichever purpose arises. English, just like most second and third languages, is taught in school to non-native speakers. Since most people (as shown in figure 1.2) in this Province have not passed matric, it can be assumed that few can speak English and that they may not have acquired good communicative English because of the restricted number of years of schooling. This is relevant to the transformation since the mean years of schooling can give an estimation of the development of the individual. Formal education is one decisive instrument of transformation. When compared with other provinces, the Limpopo Province is the lowest regarding mean years of schooling, as shown below:-

Table 1.2. Mean years of schooling by province for persons aged 25 years and older.

Year	RSA	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	North Cape	Free State	Kwa Zulu Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo Province
1980	5.43	7.63	4.63	5.42	5.13	4.91	4.35	7.35	3.92	2.82
1991	6.86	8.45	6.65	6.25	6.50	6.48	5.75	8.59	5.34	4.61

Source: Human development index for the RSA:1980 and 1991(Statistical release P0015)

The mean years of schooling shows clearly that people of the province are educationally under-developed. It also implies that the knowledge of English of these people is very low and they may not be functionally literate and will not take part in the

governance of the province unless some changes are suggested.

The dominance of English can be observed within educational sectors by the preference for English as language of learning and teaching (LoL/T) from the early junior primary years of schooling. Apart from education the South African industrial world also followed suit without regard to the effects on productivity and competitiveness. The media is mostly English oriented and government officials, including the senior administrators accept and prefer the dominant role of English, something contrary to the constitution. English is used in parliament and in the courts of law. There are even proposals that it be the only language in that regard. The complete dominance of Afrikaans and English (to an increasing extent in the latter case) has led to a threat in some degree to the country's cultural diversity, which is an important feature of the country's wealth. (Webb 1998).

While the constitution supports the development of indigenous languages, members of parliament and councillors, most of whom were elected by their Bantu language speaking constituencies, address the same constituencies in English. Multilingualism must include the promotion of individual multilingualism, and people must develop communicative competence in a number of languages. Major languages in the province should be revalorised to cover a wider scope of public and social functions. I will in this dissertation sometimes mention varieties which are not officially taken to be languages. I feel they should be mentioned since their speakers as speech communities or as tribes look to them for identification and to the speakers these varieties are 'languages'. I believe that language planning should not be silent about varieties spoken in a

particular area only because they are not officially recognised as 'language'. These include varieties like Selobedu and the Mashashane Ndebele.

The Limpopo Province has several language-related developmental problems. The problems may be social problems such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, inadequate health services and corruption. One of the most serious of this province's problems is the inadequate development of its human resources (as table 1.2 implies), which is a problem in which language plays a fundamental role. Language plays such a role in a number of domains. In this discussion of un(der)development, I will follow the approach as used by Alexander (1989:8). South African people seem to agree that they want to become industrialised, technologised and 'modernised'. It seems reasonable to measure their degree of underdevelopedness with the measures of a modern technologised society.

Given the perspective that most people in Limpopo Province are underdeveloped, access to educational opportunities in the Province vary. Compared to the country as a whole, the Limpopo province fares quite poorly. For example the proportion of the population 20 years and older that did not go to school is twice (27%) the national proportion (13%), those who ended their education in primary school (grade 7 or less) are below the national proportion: 19% compared with 24%. (Orkin, 1998:14). The proportion of those who attended school up to secondary school only, i.e. between grade 7 and 11, is also below the national proportion: 29% compared with 35%. The proportion for those who completed secondary school (grade 12) is also lower for Limpopo than for the whole country: 15 % compared to 19 %. Those with university or

technikon degrees or diplomas are also lower than those in the country as a whole, i.e. 7% as compared with 9%. (In both cases the proportion of people with post-secondary school education levels is quite low) (ibid.). The educational attainment is clearly below the national level. This gives an indication of the gravity of the educational situation in Limpopo Province. The following table may best illustrate the situation.

Table 1.3. Level of education of the population 20 years and older in South Africa by provinces.

	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu- Natal	Mpuma- langa	N. Cape	Limpopo	North West	W. Cape	S.A.
No schooling	20.9	16.1	9.5	22.9	29.4	21.7	36.9	22.7	6.7	19.3
Some primary	21.5	22.4	11.7	17.9	15.2	21.0	12.1	20.5	15.9	16.7
Complete primary	9.0	8.9	6.7	6.7	6.9	8.8	5.9	7.8	8.9	7.5
Some secondary	32.7	33.7	40.2	31.8	29.0	30.9	26.6	31.5	39.2	33.9
Std 10/Grade 12	11.1	13.6	23.6	15.9	14.6	11.9	14.0	13.3	18.9	16.4
Higher	4.7	5.2	8.4	4.8	5.0	5.8	4.5	4.2	10.6	6.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: CSS 1996

The educational development of most individuals in the Limpopo Province is thus below the national potential.

To address the low mean years of schooling the province needs extensive resources

to provide children with adequate education. Children who do not attend school should be identified and reasons for non-attendance should be addressed. It is vital to plan for the most suitable language to be used in introducing children to education.

There are various reasons for the under-development of people in this province. Many children grew up in illiterate or semi-literate environments where they had little or no exposure to learning. The daily chores performed might have kept them away from studying, for example some children work as farm labourers. The Apartheid education system was not conducive to the development of people's full potential. Reasons for this stemmed from the objectives of this system of education, as once mentioned by a former Prime Minister of South Africa, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, in a speech in the Senate on June 7, 1954:

There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community, however, all doors are open. For that reason it is of no avail to him to receive training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system, which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze" (Janks and Paton, 1989: 22).

As a result of statements like Verwoerd's and the Apartheid education system, teachers were/are mostly underqualified, and school classrooms were/are overcrowded.

The system also prescribed a medium of instruction (Afrikaans) which was difficult to be used by both teachers and pupils (Mmusi, 1989).

Generally it is accepted that cognitive development can only occur in a language the learner knows well. Cognitive skills like comprehension, which allows a learner to grasp the central points in a discourse and even summarise the gist, the ability to make observations and generalisations, and understanding cause and effect, can be better developed in a language the learner knows well.

The use of English as medium of instruction retards and restricts educational development as the language is generally not well known by both teachers and students in the Province. Its dominance may block access to many opportunities and this may lower the productivity and increase inefficiency in the economic and public sectors. People cannot participate fully in the politics of the country if the language used for politics is not well known to them. They therefore remain silent because of their inability to put their case in English. The province's linguistic diversity is viewed by sociolinguists as a resource, but the dominance of one language is a possible threat to this wealth.

A Committee of Marginalised Languages (C.M.L.) has been instituted nationally for Xitsonga, Tshivenda, siSwazi and isiNdebele because they feel threatened by the dominant languages. This committee, even though it is national, mainly addresses problems of languages which are found in this Province. Some speakers of the Bantu languages do not believe that their languages can serve as useful instruments of

learning or social mobility. Their argument is that these languages lack the necessary lexical and registral equipment for use in secondary domains of life in the Province and elsewhere in the country. To succeed in social and economic life, people who speak the 'minor' official languages may thus be increasingly under pressure to shun their languages and cultural practices to associate themselves with one or two of the 'major' official languages (Webb. 1996:142). This view is held by most speakers of the languages, some of them because of ignorance and negative self-esteem. These languages may have some instrumental value but most people use them only for personal interaction and cultural expression. We can attribute this language behaviour to long exposure to foreign rule, missionary education, and apartheid and its language treatment. The situation requires language revalorisation to rekindle a spark of feeling for one's language. People are ashamed of speaking their own languages even amongst themselves. They try to speak English to sound civilised.

The politicized language situation mentioned in 1.1 has had a number of serious consequences, according to Webb (1996:142). In the educational domain, the politicization of the languages has contributed to a high rate of illiteracy and the high rate of school dropouts in what was generally known as Bantu education. This poor performance in school examinations is still observable in the Province. The 1997 Grade 12 results show how serious the situation is:

Table 1.4: Grade 12 results for Nov/Dec 1997.

Candidates registered	Candidates who wrote	Passed with exemption	Passed without exemption	Candidates failed
155640	139754	7318	33971	89741
100%	89.7	4.7	21.8	57.6

Source: Limpopo Department of Education, Circular No.E0319F1. Page 1.

From table 1.4 it is evident that very few students are educationally developed and very few are ready for employment or higher education. The failure rate makes the province poor in this regard. Knowledge and skills have not been democratized.

In the social domain opportunities for social mobility have also been unequal, with access to resources, power, and prestige also being linguistically based. Students with a poor knowledge of English have very slim chances of doing well in any subject, as most subjects are taught through the medium of English. In the political domain there is a non-democratic atmosphere, the absence of national cohesion, the presence of deep divisions in national life, which has a strong potential for conflict. There is also discrimination on linguistic grounds. In the economic domain job opportunities are more often than not linguistically-based and discriminatory, for example: government departments, the media and other non-governmental organisations hold their selection interviews in English and one's knowledge of the language determines the outcomes of the interviews. These problems are related to aspects of the existing language situation even though they are not all directly caused by the language situation.

Limpopo Province has a shortage of well-trained language practitioners to meet the needs of the new situation. There is now more than ever before a dire need for language specialists to translate texts and interpret discourse in a number of different forms. Instead of the former "bilingual" interpreters and translators, there is now a need for multilingual ones who control a number of different languages spoken in the Limpopo Province.

Language study has become an important area for educational institutions, most of which lack the relevantly qualified teaching staff. Most of the language teachers do not have the expected professional and academic language qualifications. There is a need for terminologists and lexicographers since some official languages need to be developed to match the terminological and scientific development which the Province can't evade.

The language situation in the province thus warrants a democratic language policy which addresses every aspect that might spark conflict occasioned by language differences. This may be so as racial prejudice and racism are without any doubt reinforced and maintained by language barriers (Alexander 1989: 9). The overriding question is how we abolish social inequality based on colour, class, religion, sex, language group or on any other basis. The language problems should be resolved to fight the historically determined racial prejudice and racism. We need a democratic solution to the language question in this Province.

1.3 Information needed for the study

In order to deal with the language-related problems and the language problems and to contribute towards their resolution, information is needed on a number of issues.

This dissertation will use a theoretical framework applicable for the study of language-related conflict and conflict resolution. It will discuss concepts, terms, points of departure and the theoretical assumptions of language planning. It will also discuss the interaction between social transformation and language planning . Since the research is concerned with a multilingual situation it will include, in its theoretical framework, language promotion and revalorisation .

The Province needs a comprehensive language policy, an associated language plan, a set of well-defined specific strategies for the implementation of the plan, and acceptable methods of evaluating the implementation efforts (Webb, 2000:25-26) .The need for such a plan is made clear by social and economic forces. According to Orkin (1998) the economically active population of the Limpopo Province shows signs of chaos as “amongst those aged 15-65, about 53.9% is employed and the remaining 46.04% is unemployed” (Orkin, 1998:29). The prevalence of poor economic conditions will lead to poverty and crime, which will then negatively affect the social life in the province. The policy should meet a number of conditions which will be explained in Chapter 6.

The language planning process should not deviate from the general political ideology of the country. It must be informed by the Constitution, Bill of Rights and the Reconstruction and Development Policies of the country. The process must be directed

at solving identified language-related problems of the region. It must be orderly, be based on a strategic analysis of the language politics of the province, and it must be based on reliable information (Webb 1998). The process should be undertaken by specialists in the field of language planning but it must have the necessary government support to make it authoritative enough to satisfy the majority of the people. It has to be consultative, all interested stake holders must be invited to participate in policy formulation and in directing the process as a continual dialogue between government agencies, the private sector, labour organisations and the union movements, NGO's and any other organisation that may feel the need to assist.

It will also be necessary to address the major language planning problems of the province, e.g. the multilingual nature of the province and the mutual unintelligibility of languages. Language planning should be undertaken in four domains: education, the economy, state administration and the media, but this study will focus on education. It will also include the selection of official languages, as cited by Alexander (1989), Cluver (1992b), Combrink (1991), Sachs (1993), Steyn (1992), and the role of language planning in nation-building (Alexander 1989, Webb 1990). The question of language rights will also be included (Steyn 1990, 1991, Webb 1990a, 1992d).

In the context of Limpopo Province, policy development and planning is the prerogative of the provincial legislature. In the province there are a number of bodies which are involved in the process. The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), which is a permanent body set up by the Constitution, was established in 1996 and is involved in policy development . Other bodies are the Provincial Language Council and the

Language Committees which serve to oversee language issues in the Province and to look at the treatment of specific languages respectively. Data about the duties, achievements and problems of PanSALB will be needed to clarify the language problems outlined above.

For language planning to succeed in this context, language planners should take direct note of the needs of provincial and local communities and of the sociolinguistic realities of these communities, with reference to their diversity.

1.4 Aims of the study

The aim of this research is to show how language policy can help to bring about social transformation through language in education, because effective formal education is one route to achieve this and ultimately to assist the Province in transforming. Of utmost importance will be the discussion of the role of language in education because the acquisition of education is part and parcel of the educational process which directly influences and shapes social transformation. This research will show that language planning must promote socio-political unity and a common loyalty. I will recommend that the province should adopt a policy of multilingualism, which is directed at facilitating communication within the province.

The research will encourage those involved in education, community workers, labour organisations and youth movements to reassess the language issue in the quest for the democratic transformation of the society. Language policy must be seen as an instrument to unify people and not to divide them into ethnic communities.

I will look at the revalorization of the indigenous languages and their adaptation to present-day needs by extending their usability and use. This whole process requires the maintenance of a delicate balance of transformation. The role of linguistic and cultural differences must obviously be respected, and “the real possibility of ethnic nationalism must be controlled” (Webb 1996:153). The recognition and promotion of cultural identity can facilitate nation-building as it will contribute to spiritual and intellectual upliftment. If languages do not have the necessary status, they will not be effective instruments of public communication. There are a number of steps a government can take to revalorise a language, such as giving it statutory recognition, supporting language promotion as an instrument of development and occupational advancement, funding its corpus development and recognising its use as medium of school instruction and as a language of governance.

The research will focus on language-in-education policy, particularly the use of English in schools in the rural black communities as medium of instruction from the first years of primary education. The language-in-education implementation plan generally supports the principle of multilingualism, and the protection of the language rights of the individual. For this reason I will discuss the promotion/development of the African languages to full-fledged languages, i.e. languages that are able to serve all the social functions that a language can be put to. The use of English and Afrikaans must be normalised, i.e. the over-dominance of English and the stigmatisation of Afrikaans must be checked to restore the balance between the power relations of the official languages in the Province.

Policy statements should explicitly mention practicable steps to achieve particular objectives. This will be looked into and the requirements of a multilingual language policy will be suggested in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

I will also discuss the legitimization of the norms of English, Afrikaans, Northern Sotho, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga, which are the main languages of the Province. There is also a need to train language practitioners to meet the needs of a new situation, viz. language teachers, translators, terminologists, lexicographers and interpreters. Emphasis will be laid on the role of language in education and the role of language planning in establishing democracy and also its role in social transformation as a forerunner to nation-building.

1. 5 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation aims at supporting the development of the people of the Limpopo Province through contributing to language policy development and language planning.

It is therefore directed at a discussion of the following issues:-

a. Chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical framework for the study of language-related conflict and conflict resolution. It will cover the relevant central issues, concepts, terms, points of departure, and theoretical assumptions. The role of language in education and in society obviously needs attention as well as the politics of language.

b. Chapter 3 will dwell on language-based conflict in comparable countries. It will look at countries elsewhere in Africa, like Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, and

provide a comparative study of these multilingual countries to determine how they are handling their language and language-related problems .

c. All arguments in the dissertation will obviously relate to the present linguistic facts of the province; for this reason Chapter 4 will give a socio-political history of the Northern Province with special reference to its language politics.

d. Chapter 5 will provide a sociolinguistic profile of the Northern Province. It will include issues such as which languages are spoken, what the language knowledge of the inhabitants is, what language preferences people show, what the patterns of communication are, and what the discernible attitudes to languages are. A SWOT analysis of Northern Sotho, Xitsonga Tshivenda, Afrikaans and English is a valuable tool required for effective language planning in the Province.

e. Chapter 6 will focus on educating for social transformation, and

f. Chapter 7 will provide proposals for developing a language policy for social reconstruction.

g. The last chapter will summarize findings and provide proposals and recommendations.