THE INCREMENTAL INTRODUCTION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Draft Policy

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DEFINITIONS

"additional language" – means a language learned in addition to one's home language; in South Africa it may be used for certain communicative functions in a society, that is, medium of learning and teaching in education;

"additive multilingualism" – means when a person learns a language (or languages) in addition to his or her Home Language. This language does not replace the home language but is learned alongside it. In an additive multilingual programme, the home language is strengthened and affirmed while any further language learned is seen as adding value (e.g. all Additional Languages, including the Language of Learning and Teaching, are taught alongside the Home Language but do not replace it);

"African languages" - means a term used as a geographic rather than linguistic classification of languages spoken on the African continent;

"assessment" – means a continuous structured process of gathering information on learner competence in many different ways;

"Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades R – 12 (January 2012)" – means the policy documents stipulating the aim, scope, content and assessment for each subject listed in the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12;*

"First Additional Language" – means a language learned in addition to one's home language that can be used for the basic intercultural and interpersonal communication skills needed in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum;

"First Additional Language level" - means the language proficiency level that reflects the basic intercultural and interpersonal communication skills needed in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum;

FET – Further Education and Training – means a term covering Grades 10-12;

GET – General Education and Training – means a term covering Grades R-9;

"Home Language" – means the language first acquired by children through immersion at home; the language in which an individual thinks;

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"language level" – means the proficiency levels at which all official and non-official languages are offered at school, i.e. Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language levels;

"Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)" – means the language chosen by a school's governing body in consultation with parents. It is the language teachers use to instruct and assess;

"NPPPR" – means the National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12;

"Second additional language" – means a language learned in addition to one's home language, primarily for interpersonal and social purposes; it is intended to further multilingualism.

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1. Introduction

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) policy aims to:

(1) promote and strengthen the use of African languages by all learners in the school system by introducing learners incrementally to learning an African language from Grade 1 to 12 to ensure that all non-African home language speakers speak an African Language;

(2) strengthen the use of African languages at Home Language level;

(3) improve proficiency in and utility of the previously marginalized African languages (at First Additional Language level);

(4) raise the confidence of parents to choose their own languages;

(5) increase access to languages by all learners beyond English and Afrikaans; and

(6) promote social cohesion by expanding opportunities for the development of African languages as a significant way of preserving heritage and cultures.

The IIAL policy will be implemented incrementally commencing in Grade 1 in 2015 and will continue until 2026 when it will be implemented in Grade 12.

2. Background

Many of the recommendations in recent research reports either implicitly or explicitly speak to the strengthening of African language teaching to improve learning outcomes. The NEEDU report applauds the incremental introduction of an African language: "*The planned introduction of an African language, other than Afrikaans, for all learners is a positive policy in the interests of nation building.*"

In summary it must be noted that:
- Poor learning outcomes in South Africa are to a great extent a result of poor language proficiency and utility;

- The results of ANA, PIRLS, TIMSS, SAQMEC and the NSC have confirmed this on various occasions;

- Very little or nothing has been done up till now by institutions, broader civil society or the education sector to address this perennial problem.

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Multilingualism is an important tool for social cohesion, and for individual and social development. Community life takes place mainly in African languages. Learners proficient in African languages are thus able to participate and take leading roles in local institutions and organizations. However the linguistic skills and knowledge acquired in this formal education system is often not compatible with the linguistic skills and competencies needed in other, less formal contexts, especially in the informal sector.

A multilingual education system is part of a broader social vision which aims to build an efficient economic system to ensure the competitiveness of African countries, to link all societal levels, and to facilitate communication, knowledge, power-and wealth-sharing and democratic and participatory governance.[1] Currently the communication gaps between speakers of the different official languages remains wide which amplify the social divide.

3. Aims

The main aims of the Policy are to:

1. improve proficiency in and utility of African languages at Home Language level, so that learners are able to use their home language proficiently.

2. increase access to languages by all learners, beyond English and Afrikaans, by requiring all non-African Home Language speakers to learn an African language; and

3. promote social cohesion and economic empowerment and expand opportunities for the development of African languages as a significant way of preserving heritage and cultures.

4. Legislative Context

The Language in Education Policy, which is entrenched in the Constitution, clearly recognises and elevates the eleven designated languages in South Africa regarding their educational use and their use within home and public environments. The protection of the eleven official languages as well as the previously disadvantaged indigenous languages is entrenched in the following Acts and policy documents:

(1) The Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates:

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[1] UNESCO 2010. Why and how Africa should invest in African languages and multilingual education

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(a) in Section 6.4 that all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably; and

(b) in Section 29(2) that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where education in that language is reasonably practicable.

(2) The Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution lays the foundation for the development of democratic values and forms the basis for the language legislation and a policy framework to be derived (Braam, 2004: 8). The following provisions relate to the IIAL Policy:

(a) Section 9: the promotion of the equality of all South African citizens;

(b) Section 29(2): everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable;

(c) Section 30: everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, provided that they do not violate the rights of others; and

(d) Section 31: persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community.

(3) The *National Education Policy Act 1996* (Act 27 of 1996)[2] authorises the national Minister of Education to determine national education policy in accordance with certain principles and in consultation with bodies established especially for the purpose of consultation. Two of the directive principles as related to language are:

- *The right of every learner to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable (clause 4 (v))*

- *The right of every person to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice within an education institution (clause 4 (viii)).*

(4) In accordance with Section 6(2) of the *South African Schools Act 1996* (Act 84 of 1996)[3]: the governing body of a school should determine the language policy of a

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2 National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA) in Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003). Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates

3 The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA) in Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003). Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates. SASA aims to redress past injustices in educational provision and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners. SASA thus lays a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advances the democratic transformation of society, combats racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and

school and programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages subject to the National Education Policy Act, the Constitution and any applicable provincial law.

(5) The *Language-in-Education Policy* (LiEP) for schools was adopted in 1997 in terms of Section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) which authorises the national Minister of Education to determine language in education and in terms of section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) which authorises the national Minister of Education to determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools. The Language-in-Education Policy (DoE, 1997) "should be seen as part of an ongoing process by which policy for education is being developed as part of a national plan" (DoE, 1997a: 1). The LiEP aims to pursue a language policy supportive of conceptual growth amongst learners by establishing "additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education" (DoE, 1997a: 2). The LiEP endorses:

(a) multilingualism;

(b) the building of a non-racial nation;

(c) an additive approach to language in education, giving individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) at their school if it is practicable for the school to accommodate the choice of LoLT; and

(d) the promotion of the use of learners' home language and at the same time to provide access to other languages.

(6) The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (DBE, 2010) follows an additive approach to the promotion of multilingualism and states explicitly that learners' home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible.

5. Current Position

The present *Language in Education Policy* provides for languages to be offered as (1) language(s) of learning and teaching, and (2) subject(s). The powers of determining a school language policy are vested with the School Governing Body subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the South African Schools Act and any applicable provincial law.

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intolerance, contributes to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protects and advances our diverse cultures and languages, upholds the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promotes their responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa.

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5.1 Languages as subject

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) makes provision for the offering of languages at three levels, i.e. Home Language (HL), First Additional Language (FAL) and Second Additional Language (SAL). Only official languages can be offered at HL and FAL levels. Foreign languages can be offered at SAL level.

5.1.1   Home Language level (HL)

Offering a language at a home language level assumes that the learners come to school able to speak and understand that language. These basic competences are developed further and include a focus on various types of literacies (reading, writing, visual and critical literacies). The NCS provides for learners to offer at least one language at Home Language level. Only official languages can be selected at Home Language level.

5.1.2 First Additional Language level (FAL)

The first additional language assumes that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. The learners' basic competences of understanding and speaking are developed, and it builds on the literacies acquired by the learners in their home language.

6. Policy Framework

6.1 Programme Requirements

From Grades 1-12 learners will offer three official languages, one at HL level and the other two languages on at least FAL level. The proposed subject provisioning is illustrated in the Table below:

Table 1

Grade	Current provisioning (NPPPPR)	Proposed provisioning (IIAL)
Grades 1-3	Four subjects 1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. Mathematics 4. Life Skills	Five subjects 1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. First Additional Language 4. Mathematics 5. Life Skills

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Grades 4-6	Six subjects	Seven subjects
	1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. Mathematics 4. Life Skills 5. Natural Sciences and Technology 6. Social Sciences	1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. First Additional Language 4. Mathematics 5. Life Skills 6. Natural Sciences and Technology 7. Social Sciences
Grades 7-9	Nine subjects	Ten subjects
	1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. Mathematics 4. Life Orientation 5. Natural Sciences 6. Technology 7. Social Sciences 8. Economic and Management Sciences 9. Arts and Culture	1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. First Additional Language 4. Mathematics 5. Life Orientation 6. Natural Sciences 7. Technology 8. Social Sciences 9. Economic and Management Sciences 10. Arts and Culture
Grades 10-12	Seven subjects	Eight subjects
	1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy 4. Life Orientation 5. Group B – 3 subjects	1. Home Language 2. First Additional Language 3. First Additional Language 4. Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy 5. Life Orientation 6. Group B – 3 content subjects

6.2 Promotion Requirements

In Grades 1-9, learners must pass the third required official language at FAL level at achievement level 3 (40-49%). In the FET Phase, the third required official language must be passed at level 2 (30-39%) provided that the official language at HL level has been passed at level 3 (40-49%).

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7. Time allocation:

7.1 Foundation Phase

The instructional time for Grades 1 and 2 will increase from 23 hours per week to 25 hours per week, and in Grade 3 from 25 hours per week or 28 hours per week as illustrated in Table 2 below:

Table 2

The instructional time in the Foundation Phase		
Subject	**Grades 1-2**	**Grade 3**
Home Language	8/7	8/7
First Additional Language – 1st	2/3	3/4
First Additional Language – 2nd	2/3	3/4
Total for Language	**12**	**14**
Mathematics	7	7
Life Skills	6	7
Total – current allocation	**23**	**25**
Total – when the 2nd FAL is allocated the equal number of hours allocated to the other FAL	**25**	**28**
	An extension of two hours per week	An extension of three hours per week

7.2 Intermediate and Senior Phases

The instructional time in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and in the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9) will increase from 27.5 hours per week to 32.5 hours per week as illustrated in Tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3

The instructional time in the Intermediate Phase	
Subject	**Time allocation per week**
Home Language	6
First Additional Language – 1st	5
First Additional Language – 2nd	5
Total Language Allocation	16
Mathematics	6
Natural Sciences and Technology	3.5
Social Sciences	3
Life Skills	4
Total – current allocation	**27.5**
Total – when the 2nd FAL is allocated the equal number of hours to the other FAL	**32.5**

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Table 4

The instructional time in the Senior Phase	
Subject	**Time allocation per week**
Home Language	6
First Additional Language	4
First Additional Language	4
Total Allocation for Language	**13**
Mathematics	4.5
Natural Sciences	3
Social Sciences	3
Technology	2
Economic Management Sciences	2
Life Orientation	2
Creative Arts	2
Total – current allocation	**27.5**
Total – when the 2nd FAL is allocated the equal number of hours allocated to the other FAL	**31.5**
Total – when 1 hour is added to Home Language to ensure that overall time allocation for the Senior Phase is not lower than the Intermediate Phase.	**32.5**

7.3 Grades 10-12

In the FET Phase (Grades 10-12) the instructional time will increase from 27.5 hours per week to 32.5 hours per week as illustrated in Tables 5(A) and 5(B) below:

Table 5(A)

The instructional time in Grades 10-12	
Subject	**Time allocation per week**
Home Language	5
First Additional Language	4.5
First Additional Language	4.5
Total Language Allocation	**14**
Mathematics	4.5
Life Orientation	2
A minimum of any three content subjects selected from **Group B** Annexure B, Tables B1-B8 of the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*, subject to the provisos stipulated in paragraph 28 of the said policy document.	12 (3x4h)
Total – current allocation	**27.5**

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Total – when the 2nd FAL is allocated the equal number of hours allocated to the other FAL.	**32**
Total – when 30 minutes are added to Home Language to ensure that time allocation for Grades 10-12 is not lower than the Senior Phase and the Intermediate Phase.	**32.5**

All learners will offer at least three languages:

Table 5(B)

Language selection guide	
Xitsonga	
Nguni languages	IsiZulu
	IsiXhosa
	IsiNdebele
	SiSwati
Sotho languages	Sesotho
	Sepedi
	Setswana
Tshivenda	
Afrikaans	

8. Implications for the Incremental Introduction of African Languages

(1) Programme and Promotion Requirements

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) has implications on the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12.

(2) Provision of Resources

The incremental introduction of African languages has resource implications both for the teaching of African languages at a First Additional Language level.

The Department of Basic Education's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and the DBE workbooks are available for both the Home and the First Additional Language levels for all official languages.

The National Catalogue contains textbooks and readers for Home language in all official languages. The Department of Basic Education will work with publishers to ensure that a list of approved textbooks is available to support the incremental implementation of African languages at First Additional Language level.

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(3) Provision of Teachers

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) will require all learners to offer an African language at First Additional Language level. This effectively means that all schools should have an African language teacher. The post provisioning norm to promote African languages will differ from one province to the other. It would be simpler in provinces with few official languages and more complex in those with more official languages. The same applies to the rural and urban (cosmopolitan) situation. It is expected that in a rural situation only one African language will be selected as a subject at FAL level. But in an urban or cosmopolitan area more than one African language can be selected for this purpose. Based on the demographics of the school population, and considering the "language majority" of the learners, schools will select their languages of choice to represent that majority.

Staffing to meet this need can be achieved by using different models. The most ideal situation is to provide all schools with African language(s) teacher(s). Depending on the school context, this might mean a provision of one or more African language(s) teacher(s). However other models may be more appropriate in some situations:

- In a cosmopolitan area wherein all languages are found, schools may be designated to offer specific languages. There would be dominant languages side to side with minority languages.
- In instances where there are very few learners for a particular language(s) scattered across a phase, the multi-grade model can be ideal. Learners from different grades can be brought into one class and taught by one teacher.
- The itinerant teacher model allows schools to share scarce resources. One teacher will be roving from one school to the other. Depending on the close proximity of schools, the roving teacher can teach at a minimum of two and a maximum of four schools. This model could be used in schools that are within close proximity for the itinerant teacher to reach them with ease.

The ratio 1-40 could be applied to a rural situation wherein there are few dominant languages. The ratio 1-20 could be used in the cosmopolitan, multilingual context with a mix of dominant and minority languages. The determination of the provisioning of transformational teachers should be based on the feasibility of schools to be able to utilize African language(s) teacher(s).

The employment of additional staff to teach a third language at First Additional Language level will have implications for teacher training. Programmes will be put in place both at the Preset and the Inset levels to prepare new teachers and reskill existing teachers to teach in and through an African language.

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(4) Funding implications

The provision of textbooks, readers and workbooks, the employment of additional staff to teach a third language and the provision of training/reskilling programmes all have implications for funding. Additional funds will be sought from National Treasury to support the incremental introduction of African languages.

(5) Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation should follow a bottom up approach, from school-level to the Department of Basic Education. District reports on the phased-in implementation must be consolidated at provincial level. Consolidated reports must be provided to the Department of Basic Education in order to inform policy decisions and national planning.

Key elements for monitoring are:

(a) staffing and resource provision;

(b) staffing and resource utilization;

(c) implementation challenges;

(d) effects on assessment and promotion;

(e) training effectiveness; and

(f) future needs.

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