

# Patterns of Language Use and Language Preference of some Children and their Parents in Botswana

*Arua E. Arua*

*Department of English, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana*

*Keoneng Magocha*

*Communication and Study Skills Unit, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana*

This paper examines the patterns of language use and language preference of some children aged 6–15 and their parents at the University of Botswana. The results indicate that the majority of the children speak Setswana and English, despite the fact that they come from different language groups. However, Setswana, the national language, is the more widely spoken. Very few of the children speak languages such as Ikalanga, Otjiherero and Sesotho and other minority languages. The language preferences of the children and their parents differ. Although many of the children speak two or three languages, they prefer only one – Setswana. However, the parents of the children prefer them to speak English rather than Setswana, especially in the school and playground. They also prefer their children not to speak English at home, although the children actually do so. Children from other language groups prefer English to their mother tongues. Generally, the study shows the continued growth of Setswana and English, and the gradual decline of the other local languages, except Ikalanga. The government is reported to be considering introducing a third language as a medium of instruction in the hope that it will stop the decline of minority languages.

## Introduction

A survey of the studies on the languages in Botswana (see, for example, Andersson & Janson, 1991, 1997; Balisi, 1989; Batibo, 1997; Batibo & Śmieja, 2000; Chebanne *et al.*, 1993; Lukusa, 2000; Mogapi, 1999; Tsonope, 1995; Vossen, 1989) reveals, for the purposes of this paper, two major features. First, it shows that the studies rightly reveal an overwhelming concern for the fate of minority languages in the country. Second, it shows that the studies, except for Balisi (1989), do not explicitly discuss the attitudes of the Botswana towards the languages. This second feature which relates to our main concern is not surprising, for in an earlier study, Arua and Magocha (2000) had also noted the neglect. Indeed, the lack of studies on attitudes to English and other languages is not confined to Botswana, as Adegbija (1994) has also observed a similar trend for the whole of Africa. This study therefore complements studies that are beginning to examine more systematically the attitudes of Africans towards the languages in their countries.

Essentially, the study asks the question: what are the languages that children use in Botswana today, and are the languages the preferences of the children's parents? This question is important for two reasons. The first is that it enables us to confirm whether the functions tacitly or explicitly assigned to Botswana's

languages are the same functions for which the children used in the study employ the languages. Children have been used because of the intention to ascertain whether there have been any shifts in the functional roles of the languages. Shifts in the roles of the languages would have implications for language planning.

The second reason is that it enables us to determine to what extent the children's language use and preferences, and the language preferences of their parents coincide. It is important to determine this because the language use and preferences of the children and the language preferences of the parents will indicate the attitudes of both groups to the languages in Botswana. However, it is the attitudes of the parents that are the focus here, as they are more aware of the intrinsic and extrinsic values the Botswana society attaches to the languages, which make them to react to them the way they do.

The language use and language preference patterns of the children and their parents, as well as the other issues raised above, will be discussed presently. Meanwhile, we discuss briefly the language situation in Botswana in order to put the study in its proper perspective.

The languages in use in Botswana and the roles assigned to them are well known. English and Setswana are official languages of unequal status. English generally has a higher profile than Setswana. Both are used unequally as media of instruction in schools. The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) (1994) recommends that 'English should be used as the medium of instruction from Standard 2 as soon as practicable' (Rec. 18(a)). Hitherto, English had been used as a medium of instruction from Standard 5 as Rec. 18(c) shows. It is clear then that English should be used exclusively as a medium of instruction from Standard 2 in the primary school to the tertiary level. Setswana therefore has a very restricted role as a medium of instruction, since it is now confined to Standard 1. Setswana, however, serves as a national language and is thus a lingua franca. Andersson and Janson (1997) estimate that 80% of the Botswana speak it. This figure does not include speakers of Ikalanga and other languages who use Setswana either as a first or second language. It may well be that the number of people from all the language groups who speak it is considerably higher than the figure quoted above.

The other languages in Botswana such as Otjiherero, Ikalanga, Sekgalagadi, Ndebele and Sesotho are minority languages, because only a very small percentage of the population speaks each of them. Based on Andersson and Janson's (1997) figures, the most prominent minority language that is used by an estimated 11% of the population is Ikalanga. The language is restricted to northern Botswana, where it serves as an unofficial regional lingua franca. Although all the minority languages are used to some extent in domains such as offices and especially the Kgotla (a traditional meeting place) in their respective regions, they do not have official status. Apparently, tacitly, the languages have been confined principally to the home.

## Methodology

The data for the study were collected through a questionnaire administered to some parents of children aged between 6 and 15. As indicated earlier, the ques-

tionnaire sought the responses of the parents to the patterns of their children's language use and language preference. In instances where respondents had more than one child, the typical language behaviour of the children was requested. If the children manifested radically different language behaviours, then the respondent was asked to indicate the differences.

Data were collected from parents mainly for two reasons. First, the children's age differences precluded a uniform means of collecting the data from them. It is not reasonable to expect 6–7 year olds to articulate their views on language use in Botswana as effectively as 12–15 year olds. Second, direct observation of the children was not possible, as the data were not collected in a classroom-like situation, where children can be observed fairly easily. For these reasons, parents were asked to report on the language use and language preferences of their children as well as on their own language preferences through a questionnaire administered to them. The limitations of the use of the questionnaire, including its low return rate and the provision of responses respondents think are acceptable to researchers, to elicit behavioural data are fairly well known. Nevertheless, our view is that in spite of its limitations and the limitations arising from asking parents to report the language behaviour of their children, the questionnaire is the most viable way of collecting the data required for the study. Readers should note these methodological limitations as they review the results of this study.

The section of the questionnaire relevant to the paper contains the following instructions and questions:

- Please list all the languages spoken by your child(ren).
- Which of them is the preferred language of your child(ren)?
- List other languages not mentioned above in the order in which your child(ren) prefers to use them.
- Which language is *predominantly* used by your child(ren)
  - (a) In school?
  - (b) At home?
  - (c) With peers?
- Which language is your child(ren) most proficient in (if your child speaks more than one language)?

Where necessary, as with the last question, parents were asked to give reasons or provide explanations for their responses. This was done to improve the research design of the study, for as Adegbija (1994) has observed, impressionistic or unsophisticated research designs are the bane of most language attitude or language use studies in sub-Saharan Africa. Asking parents to explain their responses enabled them to bring to bear on the study their knowledge of the language situation in Botswana. It also enabled the researchers to understand the extent to which parents understood what they were required to do.

The questionnaire was administered to employees of the University of Botswana. The university's staff is made up of people of diverse educational, ethnic, professional and socio-economic backgrounds. The large majority of people in the population sample are Batswana who speak different dialects of Setswana. Other respondents speak Ikalanga, Ndebele, Sesotho, Afrikaans and other foreign languages. It was thought that people of such diverse backgrounds should be able to respond adequately to the issues raised in the questionnaire.

However, the amount of data collected was small because of the age restriction of 6–15 years. It was difficult to find parents who had children of the stipulated ages who were willing to fill in the questionnaire.

In spite of the difficulty highlighted above, 76 respondents returned the questionnaires. After discarding questionnaires that were not properly filled out, only 67 of them were analysed for this study. Of the 76 respondents, 30 were male and 46 were female. The ages of the respondents ranged from 21 to 51. The largest age group was composed of those in the 31–40 range (32 respondents), followed by those in the age group 21–30 (21 respondents), 41–50 (20) and 50–60 (3). Their educational qualifications ranged from PhD to MA, Bachelor's degree, Higher National Diploma, Cambridge, Junior Certificate, Primary School Certificate, to those with incomplete Primary Education, or no formal education. Their professions also varied. There were lecturers, administrators, secretaries, accountants, librarians, security personnel, cleaners, cooks and some technical staff.

Generally speaking, then, the respondents are enlightened people who normally keep pace with the topical issues of the day. This is especially so because of the environment in which they operate. It is expected then that the results of the study, while not entirely representative of the broad range of people found in Botswana, would point to the language use and language preference trends, especially in the urban areas of the country. The results of the survey are presented and discussed in the following section.

## Discussion

The discussion is in two parts: the actual language use and preference patterns of the children and the language preference patterns that the parents would like to see emerging in their children's language use.

### Children's language use and preference patterns

This section is described under several headings. These are the patterns of the languages used by the children, their language preferences, language proficiency and the languages they use in the domains of school, home and playground.

#### *Patterns of language used by the children*

Four patterns of language use are evident in Table 1. By far the most predominant language use pattern is Setswana + English (as 65.67% of the respondents indicate). This two-language pattern is not surprising, as Botswana is officially bilingual in Setswana and English. Some of the respondents contend that the two languages, especially Setswana, are sufficient for their children's communicative needs. As the table shows, 96% and 90% of the respondents indicate that their children speak Setswana and English respectively. This implies that Botswana is a bilingual community where the majority of children are fluent in either or both of the official languages. In the future, Botswana may not need the other languages. In this sense, then, the risk of other languages disappearing – an idea that has caused some of the speakers of and researchers on languages other than Setswana and English considerable concern – becomes very real indeed.

The next dominant pattern is that of Setswana + English + additional language (22.38%). The third language in the three-language pattern is any of Ikalanga,

**Table 1** Patterns of children's language use

<i>Pattern of languages spoken</i>	<i>Names of languages</i>	<i>No. of respondents (67)</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Setswana	4	5.97
2	Setswana + English	44	65.67
3	Setswana + English + Ikalanga	8	11.94
	Setswana + English + Sesotho	3	4.48
	Setswana + English + Ndebele	1	1.49
	Setswana + English + Afrikaans	1	1.49
	Setswana + English + French	1	1.49
	Setswana + English + Spanish	1	1.49
4	Setswana + English + Ikalanga + Sekgalagadi	1	1.49
No response		3	4.48

Sesotho, Ndebele, Afrikaans, French and Spanish. The pattern is the natural outcome for speakers of minority languages, for not only do they need to speak Setswana, the national language and English, generally the medium of education in most schools, they need a language that shows their ethnic backgrounds. Ikalanga is certainly the largest minority ethnic group. This fact is not only shown in the 11.94% of respondents in Table 1 (a figure similar to that cited in Andersson & Janson, 1997), but also in the statistics of the numbers of people speaking the different languages. Going by the number of parents who say that their children speak Ikalanga, the generally held view in Botswana that it is one of the minority languages facing extinction may be false (see also Andersson & Janson, 1991: 48). We shall return to this issue presently.

The next language use pattern is one in which some children (as 5.97% of the parents indicate) speak only one language. Two alternative reasons may be adduced for this interesting pattern. The first is that the children involved do not attend school. This reason is not plausible, because education in government primary schools in Botswana is free. Also university staff, including cleaners, should be able to afford school uniforms and shoes, which are items that parents should be able to provide for their children. The second more plausible explanation is that the medium of instruction in government schools is Setswana. As we have already shown, English becomes the medium of instruction from Standard 5, although the RNPE of 1994 fixed its use from Standard 2. It is obvious that the expected switch from Setswana to English from Standard 5 to Standard 2 is yet to occur.

The last language pattern is Setswana + English + Ikalanga + Sekgalagadi. This language pattern is rare when compared to the others. But it is not unexpected that such a pattern would exist in a multilingual nation such as Botswana. The language pattern is certainly the result of population mobility.

#### *Patterns of children's language preference*

Two patterns emerge from the results in this section. A negligible percentage of the respondents (4.47%) indicate that their children show a preference pattern

**Table 2** Patterns of children's language preference

<i>Pattern of languages</i>	<i>Names of languages</i>	<i>No. of respondents (67)</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Setswana	44	65.67
	English	18	26.86
	Ikalanga	2	2.98
2	Setswana + English	3	4.47

of two languages. As is to be expected, the two languages are Setswana and English.

The more dominant pattern is one in which the children prefer one language. Setswana is the most preferred (65.67%). This basically is a question of the number of natural speakers of the language. English is next in rank. It is apparent that at 26.86% some Setswana, Ikalanga and speakers of the other minority languages in Botswana prefer to speak English than they do their mother tongues. However, Ikalanga is the only minority mother tongue that appears in the data, although it seems that many Kalanga children prefer English to Ikalanga. The children of the other minority languages which appear in the data, apparently, do not like to use their languages. This situation does not bode well for the survival of these minority languages. In a later section – 'Patterns of parents' language preferences' – which discusses the languages the parents prefer their children to speak, we will see whether this preference pattern is replicated.

#### *Patterns of children's language proficiency*

Language proficiency, as defined by the majority of the parents used in the study, means to 'use speech fluently and in such a way that it effectively conveys intended meanings or messages' (see Arua & Magocha, 2000: 284). This concept of proficiency encompasses the notions of grammatical correctness and communicative competence, while taking into account the differing levels of language development of the children used in the study. The use of the respondents' notion of language proficiency is, in our view, motivated. There was no need to prescribe multiple language proficiency criteria for the parents. It was enough, for our purposes, for the parents to feel that their children spoke or used their languages (the local languages and English) well. That is not to say that the parents did not bring to bear on the situation their understanding of what it means to speak any of the languages well. They did, and that is why they are able to compare their children's proficiency levels across languages.

The patterns of the children's language proficiency replicate those of language preference. The majority of children are proficient in Setswana (61.19%). Not all children who prefer English (26.86%) are proficient in it (17.91%). All the children who prefer Setswana and English (4.47%) appear to be proficient in them (5.97%). The preference and proficiency levels for Ikalanga are the same. One respondent indicated that his/her child is proficient in French although the child does not prefer it. Some parents (10.45%) did not respond to the question on language proficiency, either because they did not know the proficiency levels of the languages their children speak or because they were not able to compare proficiency levels across languages.

Table 3 Patterns of children's language proficiency

Pattern of languages	Names of languages	No. of respondents (67)	%
1	Setswana	41	61.19
	English	12	17.91
	Ikalanga	2	2.98
	French	1	1.49
2	Setswana + English	4	5.97
No response		7	10.45

Table 4 Patterns of language use in specified domains

Pattern of languages	Names of languages	No. of respondents (67)					
		School		Home		Playground	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Setswana	7	10.45	40	59.70	40	59.70
	English	36	53.73	6	8.96	9	13.43
	Ikalanga	0	–	3	4.47	0	–
2	Setswana + English	13	19.40	11	16.42	6	8.96
	Setswana + Ikalanga	0	–	0	–	1	1.49
	Setswana + Afrikaans	0	–	1	1.49	0	–
No response		11	16.42	6	8.96	11	16.42

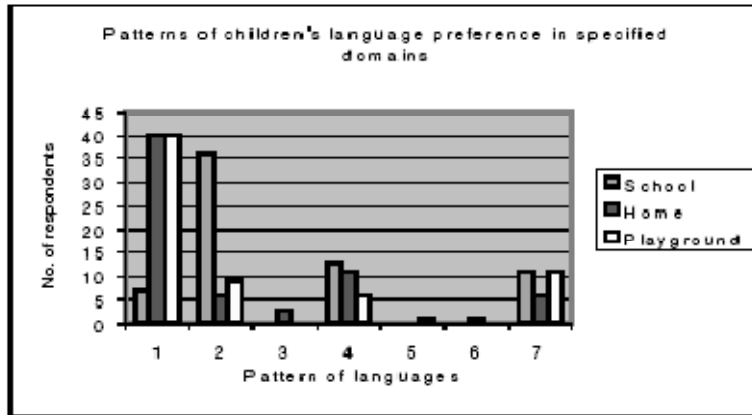
*Patterns of language use in specified domains*

The results for the languages the children use in school, home and playground are given in Table 4.

The patterns of language use are more graphically presented in Figure 1. Two patterns are apparent in the Table 4 and Figure 1. The first is one in which only one language is used in the domains specified, and the second is the simultaneous use of two languages. In the first pattern, it is clear that Setswana is the language of the home and the playground (59.70% of the respondents indicate this). Ikalanga is basically a language used at home (4.47%). It is not used in school because the Education Policy does not allow its use. It is also not used in the playground, possibly because the respondents live in an area that is dominated by Setswana. And since they understand Setswana as well, they do not need to use Ikalanga. The results clearly indicate that English is the language of the school, a result that supports the dominant role of English in the educational system in Botswana. Setswana is also used in school (10.45% – see also the second pattern).

In the second pattern, hardly any of the combinations of Setswana and Ikalanga, and Setswana and Afrikaans are used in any of the identified domains. And in instances where they are cited, they are confined to the home and playground. Appreciable use is, however, made of the Setswana + English combination, especially in the domains of the school and home. All this serves to confirm the pre-eminence of Setswana and English in Botswana.

The simultaneous use especially of Setswana and English in the domains of school, home and playground indicates the possibility of code-switching



(1) Setswana (2) English (3) Ikalanga (4) English + Setswana (5) Setswana + Ikalanga  
 (6) Setswana + Afrikaans (7) No response

**Figure 1** Patterns of children's language preference in specified domains

between English and the local languages. Code-switching is, of course, a widespread phenomenon in Botswana as it is in countries where two or more languages are in contact. Arua and Magocha (2000:287) have, in fact, observed that high school teachers inevitably code-switch between English and the local languages in their classrooms in Botswana. However, while code-switching occurs in various formal and non-formal domains, it is not regarded as a language, and is, therefore, not considered in this study, which focuses only on the recognised languages of Botswana. Nevertheless, it is a very important aspect of the sociolinguistic make up of bilingual and multilingual societies. It is thus a subject worth studying in Botswana as it has been in other bilingual and multilingual communities.

The results discussed so far confirm that the children's language use and preferences conform to the roles which the languages have been assigned both tacitly and explicitly in the language policy document. In other words, using the results of this study as a measuring instrument, it may be concluded that the government has been successful in respect of its language policy in Botswana. The question to address now is whether the parents of the children whose language use, preferences and proficiency we have discussed are in agreement with the language use and preferences of their children.

#### Patterns of parents' language preference

This section identifies the patterns of the language preference of the parents. The patterns indicate the language roles that parents want to reinforce or change. The first part of the discussion deals with the overall language preference patterns of the parents for their children, and the second, their preference patterns in the specified domains of school, home and playground.



**Table 5** Patterns of language preference of parents

<i>Pattern of languages</i>	<i>Names of languages preferred</i>	<i>No. of respondents (67)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	Setswana	12	17.91
	English	35	52.24
	Ikalanga	4	5.97
2	Setswana + English	7	10.45
3	Setswana + English +Ikalanga	1	1.49
None		1	1.49
No response		7	10.45

*Patterns of overall language preference of parents*

It is clear that the overall preference patterns of parents are at variance with the patterns of language use, preference and proficiency of their children. The majority of children (65.67%) use the Setswana + English pattern. However, while an overwhelming majority of children prefer to speak Setswana (65.67%) and are indeed more proficient in the language (61.19%) than in English (17.91%), the majority of parents (52.24%) prefer their children to speak English (see Table 5). In the two- and three-language patterns also found in Table 5, English features prominently. This response pattern is not surprising. There are many studies in Botswana and other countries where English is a second language, which indicate the locals' preference for English over the indigenous languages, because of the advantages it confers on its speakers (see, for example, Adegbija, 1994; Arua & Magocha, 2000; Balisi, 1989; Kunene, 1997).

The results here indicate that English will continue to play a leading role in all aspects of the life of the people. Now let us examine the patterns of preference for the languages in specified domains.

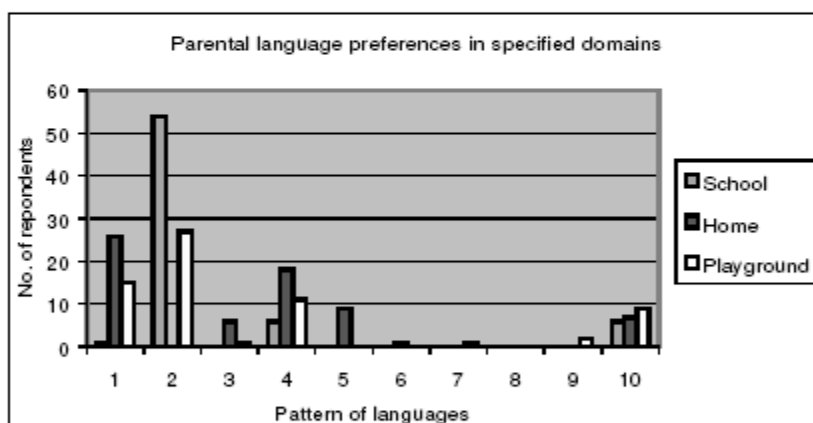
*Parental language preference in specified domains*

The patterns of parental language preference in the school, home and playground are presented in Table 6. Again, the results in the Table are more graphically presented in Figure 2.

Table 6 shows that there are four patterns of language preference. These patterns are somewhat similar to the patterns of the language use of the children (see Table 1) and their language preference patterns. In the one-language pattern, the same three languages preferred by the children are those that the parents also prefer. For the two-language pattern, neither the children (Table 2) nor their parents (Table 6) prefer languages other than Setswana + English. Of the six three-language combinations in the three language pattern (Table 1), there was only one respondent who indicated that the child preferred the Setswana + English + Ikalanga combination and one that indicated that s/he prefers Setswana + English + Afrikaans. All the other languages spoken by the children, except Ndebele, do not feature at all in either the children's or their parents' preferences. It would be surprising indeed, if the results imply that the parents suggest that these languages should not play any roles in the school, home or playground. The last pattern is one that indicates that all languages in Botswana should be used in the playground.

Table 6 Patterns of parental language preference

Pattern of languages	Names of languages	No. of respondents (67)					
		School		Home		Playground	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Setswana	1	1.49	26	38.80	15	22.39
	English	54	80.59	0	–	27	40.30
	Ikalanga	0	–	6	8.96	1	1.49
2	Setswana + English	6	8.96	18	26.87	11	16.42
	Ikalanga + English	0	–	9	13.43	0	–
	Setswana + Ndebele	0	–	1	1.49	0	–
	Setswana + Ikalanga	0	–	0	–	1	1.49
3	Setswana + English + Afrikaans	0	–	0	–	1	1.49
4	All languages in Botswana	0	–	0	–	2	2.99
No response		6	8.96	7	10.45	9	13.43



- (1) Setswana (2) English (3) Ikalanga (4) Setswana + English (5) Ikalanga + English  
 (6) Setswana + Ndebele (7) Setswana + Ikalanga (8) Setswana + English + Afrikaans  
 (9) All languages in Botswana (10) No response

Figure 2 Parental language preference in specified domains

The parents' one-language preference pattern has some interesting results. 80.59% of the parents prefer their children to speak English in school. A considerable number (40.30%) also prefer their children to use more English outside the home. In this respect, more parents indicate a preference for English over Setswana (22.39%) in the playground for their children. There is a clear indication here that parents want an expanded role for English both in and outside of school. This is especially so because the number of parents indicating that they

prefer their children to use English generally is much less than the number that indicate preference for English in the school and just slightly higher than those who indicate a preference for English in the playground. It is interesting to note that parents do not want English to play any role in the home. Not a single respondent indicated a preference for English in the home, although some children use it in that domain (see Table 4). Parents have therefore made a very clear demarcation of the domains in which English and Setswana are to be used in Botswana.

Preference for Setswana in the home and playground is unexpectedly muted. Fewer parents indicate a preference for Setswana in the home and playground (Table 6) than those who indicate that their children use it in these domains (Table 4). This does not necessarily mean that parents are advocating a diminishing of the role assigned to Setswana in the home and playground. It may indicate, as already highlighted, a desire for the expansion of the roles assigned to English.

For Ikalanga, the results are surprising. No respondent indicated a preference for the use of Ikalanga in schools. Against the background of the agitation for increased official and educational roles for Ikalanga and other languages, we thought that the results would indicate this growing agitation. However, twice as many parents prefer their children to use Ikalanga in the home and playground (Table 6) than those who indicate that their children use the language in these domains (Table 4). This shows the desire of parents to promote Ikalanga, although not within the framework of the Education Policy.

The two-language preference pattern has a total of four two-language selections: Setswana + English, Ikalanga + English, Setswana + Ndebele and Setswana + Ikalanga. Only one respondent each indicates a preference for the use of Setswana + Ndebele and Setswana + Ikalanga in the home and playground respectively. The Ikalanga + English pattern replicates the pattern already noted for Ikalanga. The Ikalanga parents used in the study want the language pattern to be used only in the home, not the school and not the playground. This result should be taken seriously, especially as the Ikalanga respondents who indicate this are about 13.43% of the total number of respondents sampled. For the Setswana + English pattern, quite a number of respondents prefer the use of both languages in all the domains. One of the inferences to be drawn is that they prefer not to use English alone in the home (see the result for English in pattern 1), rather English must be used in conjunction with Setswana in that domain. The last two patterns (Setswana + English + Afrikaans and all the languages in Botswana) are preferred by very few respondents (1 and 2 respectively for the playground).

### **Some Implications of the Study**

The study has implications for the roles already assigned to various languages and for the attitudes of the parents used in the study to the languages they speak. Some such implications are summarised below.

#### **The national language question**

In the view of the parents, the national language question is an issue that appears to be settled. An essential character of a national language is that it serves

as a lingua franca. A lingua franca is a language that is mass oriented. That is exactly what Setswana is. However, mass orientation is not merely in terms of the large number of people who speak it, but also in terms of its cutting across ethnic boundaries. The attitude of acceptance of Setswana as the national language is also clear, not only in statistical terms (96% of the respondents indicate that their children speak it), but also in the pattern of the responses to the use of the language in various domains in Botswana.

### The survival of minority languages

One interesting aspect of this study is that of the local languages (Setswana, Ikalanga, Sesotho, Ndebele) spoken by the children used in the study, none of them, except Setswana and Ikalanga, is preferred or used in any of the domains identified for this study by the children. The question that arises is how the minority languages are going to survive when the children for whom they are natural mother tongues do not prefer to speak them. An additional complication is that the parents (the owners of the languages) do not prefer their children to speak the languages even in the home and the playground. With this negative attitude to the languages identified, it is fairly certain that in the future the growth of some of the languages will be stunted further, unless the government approves them for use in some (quasi-) official capacity.

### The language of instruction in Botswana

Another interesting aspect of the study is that the respondents (of which an appreciable number is Kalanga) ignore Ikalanga (and the other local languages) as a candidate for use as a medium of instruction in Botswana's schools. One of the amendments proposed to the National Commission on Education in 1993 is that

children in pre-primary schools should be taught in the language dominant in the area where the school is located. English and Setswana should be introduced gradually. (RNPE: 84)

The recommendation was rejected on the basis that it was 'contrary to language policy' (p. 85). However, in spite of the rejection, the agitation for the adoption of minority languages as media of instruction has continued, as recommendation 5 on page 3 of the draft recommendations of the 4th Biennial conference of the National Conference on Teacher Education (2000) shows. Evidence that the government is thinking of reversing its rejection (indicated above) is found in Motlalo (2001: 4). Apparently the government wants a consultant to study the feasibility of introducing a third language as a medium of instruction in Botswana's schools.

### Conclusion

The study has shown the patterns of language use of children aged 6-15 and the patterns of language preference of both the children and their parents. One of the major findings of the study is that the people used in the study are satisfied with the roles assigned to the various languages in Botswana. English should be the primary medium of instruction in Botswana. Setswana should continue to be

the national language and should be used to some extent as a medium of instruction. Kalanga should be a language confined to the home and playground. The consequences of maintaining the status quo are clear. While English and Setswana grow from strength to strength, the other languages will continue to diminish with the possible lurking result of language death in the future. In view of the foregoing, this study recommends the expansion of the roles of local languages other than Setswana in order to improve their chances of survival.

#### Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Dr Arua E. Arua, Department of English, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana (aruaae@mopipi.ub.bw).

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