

Language maintenance or shift? Attitudes of Bakalanga youth towards their mother tongue

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This article reports the findings of a study whose objective was to investigate whether there was a likelihood of a language shift (or loss) from Ikalanga (a minority language spoken in Botswana) to either Setswana or English. The focus of the investigation was 17–25 year olds. The findings indicate that although Ikalanga (unlike indigenous languages like Khoe and Shekgalagadi) is not under imminent threat of loss, there are, nevertheless, clear indications of a gradual shift to Setswana. This conclusion was reached based on informants' language use patterns and their attitudes towards using their mother tongue, particularly around people with a different mother tongue from them. The results show that informants use Setswana frequently, even in domains where they could use their mother tongue, e.g. when speaking to peers from the same mother tongue. In addition, the responses to a question which required them to indicate which language(s) they would use with their children show that the subjects embrace linguistic diversity (a large majority indicated they would teach their children Ikalanga, Setswana and English), showing no clear conviction to Ikalanga. Some of the subjects also expressed negative feelings towards using their mother tongue around non-native speakers of the language.

Keywords: language maintenance; language attitudes; language shift; indigenous languages; minority languages; language loss

Introduction

Maintaining and upholding minority languages and cultures lies, among other things, in the hands of the young generation. For the minority languages and cultures to survive, the young generations that belong to these languages and cultures need to show loyalty to these languages and perceive them as part of their cultural identities. Failure to do so is certain to result not just in language shift and/or death but also in continued low esteem accredited to these languages. The overarching goal of the study reported in this paper was to investigate the likelihood of language shift and/or loss of Ikalanga. In order to achieve this goal, a questionnaire was devised especially to determine the attitudes of Bakalanga youth towards their mother tongue (Ikalanga). The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A consisted of questions that investigated the patterns of language use by young speakers of Ikalanga as well as their attitudes towards using their mother tongue. Part B investigated the attitudes of the subjects towards using the two official languages in Botswana, Setswana and English.¹

Background

Putting the study into perspective

The topic of attitudes of speakers towards their languages and dominant languages has been studied, particularly in countries with histories of colonial domination. This includes most, if not all, African states. Most of the investigations, however, centred on finding out the attitudes of locals towards colonial languages, which tend to be the official languages in these countries (see Bamgbose, 1982; Kembo-Sure, 1991; Mordaunt 1991; Schmied, 1985). Adebija's (1994) investigation is slightly different and interesting in that not only does it narrow its focus to sub-Saharan Africa, it also discusses attitudes of minority language speakers towards their languages, thus bringing to the fore the often ignored but very important and unique situation in most African countries, namely their multilingual nature.

On the local scene, very insightful discussions on the topic of attitudes of speakers towards their language(s) or official languages are to be found in the collection of papers edited by Batibo and Smieja (2000). Some of the articles in this book (e.g. Smieja and Batibo, 2000) specifically discuss the patterns of language use of and attitudes towards the minority languages in Botswana, highlighting the fact that such minority languages are marginalised, and that this results in language shift and/or death. In the same collection, Lukusa's (2000) investigation reveals that Shekgaladi runs the risk of extinction/death at the hands of the national language, Setswana. When asked what language(s) they preferred to see used in schools, the Bakgalagadi interviewed indicated that they would prefer to have English, Setswana and Shekgaladi in that order. Such linguistic preferences leave Shekgalagadi vulnerable to loss.

In other works conducted on minority languages of Botswana, Sommer and Vossen (2000) and Nyathi-Ramahobo (2000) point out that Shiyeyi is the most threatened language in Ngamiland, as children no longer speak this language. They note that in fact most form II leavers never used to reveal that they were Wayeyi and they did not speak the language in public. This kind of attitude is bound to lead to language shift if not indeed language death.

The Sociolinguistics of Botswana and the Language Policy

The sociolinguistics

Botswana is a multilingual and multicultural country. Batibo (2005) reports that there are 28 languages in Botswana, most of which correlate with different ethnic groups. The population of Botswana is itself small, estimated at only 1.5 million. Of the 1.5 million, 78% of the people are of Tswana ethnic origin. This includes the Bangwato, Bakgatla, Batawana, Barolong, Bangwaketse, Batlokwa, Balete and Bakwena. The rest of the population constitutes mainly peoples of different Bantu ethnic groups, the Basarwa (Khoesan), who according to Andersson and Janson (1997) constitute 4% of the population, and a small percentage of people of Indo-European descent. Of the Bantu group, the Kalanga are the largest minority group. It is estimated that the Kalanga make up 11% of Botswana's population (Andersson & Janson, 1997). The other Bantu languages of Botswana include Shekgalagarhi, Shiyeyi, Setswapon, Sebirwa, Otjiherero, Thimbukushu, Ciikuhane, Silozi, Nambya, Isindebele and Zezuru. There are more than 12 Khoesan languages

in Botswana, which include, among others: |Gana, |Gwi, Khwedam, !Xoo, #Hua, Nama, Naro, Shua, Tswa, Kua and Ju|'haon. The languages of Indo-European descent are English and Afrikaans, which is found mainly along the border with South Africa.

The language policy

The findings of this study can be understood better by mapping out the language policy of Botswana. In Botswana, only two languages enjoy official recognition: English, the official language, and Setswana, the national language. These are the two languages that are used in public domains: the media, churches, private industry, government and in education. The rest of the indigenous languages are used only within the communities that speak them where they are still threatened by Setswana, as Mooko (2006) points out, because Setswana is used at events like funerals under the pretext of accommodating those who do not speak the indigenous language.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. Section 4 describes the methodology. Section 5 outlines the theoretical framework adopted in this paper, while Section 6 discusses the findings on language use patterns and attitudes of subjects towards the mother tongue in light of the language maintenance/shift theoretical framework. Section 7 discusses the findings on subjects' attitudes towards the two official languages – Setswana and English. Section 8 provides the conclusion and recommendations.

Methodology

The data were collected mainly in the form of a questionnaire that the investigator prepared and short interviews. The subjects were randomly sampled mainly from senior secondary schools in the northern part of the country. Schools used included two senior secondary schools located in non-urban areas and two in an urban area. In terms of subjects from the senior secondary schools, the school administrations were approached and requested to provide names of students within the relevant age group who are Kalanga. Sampling of subjects from the University of Botswana was in the form of snowballing.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on language use patterns and on attitudes towards Ikalanga, Setswana and English. Specifically, the questionnaire solicited information such as the following: what language the informant uses most with peers, their feelings about using their mother tongue among peers or other people who do not speak their mother tongue, and reasons for choice of language frequently used.

A total of 232 subjects took part in the study; 97 were from urban schools, 108 were from non-urban schools and 27 were University of Botswana students. The age range of the subjects was 17–25 years. The questionnaire was given to one person at a time and the investigator or research assistant walked the subject through the questionnaire, ensuring that all questions were clear to the subject. Short interviews followed particularly on the question of specifying the domains in which subjects use Setswana outside of school. Subjects' responses to the interview questions

were documented at the back of their questionnaire by the investigator or the assistants.

Theoretical Framework

Various theoretical frameworks that explain language shift and/or extinction have been proposed in the literature, among these Batibo (2005) and Mesthrie and Leap (2000). One of the language shift and/or extinction theoretical approaches that Batibo (2005) proposes is the process-based approach. This theoretical framework focuses on the stages that a language goes through on its way to extinction and the way it loses its domains of use and its stylistic and structural complexity. Batibo (2005) identifies five phases that a language goes through on its way to extinction. In phase 1, speakers of the threatened language use their L1 in most domains while phase 2 is characterised by bilingualism, but with the L1 as the predominant language. In phase 3 there is continued bilingualism but with L2 taking a predominant role, that is, L2 takes over some of the domains that previously belonged to L1 such as village activities and family interactions. L1 is restricted to family and cultural activities. There is extensive codeswitching as well as borrowing from L2. Phase 4 is characterised by restricted use and competence in L1. L1 is now used only in specific situations such as initiation ceremonies, rituals and folkloric performances. The structural competence of L1 as well as the stylistic expressions are reduced. In phase 5 the L1 is the substratum with L2 so predominant as to replace L1.

Batibo's (2005) theoretical framework discussed here is similar to Mesthrie and Leap's (2000) language shift and language maintenance framework which follows Fishman (1964). According to Mesthrie and Leap (2000), language maintenance refers to the continued use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally and socially more powerful language, while language shift means the replacement of one language by another as the primary means of communication and socialisation within a community (Mesthrie & Leap, 2000: 253). Language shift does not happen overnight; rather it is a gradual process that goes through stages, one of which involves bilingualism of the community undergoing the shift. In the initial stage of the shift, each of the languages involved usually serves specific purposes in the community with the dominant language usually serving public and formal domains. The language that undergoes shift is usually used for informal purposes such as within the home and family. Over time, a redistribution of the roles of the languages occurs, with the dominant language taking over roles such as home language, religion and folk songs from the dominated language. Mesthrie and Leap (2000) further point out that the shrinkage of domains in the course of shift is accompanied by a decline in the younger generation's competence in the dominated language.

The frameworks of Batibo (2005) and Mesthrie and Leap (2000) are not very different from one another. The one main difference is that the Batibo framework takes into consideration factors such as the levels of reduction in stylistic expressions and simplification of L1 grammatical structures such as the phonology, morphology and the lexicon, factors which were not investigated in the study discussed in this paper. Thus, because of this, I discuss the findings of the study reported below in light of the language shift/maintenance theoretical framework discussed in Mesthrie and Leap (2000).

Findings and Discussion

The language use patterns and the attitudes expressed by the subjects in this study mirror the language policy of Botswana, as will become evident in the discussion below. The findings are described in two separate subsections below.

Language fluency and loyalty

In multilingual societies, people often know/speak more than one language. Also, sometimes one can belong to an ethnic (language) group but not speak the language of the ethnic group. This happens particularly in multilingual countries such as Botswana where there are dominant languages which are imposed on minority groups. With this in mind, the investigator thought it was necessary to not be presumptuous about subjects' knowledge of their native language but instead to establish the level of their fluency on the basis of their responses to the questionnaire. This information was elicited using a four-point attitude measurement scale. Informants were required to rate their fluency in the three languages – Ikalanga, Setswana and English – according to whether they thought they were: very fluent, averagely fluent, not very fluent or they could not speak the language at all.

The overall picture that emerges from the investigation of the level of subjects' fluency in the three languages is that a large number of the subjects at least seem to have retained their mother tongue as a relatively large number indicated that they are very fluent in it. Of the 232 subjects interviewed, 68.5% (159) indicated that they were very fluent in Ikalanga while 39.7% (92) said they were very fluent in Setswana; 16.8% (39) said they were very fluent in English; 23.3% (54) said they were averagely fluent in Ikalanga and 53% (123) said the same of Setswana, while a larger number (57.3%, i.e. 133) said they were averagely fluent in English. Smaller numbers indicated they were not fluent in any of the local languages: 4.7% (11) for Ikalanga and 2.1% (5) for Setswana, while a larger number 21% (49) said the same of English. Only 2 subjects (0.86%) claimed they could not speak Ikalanga; 2 (0.86%) said the same of Setswana and 3 (1.2%) made the same claim for English.

Although the majority of the subjects indicated that they are very fluent in the mother tongue, the fact that some (23.3%) said they were only averagely fluent in the language is a point worth discussing. This is because a decline in the competence of

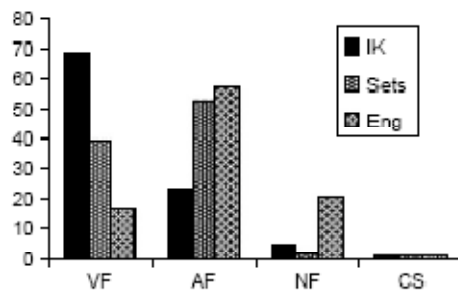


Figure 1. Rate of fluency in Ikalanga, Setswana and English. VF, very fluent; AF, averagely fluent; NF, not fluent; CS, can't speak the language.

the young generation in the mother tongue has consequences for its transmission to their own children. One of the consequences is that the variety of the language that their children will receive will be less than fluent. As Smieja and Batibo (2000) point out, if the mother tongue is not fully acquired and only average competence is attained, a shift to a dominant language is likely to occur. In this case, a gradual shift to Setswana is likely to occur as 39.7% of the informants indicated that they are very fluent in it.

Language use patterns

In order to find out the patterns of language use by the Ikalanga youth, one of the questions required the subjects to indicate what language they use with peers from the same mother tongue, Ikalanga. Signs of shift are detectable from subjects' responses to this question. While the majority, that is, 81% (174 out of 215), said they use their mother tongue, 15.3% (33) said they use Setswana.² Only 1 subject said they use English; 2.79% (6) said they use Ikalanga, Setswana and English, while 1 subject said they use Ikalanga and English. This is clearly a domain where the subjects could use their mother tongue, but once again there are signs of encroachment from Setswana. The results are summarised in Table 1.

Another point which has been identified as a factor leading to language shift and/or death is the fact that dominated languages tend to be very limited in terms of the domains in which they are used (Adegijba, 1994; Mesthrie & Leap, 2000). This is the case with Ikalanga judging from the responses to the next question, which was intended to find out the specific functions that are allotted to the Ikalanga language in these subjects' lives. The responses of the subjects show that the use of Ikalanga is limited mainly to the home or within the family; 72% (169) responded that they use Ikalanga at home and 47.4% (110) indicated that they use this language only when they speak to other native speakers of the language.³ 1.2% (3) indicated that they use Ikalanga at school and 2.6% (6) said they use Ikalanga only when they visit their villages. The rest pointed out that they did not use Ikalanga within the school environment because they were encouraged only to use Setswana or English as those are the two languages recognised in the education system in Botswana.

Several scholars, among them Crystal (2000) and Mooko (2006), have noted that one way in which a language could be sustained is if it is used within the community. Use within the community can only be effected if such use begins within the family. As the family is a smaller and close-knit unit and it is responsible for instilling norms and values in its members, it goes without saying that it plays a significant role in the transmission and consequently the sustenance of a language. The fourth question therefore was modelled on a four-point scale where the subject could measure the rate of use of each of these languages (Ikalanga, Setswana, English) within their families by choosing from the following options: often, sometimes, rarely or never. Figure 2 presents a summary of these results.

Table 1. Patterns of language use with peers from the same mother tongue.

Ikalanga	Setswana	English	Ik, Sets, Eng	Ik & Eng
81% (174/215)	15.3% (33)	0.46% (1)	2.79% (6)	0.46% (1)

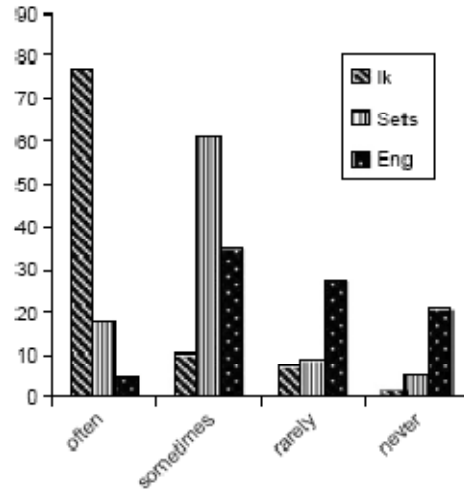


Figure 2. Frequency of use of Ikalanga, Setswana and English within the family.

According to Figure 2, 77.1% (179 out of 232) of the subjects indicated that they use Ikalanga often, while 18.1% (42) said they use Setswana often. Only 4.7% (11) indicated that they use English often. Although the majority responded that they use Ikalanga often, there is an indication that there might be a gradual shift from Ikalanga to Setswana as 18.1% said they use Setswana often. English does not seem to be a major threat as only 4.6% said they use English often. The fact that some subjects indicated that they use Setswana often within the family is consistent with the language scenario conducive for language shift described by Mesthrie and Leap

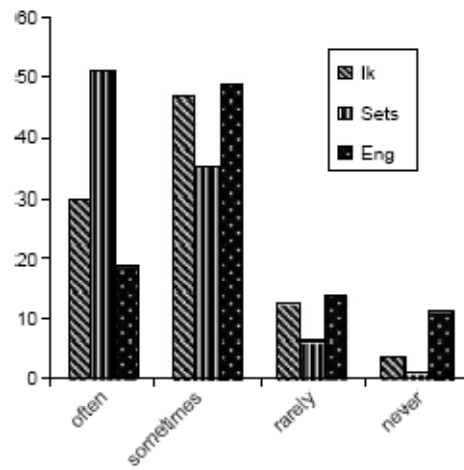


Figure 3. Rate of language use outside the family.

(2000), where a redistribution of the roles of the languages takes place with the dominant language taking over roles such as that of home language.

Another question intended to find out the language use patterns required the subjects to indicate the frequency with which they use the three languages outside the family. The results are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows that Setswana, at 50.8%, is the language that the subjects use most often, outside the home, followed by Ikalanga at 29.7%. When the subjects were asked to specify what domains they use Setswana in outside the home, they indicated that they do so when they converse with shop assistants, post office staff, at the clinic or health centre, at church and with other students at school (unless they know for a fact that the particular student speaks their language). So the results in Figure 3 confirm the view that minority languages are restricted in terms of the domains in which they serve, a scenario that can lead to language shift (Mesthrie & Leap, 2000).

Attitudes towards mother tongue

There are three questions that were specifically designed to obtain information pertaining to subjects' attitudes towards their mother tongue. One of the questions informants had to answer was on language loyalty. It required the subjects to indicate using 'Yes' or 'No' responses whether they liked their mother tongue. The responses to this question are very encouraging as an overwhelming majority, 95.1% (215) out of the 226 subjects who responded to this question, gave the answer 'Yes', while 4.8% (11) subjects said they did not like their mother tongue.

Interpreting the findings of a question such as this one and questions on attitudes in general requires caution because it is possible that the informants were providing answers which they thought the researcher wanted to hear (see Adegbija, 1994; Baker, 1992; Smieja & Batibo, 2000 on a similar point). The other issue worth noting regarding this kind of question is that being loyal to one's language may by itself not be enough to stop language shift. The two issues discussed above notwithstanding, the fact that some subjects, albeit a small number, indicated that they did not like their mother tongue is an indication of erosion of the mother tongue. That there are individuals who do not like their mother tongue is evidence of it being in danger. In the Botswana context, such a negative view of one's mother tongue can be blamed on the country's language policy, which downplays the value of indigenous languages, particularly minority ones.

The next question geared towards finding out the attitudes of the subjects towards their mother tongue required them to indicate which language(s) they would speak to their own children. The findings on this question are very interesting. The responses given show a general tendency towards embracing linguistic diversity because a total of 120 subjects (53%) indicated that they would use more than one language with their children. The 53% is split as follows: 19% said they want their children to speak Ikalanga, Setswana and English; 17.3% said they would want their children to use Ikalanga and English, while 9.8% said they would use Setswana and English; 7% said they would use Setswana and Ikalanga. Only 21.7% of the subjects said they would use only Ikalanga with their children; 13.7% chose English, while 7% chose Setswana. A very small number (4, that is 1.8%) said they would use all three languages plus an additional language not commonly used in Botswana.

The tendency to embrace linguistic diversity is not unique to the Kalanga youth. For example, Lukusa's (2000) study makes a similar observation about the Bakgalagadi. The author observes that the Bakgalagadi are very accepting of other languages, but that this openness to multilingualism might result in less proficiency in Shekgalagadi on the part of the younger generations who are susceptible to acculturation. The same could be said of Ikalanga, particularly considering the results described here. These findings do not show a strong commitment on the part of these young speakers to pass on their language to their children. Such a finding is not surprising because in order for such a commitment to exist, the speakers need to have a sense of value for their language. The language policy of Botswana marginalises indigenous languages, with the exception of Setswana. As such the policy cannot cultivate a sense of pride in speakers of minority languages as it does not attach value to these languages. It is therefore not surprising that most of these young speakers are open to diversity. For them, using other languages such as English and Setswana which are not stigmatised might save their children from experiencing low self-esteem arising from feelings of insecurity simply by the token of belonging to marginalised groups. A language can only survive if it is passed on from generation to generation. For this to happen successfully, the family plays a very crucial role: in fact successful transmission of a language and its accompanying culture can take place only if the parents see the value of such a language and culture and take on the responsibility of passing these on.

The third question on attitudes towards their mother tongue required the subjects to describe their feelings whenever they speak their mother tongue, particularly around people who do not speak the same language. Many scholars have reported that Africans have a poor image of their indigenous languages (Adejigba, 1994; Bamgbose, 2000; Mooko, 2006). This negative attitude is reflected in some of the subjects' responses to this question. Although the majority of speakers responded that they feel proud and/or confident (73.9%), a good number indicated negative feelings. For example, 11.7% said they feel ashamed and/or embarrassed, 9.1% said they feel guilty, 4.2% said they feel isolated, while 2.1% said they feel indifferent. The issue of being ashamed of one's mother tongue is not unique to these young Ikalanga speakers; it seems to be a problem for many if not all minority language speakers. For example, Nyathi-Ramahobo (2000) points out that Wayeyi school children never used to reveal that they belonged to this group, neither would they speak the language in public, as pointed out earlier. As others have observed (Lukusa, 2000; Mooko, 2006; Nthapelelang, 2007; Nyathi-Ramahobo, 2000; Smieja & Batibo, 2000, van Binsbergen, 2000), the language policy of the country is to blame for inculcating negative attitudes towards minority languages in their speakers. Not only does the language policy do this, it also breeds feelings of inferiority and insecurity among speakers of these languages (see Crawford, 1999; Mooko, 2006). No human being enjoys feelings of inferiority or insecurity. To avert such feelings, speakers of minority languages are likely to abort using their languages and begin to identify with less stigmatised groups. Needless to say, such a trend can lead to language shift and/or language death. But, as others have pointed out (Mooko, 2006; Smieja & Batibo, 2000), Ikalanga does not seem to be under imminent threat of loss like other minority languages such as the Khoe (see Chebanne & Nthapelelang, 2000). However, there are still signs that it is not completely free of such a threat. Perhaps

the only difference between Ikalanga and minority languages such as the Khoe is that in the case of Ikalanga, the shift is gradual. The reason for this might be due to the efforts that are being made to revitalise this language and the culture of its speakers.

The revitalisation of indigenous languages is a task that requires not only government involvement, but participation by the individual. For individual participation to take place successfully, government involvement is necessary, particularly in instilling a sense of pride in indigenous languages. An initial and crucial step that the government needs to take is to embrace multilingualism and multiculturalism. This can be achieved if the government ceases to regard multilingualism and multiculturalism as divisive factors and instead view them as resources that enrich the culture of Botswana. In addition, the government can contribute towards the promotion of these languages by, among other things, allowing them to be used at least at primary school level like Setswana. This requires investing money in material as well as human resource development. The government needs to realise that this is a sacrifice well overdue. In addition, indigenous languages could be used at local levels. For example, the idea of introducing radio stations that would broadcast through indigenous languages is a very appealing one. This is one way of empowering these languages and allowing their speakers access to information which can lead to personal as well as large-scale societal development. In this way, Botswana can truly boast of a non-discriminatory democracy which does not exclude any of its citizens based on ethnicity or language (Republic of Botswana, Vision 2016, 1997). Until and unless some of these measures are implemented, speakers of minority languages will continue to feel insecure and inferior (see Monaka & Kamwendo, 2007 for a similar view). As long as indigenous minority language speakers suffer from a sense of insecurity and inferiority, the tendency to shift to more prestigious languages will continue to prevail.

Attitudes Towards Setswana and English

Language use and preferences

In order to find out the subjects' attitudes towards both Setswana and English, they were given a five-point scale questionnaire with the following to choose from: very positive, positive, negative, very negative, indifferent. The majority of the responses fall in the positive range, with 40.8% (91) selecting this response, and 40.3% (90) selecting 'positive' for Setswana; 7.6% (17) selected the 'negative' response while 3.6% (8) selected 'very negative'; 7.6% (17) of the respondents selected 'indifferent'. The results for English are not very different: 55% (120 subjects) selected 'very positive', while 33.9% (74) selected 'positive'. Thus, the total number of subjects falling in the 'positive' category is only slightly higher for English (88.9%, that is, 194 subjects in all) than for Setswana (81.2% = 181 subjects); 5% (11 subjects) selected 'negative' while 2.3% (5) selected 'very negative'; 3.7% (8) said they were indifferent.

The respondents were also asked to indicate which of the two languages they use more. An overwhelming majority, 82% (183 out of 223), said they use Setswana more, while only 17.9% (40) said they use English more. Subjects were also asked which of the two languages they prefer to use. Again, Setswana came out as the preferred language: 63.6% (143 out of a total of 225) saying they preferred to use Setswana, while 36.4% (82) said they preferred English.

Table 2. Reasons why some subjects use Setswana more.

Integrative reasons	Instrumental	Personal
a. Indigenous language	a. Language of education	a. Fluent in it
b. Part of our culture	b. Language of media	b. Easy
c. The national language		c. Like it
d. Known by many people		
e. Language used to interact with peers		

Reasons for subjects' choices of language

Part of the study of attitudes towards the two official languages – Setswana and English – required that the subjects provide reasons why they use Setswana more or why they use English more. Subjects were also required to indicate the language that they prefer to use and give reasons for their choice. It is important to differentiate the language use and language preference question, although the outcomes are very similar because one may use a language more due to lack of alternatives. However, if one prefers to use one language over another, it means they have a choice and they are making a decision based on the alternatives that are available to them. For example, the statistics in the previous subsection indicate that Setswana is used much more widely than English (82% versus 17.9%). However, when asked which language they prefer to use, the percentage for Setswana goes down considerably, from 82% to 63.6%, while the preference for English goes up, that is, from 17.9% to 36.4%.

Most attitude studies that have been conducted so far group the attitude findings mainly into two main components following Gardner and Lambert (1972), namely the integrative and instrumental (attitudes). According to Baker (1992), an integrative attitude to a particular language may concern attachment to and identification with a language group and their cultural activities, and/or the need for an affiliation with a particular group. An instrumentally motivated attitude, on the other hand, is induced by a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972: 14). For the most part, the various reasons advanced by the subjects fit into the two components proposed by Gardner and Lambert. However, I recognise a third category in my results, which I have labelled 'personal'. The results are presented below in tabular form, beginning with reasons that subjects gave for using Setswana more.

A comparison of the results presented in Tables 2 and 3 is very revealing. While all three types of reasons are given for each language, the tables reveal that Setswana

Table 3. Reasons why some subjects use English more.

Integrative reasons	Instrumental	Personal
a. Accommodate the many people who cannot speak Setswana	a. Language of education	a. Fluent in it
b. Language used to interact with peers	b. Language of media	b. Easy
	c. International language	c. Like it
	d. Language of the job market	d. Want to achieve more fluency
	e. Language associated with success	e. More comfortable with it

Table 4. Reasons why some subjects prefer to use Setswana more.

Integrative reasons	Instrumental	Personal
a. Indigenous language		a. Fluent in it
b. Part of our culture		b. Easy
c. The national language		c. Like it
d. Known by many people		
e. Language used to interact with peers		

is used more for integrative reasons than for instrumental ones, while English is used more for instrumental reasons. Of the personal reasons, an interesting one advanced by subjects worth commenting on is subjects' desire to attain more fluency in English, while none said the same of Setswana. The desire to attain more fluency in English but not in Setswana can be tied down to the instrumental motives for why some subjects use English more: they see it as the language of opportunities; the language that leads to success. On the other hand, although subjects have a desire to integrate into the mainstream society and culture, they probably feel that having communicative competence in Setswana is enough to achieve this goal. Subjects were also required to indicate which of the two official languages they preferred to use and why. Tables 4 and 5 give the results of this survey.

Again, a comparison of Tables 4 and 5 is very enlightening. Although in terms of numbers, more subjects (143) indicated that they prefer to use Setswana over English, their reasons for the choice of Setswana are integrative rather than instrumental. As can be seen from Table 4, not a single reason was advanced by subjects which belong to the instrumental category, while five different reasons which are integrative were given for preferring Setswana over English. On the other hand, the opposite holds when we consider Table 5, which presents the English results. Only one integrative reason was given why English is preferred over Setswana and six different reasons, all instrumental in nature, were given to justify the preference for English. The instrumental reasons can be summed in one statement, that English is seen as the language of opportunities. The personal reasons follow the pattern already discussed under Tables 2 and 3. The only difference worth commenting on is where some subjects indicated that they prefer to use English because it gives them confidence, while none said the same of Setswana. This too can be tied to the instrumental motive for using English for to be successful, particularly in the job market/business, requires one who is confident. On the other hand, one can get by socially without displaying a lot of confidence.

Table 5. Reasons why some subjects prefer to use English more.

Integrative reasons	Instrumental	Personal
a. Accommodate the many people who cannot speak Setswana	a. Language of education	a. Fluent in it
	b. Language of technology	b. Easy
	c. International language	c. Like it
	d. Language of business	d. Want to achieve more fluency
	e. Language of opportunities	e. Gives me confidence
	f. Official language	

Conclusions and recommendations

As pointed out in the introduction, the peril or development and maintenance of a language depends among other things, on the attitudes of the youth towards that language. If the youth embrace a language and see value in it, they are likely to maintain the language and hence pass it on to their children. The findings in this study show that overall Ikalanga is not under imminent threat of extinction. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a gradual shift. The rate of the shift could accelerate in future if no measures are put into place to redress the situation.

It must be acknowledged that over the past few years the Botswana government has shown some positive attitudes towards minority languages. This has been shown, among other things, through recommendation 32 of the Revised National Policy on Education System, which suggests the introduction of a third language at community junior secondary school level. However, what is needed in order to revitalise these languages is not just recommendations which remain on paper, but the implementation of such recommendations. Thus far, this recommendation remains just that: a recommendation which has had no follow-up.

Related to the point above, it is not clear what the purpose of introducing a third language in community junior secondary schools is. That is, would third languages be introduced so that their speakers can learn to read and write in these? If this is indeed the only purpose for introducing them, it might not be a worthwhile pursuit because these courses might themselves be stigmatised just like the languages they are based on. I would therefore suggest an education system where each student is expected to learn at least one indigenous language in addition to Setswana. Setswana speakers themselves are denied the opportunity of knowing about the other languages and cultures that coexist with their own in Botswana, as they are not given an opportunity to learn about these in schools. In fact this view is resonant with that expressed by the Minister of Education, Jacob Nkate, in a speech he gave at the Official Launch of the Chikuhane Orthography at Kavimba (16 September 2006) when he said, 'I will go further to encourage all Batswana to start learning other languages spoken in the country and the world'. Thus, if the 'majority-language speakers' can receive an education which provides them with an appreciation of other cultures and their languages, perhaps Botswana can become an example of a country where indigenous languages are revived rather than buried.

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Notes

1. Note: Setswana =the language, Botswana =the country, Batswana =the people of Botswana or speakers of Setswana. Ikalanga =the language, Kalanga =the culture or ethnic group, Bakalanga =people of Kalanga ethnic group.
2. Note that sometimes the total number of responses is less than the total number of the subjects, which is 232. This is because sometimes not all subjects respond to a question. In calculating the responses, the actual number of subjects that responded to a question was taken into consideration in each case.

3. There is an overlap of responses between those who said they use the language at home and those who said they use the language with speakers of the same language, explaining the large number which exceeds the total number of respondents.

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