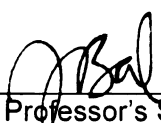This is to certify that the
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POLICY AS PRACTICE: LOCAL APPROPRIATION OF
LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION POLICIES IN LESOTHO
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

presented by

Stephen Backman

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D.   degree in   Curriculum, Teaching, and
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POLICY AS PRACTICE: LOCAL APPROPRIATION OF LANGUAGE AND
EDUCATION POLICIES IN LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

By

Stephen Backman

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Curriculum, Teaching, and Education Policy

2009

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ABSTRACT

POLICY AS PRACTICE: LOCAL APPROPRIATION OF LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION POLICIES IN LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

By

Stephen Backman

This dissertation study sets out to take a close look at the complex mix of factors on the ground, which influence the appropriation of language and education policies by local education stakeholders at Lesotho primary schools. I argue that much of the research in language policy and planning (LPP) has focused too largely on the macro-level dynamics of language policy, especially as they relate to education, while overlooking, sometimes disregarding, the local dynamics which play a crucial role in the actual implementation and appropriation of language and education policies in schools and communities.

In order to investigate the various dynamics contributing to the appropriation of language and education policy by local stakeholders, I take a "policy as practice" approach to the research. In contrast to the traditional approach to LPP research, a policy as practice approach begins with the actual practices and lived realities of key stakeholders as the unit of analysis and investigates how policies influence those practices. Thus, rather than analyzing the policy itself, a policy as practice approach analyzes language and education policies as one of many different factors which influence the attitudes and practices of local stakeholders. The intent of such an approach is to place policies in proper perspective within the multitude of factors influencing how and why local stakeholders behave and respond to their circumstances. Indeed, policy is an important factor contributing to what happens at schools, but it is only one of many.

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In this study I utilize three main conceptual frameworks to analyze the findings of a year-long ethnographic field research conducted at five selected government and private primary schools in Lesotho. Utilizing Bordieu's concepts of cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital, I analyze the multifarious mix of capital that students and their families possess, which either act as constraints on their educational opportunities or provide certain opportunities not available to those who possess less valued sources of capital. A second conceptual framework borrows from the linguistic anthropology concept of language ideologies and investigates the various competing and conflicting ideologies which play out simultaneously at schools and in the lives of teachers, students and their families. These differ greatly, especially when comparing government schools to private schools. The final conceptual framework investigates the structure-agency dynamics by exploring the role which agency plays in the linguistic and educational decisions local stakeholders make. Although there are many structural limits placed upon schools and individuals, they are still able to utilize their agency to influence their practices within certain constraints.

By taking a policy as practice approach and focusing on the lived realities of local schools and their stakeholders, this study attempts to provide a deeper understanding of the role policies take in influencing their language and educational practices. In so doing, it is hoped that language and education policy studies will gain a greater appreciation of the local dynamics which influence the appropriation of policies on the ground.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much like many things in life, I never fully appreciated the effort it takes to complete a study at the scale of a dissertation until I had to do it myself. I then began to appreciate the work that others have done for their dissertations, and most importantly, I gained a personal understanding of the appreciation they have expressed for the many people it takes to complete such a major project. There are so many people involved in the process of preparing, engaging, and writing up a dissertation that it is truly difficult to recognize and acknowledge everyone involved.

I first would like to express my deep gratitude to all of the mentors in my life who have believed in me and encouraged me to further my studies and pursue opportunities to make a difference in this world. This includes David Shuler at Brigham Young University, who was willing to sit down for over three hours with a young, eager undergraduate student whom he had never met before and point him in the right direction. His great belief and trust in me put me on the path to all I have been able to achieve since then. Similarly, I would like to thank Michael Bush at BYU who unflinchingly placed enormous responsibilities on my shoulders which he knew more than myself that I could accomplish. He set the bar high for me, which I have always tried to maintain.

At Michigan State University I have had many mentors, of which I would like to recognize a few. These include Deo Ngonyani in the Linguistics Department who became not only a mentor but a friend, David Wiley who provided me with great opportunities at the African Studies Center, John Metzler who treated me like a colleague and friend from

I would be remiss not to thank a few individuals in Lesotho by name, due to their great efforts to make my field research possible. Lois Sebatane and her husband Molapi Sebatane, the former director of the Institute of Education and now Pro-Vice Chancellor of the National University of Lesotho (NUL), were my first contact for this research and opened up more doors than anyone, to NUL, the Lesotho College of Education, and the Ministry of Education and Training, not to mention their own home, where my wife, daughter, and I stayed until we found a more permanent home. I also need to thank those at the Institute of Education at NUL, especially, Sam Motlomelo the director of the center and Pulani Lefoka, who became my colleague, mentor, and confidant. I thank the officials at the Ministry of Education, especially Paramente Phamotse, the CEO of Primary Education, for taking so much time out of his busy schedule to answer my tedious questions and clarify many concerns and queries.

And most of all, I need to express to my family for all of their support, patience, understanding, and belief in me. To my dad who is always excited and proud of anything I do, and who was always there to encourage and talk me through my struggles. To my mom who has taught me to listen to the voices often not recognized in society and who has always made me feel like I can do anything in this world. To my mother-in-law Grace, who without her coming to stay with us while I wrote my dissertation and my wife completed her degree, it would have been physically impossible to complete this work. I will always admire her patience and longsuffering, along with her great love and care for our children. To Palesa and Clyde, who are my inspiration and my joy. They brought happiness and moments of delight during my most busy and frustrating hours.

I have saved my last acknowledgement for the most important person in my life, and my greatest support and fan, my beautiful wife Claudia. She has been a shoulder to cry on, a sounding wall to unload on, a rock to steady me, and a friend to talk to. She has endured hours on end of listening to my theories, analyses, findings, discouragements, enlightenments, and conclusions. Without her listening ear and thoughtful feedback I may have never been able to process all of the information in this dissertation. I am proud of all that she has been able to accomplish during my dissertation, not willing to take a backseat to my own endeavors. She is truly an amazing woman. I'm honored to have her as my companion and best friend.

I realize there are many who deserve to be recognized whom I may have overlooked in this acknowledgement. To those I apologize and appreciate all that you have done.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Much of the literature on language in education policy (LiEP) in Africa has advocated for "mother tongue" instruction, or the use of local, indigenous languages as the language of instruction at schools. This literature draws from theories in language acquisition, cognition, pedagogy, and curriculum while also relying on postcolonial and other critical traditions of scholarship. The typical argument claims that students learn best in a language that is familiar to them (e.g., mother tongue). This is in opposition to the common practice in Africa where most state education systems have policies which favor the use of an ex-colonial language (English, French, or Portuguese) as the language of instruction at schools instead of using local, indigenous languages. There is a rich source of empirical research which supports these claims for mother tongue instruction and has been used in forceful arguments advocating changes in these policies to utilize African languages to a greater extent in schools.

Despite this scholarship which effectively advocates for the use of indigenous languages at schools, most state education systems continue to use ex-colonial, European languages as the language of instruction at schools. Perhaps more significantly, a great majority of the citizens in these countries seem to support and favor the use of ex-colonial languages at their schools. Scholars have attempted to explain this phenomenon through structuralist or postcolonial theories, claiming that the legacy of colonialism continues to play out in most African countries through neo-imperialism and other forms of inequality. They claim the use of ex-colonial languages at schools helps to perpetuate

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the inequalities that were established under colonial rule and is now used to favor the interests of the educated elite in Africa who are subsequently in control of governmental, educational, and other influential systems of society. By using a foreign language at schools, which is not commonly known to all citizens, and must often be learned in a formal setting, the educated elite are able to maintain their social status while keeping the majority of people at a lower level of education, and therefore, a lower status in society.

Many scholars argue that the complicit support of the general population of Africans for using ex-colonial languages in education is due to their being "colonized in the mind" (Ngugi, 1986) and thus buying into the current systems that oppress them. They claim that people make decisions within the structural frameworks in which they live, which largely determine the options available to them. They claim this is even more so in today's world where knowledge of English and other western languages are seen to be increasingly important in participating in the global economy and international society.

Although these arguments may help to explain the structural systems which have led to the current situation in most African countries, they do not satisfactorily explain why most parents, teachers, and students continue to support, and even push for, the use of ex-colonial languages at their schools. These theories do not take into account the lived realities and decisions which face individuals and families on a daily basis. Rather, they describe a somewhat deterministic system which perpetuates inequalities and allows little room for agency to play a role in individuals' and families' lives. These deterministic explanations are unsatisfactory because they put too much stress on the structures involved and leave out the role of individuals. Under such models the only real

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way structures can change is by changing policies from the top down. Therefore, much of the scholarship on LiEP in Africa has argued for changes in policies at the national education system level. As mentioned before, the scholarship in this field is quite sophisticated and convincing, drawing upon strong theoretical traditions and a wealth of empirical evidence. But even so, this approach has done little to influence significant changes in education policies and practices, especially as they apply to the local level of schools and communities on the ground.

In this study, I investigate the language policy issue from a more local perspective. In doing so, I attempt to understand the role that lived realities and every day decisions play into the attitudes and actions parents, teachers, and students have towards the use of language at their schools and towards education in general. Further, I attempt to gain a better understanding of the role agency plays in the attitudes and practices of those with whom I worked. Throughout this study I attempt to understand not only what constraints are placed upon individuals, families, and schools by the structures imposed upon them, but also what opportunities are presented to them through the systems and resources available to them. By doing so I hope to portray a situation in which not only constraints, but also opportunities present themselves to local participants in various, complex ways. It is within these constraints and opportunities that actors make decisions which influence not only their own lives, but systems around them. By conducting an ethnographic study of local primary school stakeholders in Lesotho schools and communities I attempt to draw out some of the complexities of their lived realities and come to a better understanding of how they influence larger policies and practices in education.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review/Theoretical Frameworks

Chapter 2 discusses four main theoretical concepts which have driven this study and are used for its analysis. The first discusses the history and development of language policy and planning (LPP) as a distinct field of study. The second is a discussion of language ideologies, especially through the lens of linguistic anthropologists as they attempt to explain the daily uses and perceptions of languages in their various contexts. The third, drawing largely upon the theories of Bourdieu, explores different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) which contribute to the constraints and opportunities facing individuals within societal structures and systems, especially with regards to educational decisions and practices. The final concept I will discuss in Chapter 2 is that of agency and how it is conceptualized in this study. I will briefly explain each of these here, but will go into much greater detail in Chapter 2 itself. In conclusion, I discuss how these four theoretical concepts work together to produce a theory of "policy as practice" which analyzes how language and education policies end up being received, interpreted, appropriated, and implemented by local populations in actual practice on the ground in schools, homes, and communities.

Language policy and planning

With regards to research on language planning and language policy there have been three main theoretical traditions. The first of these is a technocratic and descriptive

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approach where scholars and practitioners have attempted to describe the essential

components of language policies and develop models of best practices, with the ultimate

goal of developing language policies that will lead to the development, unification, and

modernization of nations. The field of LPP under this theoretical tradition has often been

portrayed as a "neutral", scientific field with little ideological concerns. This technocratic

approach mainly came out of the larger field of national development during the 60s

when there was a great focus on decolonization and creating newly independent states. It

has continued on today in many different forms.

The second phase of LPP research is largely in reaction to the first. As

development projects and nation building efforts began to show signs of failure, many

scholars began to question and criticize the technocratic approach to LPP. They have

argued that LPP is not a neutral field of study and is strongly influenced by ideological

preferences, regardless of whether these biases are recognized or acknowledged at all.

Critical scholars of LPP in this phase have claimed that many of the efforts to create

unifying and modernizing language policies has had the opposite effect by perpetuating

the inequalities developed under colonial rule and in many countries has resulted in even

greater dependence on the former colonial powers. Powerful arguments within this

approach include concepts such as linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), linguicism

(Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1986), and language ecology (Phillipson & Skutnabb-

Kangas, 1996). These concepts maintain that western languages, especially English, have

been utilized by dominant forces to create and maintain a global hegemony over

subordinate populations. They also argue that many language speaking communities are

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their accompanying cultures) towards extinction. This branch of LPP argues that we must work against these forces by fighting for linguistic human rights and implement policies that work against the neo-imperialistic, hegemonic forces in order to reverse the current negative trends.

The third phase of LPP research has, in turn, developed out of reactions towards this critical approach. Although most scholars in this third trend would agree with the overall claims of critical LPP theorists, they believe that critical theories are also too deterministic and do not sufficiently explain the complexities of language issues in the world today. Even though there are powerful global and national forces which strongly influence the language policies, attitudes, and practices of local communities, they do not determine how local actors appropriate, resist, and/or accommodate these forces. This trend of LPP research calls for a greater focus on local interactions with LPP issues in order to understand how local populations and individuals act as agents who "take over, appropriate, adapt, adopt, and reuse" (Pennycook, 2000, p. 116) English and other global languages for their own purposes and intents.

Another important concept in this approach is to look at language practice on the local level in terms of resistance theories. Resistance theorists acknowledge that social institutions impose a powerful reproductive force on society in general, but this does not change the fact that local actors interpret and react to these institutional forces through their own particular historical and culturally situated identities. It is through the agency of local actors, resistance theorists claim, that we find the possibility for changes and modifications in the status quo. Scholars that fit this model include Canagarajah (1999), Pennycook (2001), and Ramanathan (2005). These critical theories on LPP help to

explore the dynamics between the constraints placed upon actors by the structures of systems and policies along with the possible actions and reactions, either through resistance, conformity, or a mixture of both, through the agency they possess within the structures placed upon them.

Language ideologies

The second theoretical concept I draw upon is that of language ideologies as it is explored in the field of linguistic anthropology. In *Language Ideology: Practice and Theory* (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998), a collection of influential linguistic anthropologists explore the concept of language ideologies through various cultural contexts and linguistic situations. Their conception of language ideologies differs from those employed by the LPP theorists discussed above because its focus of research is on linguistic differences within particular linguistic and cultural groups rather than those of competing global languages and cultures. Therefore, rather than focusing on the macro-level dynamics of a dominant linguistic group imposing its will upon less powerful populations (i.e., colonial powers implementing English as the language of education), linguistic anthropologists strive to understand the micro-level dynamics of why people choose to use different forms of language over others within specific sociocultural contexts.

By focusing on the micro-level dynamics this approach allows us to analyze the particular contextual realities which influence the linguistic decisions made by groups and individuals. It also helps to explain how individual and group choices are informed and influenced by larger macrosocial issues. For example, it is easy to state that Sesotho speakers in Lesotho are "colonized" in their minds when they express a preference for

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English as the language of instruction at school (which many reproductive-oriented critical LPP theorists would argue), but this does not help to explain why those same Sesotho speakers prefer to use their own language in nearly every other social context, often including official politics and many aspects of official business. By parsing out the specific influences of the local sociocultural contexts combined with forces from the outside world, we are able to better understand why sometimes seemingly contradictory choices are made by individuals under specific contexts. One of the most useful aspects of using language ideologies as a theoretical framework for this study is that it provides a mechanism to link actions of local agency within structural limitations imposed by national and global forces.

Forms of capital

The third theoretical concept I draw upon for this study is that of different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic). This concept draws largely upon the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1986) and his discussion of different forms of capital. Bourdieu's concept of capital helps to analyze the educational and linguistic decisions actors make for their own families' lives beyond just language policy decisions. I argue that one of the shortcomings of the critical LPP theorists, with regards to the influence of language policy in education, is that they analyze LiEP issues without taking enough account of social and cultural influences outside of language-specific issues in education. Educational stakeholders are concerned with many competing issues at the same time, of which language policy is only one – and often not the most important – according to local stakeholders. Therefore, although language issues play a significant role in the education of children, especially when they are being taught in an unfamiliar language, they often

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are not the most important, or most pending, issues which weigh into local stakeholders' decisions. By exploring the different sources of capital available to local stakeholders, especially teachers, school children, and their families, we are able to see the conflicting and competing factors that go into the decisions that they make. In addition, we are able to gain a better understanding of which factors pose structural limits upon individuals and which areas offer opportunities for potential acts of agency within the larger social structures imposed upon them. By exploring the dynamics between constraints and opportunities in individuals' lives we can gain a greater understanding of why students, families, teachers, and other educational stakeholders make the decisions they do and how their decisions influence societal structures and policies around them.

Agency

The final theoretical concept I rely on for analysis in this study is that of agency. The notion of agency is often an illusive one, with many different fields of study having divergent ways of conceptualizing and understanding what agency is and what role it plays in social dynamics. Therefore it is important to provide a thorough definition of the concept, along with an explanation of the role it plays in social interactions. The basic definition I use for agency is borrowed from Ahearn (2001, p. 112) which states that, "Agency is the socioculturally mediated capacity to act." The expanded definition I provide in Chapter 2 emphasizes that agency is not completely free will and is highly influenced and structured by sociocultural influences, both local and global. In the way I conceptual agency, it is rational and conscious, but only to the extent that groups and individuals make the best decisions they can based upon the knowledge, experience, and understanding available to them. Agency can be performed through acts of resistance, but

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acts of agency do not necessarily mean individuals are resisting. It can often be performed through acceptance, accommodation, or hybridization of structural forces. Within this study the concept of agency is very important because it is what mediates between structural forces, as Bourdieu's forms of capital help to explicate, and local ideologies and individual interests. It is through agency where the possibilities of social transformation and real changes lie. It is also through agency where policy and practice meet in the actual appropriation of policies on the ground.

In short, by focusing on the linguistic and educational attitudes and practices of local stakeholders in Lesotho schools and communities, I attempt to provide a more complex and nuanced understanding of how global and national forces (such as national language and educational policies) impact local actors and institutions (such as schools and families) while also investigating to what extent the role agency plays in the actual attitudes and responses which local stakeholders display through their practices. By utilizing these theoretical frameworks we can hopefully obtain a better understanding of the implicit role that local actors and the realities within which they live play in maintaining social inequalities while also gaining a better appreciation of their potential power agency provides to effect changes to the status quo, for better or for worse.

Policy as practice

At the end of Chapter 2, I have a discussion on how the four theoretical concepts discussed above come together to form a theory of "policy as practice" through which the findings of this study are interpreted and analyzed. In more traditional approaches to education policy research scholars have focused on the theoretical and social foundations of policies along with their intended implications for educational practices. Policy

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research is often concerned with how to produce the most "effective" policies that will address educational "problems" which have been identified by key educational stakeholders. Traditionally this has been done with a top-down approach, with policy makers at national, regional, or other macro-levels devising policies which have implications for the local level of schools and communities.

The "policy as practice" approach, in contrast, begins with the actual practice of policies on the ground level (in schools, homes, and communities) and analyzes what factors, at both the micro and macro levels, have an influence on how things are done in actual practice, regardless of whether these practices follow the intended policies or produce unintended results. This approach has less to do with trying to come up with the most "effective" policies for education, but rather looks at how and why education is practiced in actuality. This approach attempts to draw connections between policy decisions and how they are realized in actual practice by focusing on local factors, such as, the attitudes and lived realities of local stakeholders, the social, economic, and cultural constraints placed upon individuals, schools, and communities, and the role of individual and community agency in the appropriation, resistance, conformance, and/or rejection of certain policies actualized through local stakeholders' practices. In short, the "policy as practice" approach theorizes that policies should be interpreted through the ways in which they are performed in actual practice. This in turn can inform policy decisions by understanding how local stakeholders potentially will receive, interpret, and implement policy mandates from above. Without a strong understanding of the factors influencing the actual appropriation of policies on the ground level, then policy formation can be a misinformed and counterproductive enterprise. This is because ultimately it is

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local stakeholders who have the final decision on how and whether or not to implement language and educational policies at their schools and within their own lives.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 3, I discuss the epistemological approach taken in developing a methodology for this study, along with describing the particular methods which I utilized while conducting research in Lesotho and the specific sites I worked at. The nature of this research is largely ethnographic in which I employed the strategies of participant observation, observation notes, interviews, focus groups, and artifact collection. The majority of my time was spent evenly between government and private primary schools working in classrooms with teachers and students from selected Standard 4 and Standard 7 classes. Over time I came to know the students and teachers quite well and through informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, and participation in school activities, such as teaching, marking assignments, maintaining discipline, eating lunch with teachers, and playing with the children on the playground, and thus I was able to gain a sense of their general attitudes and practices towards issues regarding education and language policies and practices. Through these observations and conversations I was able to conduct thorough interviews with the teachers, selected groups of students, and their parents. Interviews with the teachers were conducted on school grounds, interviews with students were conducted with focus groups of 6-12 students at a time, and interviews with the students' parents were conducted in their homes and communities. In addition, I lived for part of the time in a community where students from one of the government and

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In support of my ethnographic research in the schools and communities I also conducted lengthy interviews with leading officials from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), principals of other primary schools in the area, and worked collaboratively with a few scholars at the National University of Lesotho and the Lesotho College of Education. Through working with these scholars and officials I acquired official documents on national education and policy decisions, research studies on education in Lesotho, demographic and other information on the schools I worked with, samples of curriculum materials, teachers' lesson plans, students' class work, and exam results. These sources of information were extremely valuable in understanding both the local and national contexts within which the schools operated and the students lived.

Chapter 4: Sources of Capital for Government School Families

Chapter 4 uses Bourdieu's different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) to describe and analyze the constraints and opportunities which face families who send their children to government schools. Through my field research I found there were four different categories in which families fit. These were (1) those families which are so limited in their different sources of capital that they are restricted to sending their children to Free Primary Education (FPE) government schools only, whether they like it or not, (2) those families which potentially have the economic capital to send their children to a private primary school but choose not to, due to various reasons, (3) those families who have just enough economic capital to send their children

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In this chapter I analyze the different sources of capital that contribute to the decisions which families in the first two categories make for the education of their children. In doing so, I draw from the stories of a few selected students' families, as told to me through interviews and observations, to illustrate how these different sources of capital combine together to limit and constrain the choices available to these families on various levels. The purpose of this chapter is to show that some families are more constrained than others by the structures imposed upon them, but they all have opportunities to exercise their agency, although to differing degrees and with differing levels of consequences.

One of the important aspects to each of these students' lives is the amount of linguistic capital they can draw upon from their families and community networks. The lack of knowledge of English and/or support in gaining proficiency in English plays a strong role in the ability of students to benefit from their educational opportunities. It also goes a long way in shaping what type of employment and educational opportunities are available to them in the future.

Chapter 5: Sources of Capital for Private School Families

Chapter 5 is a continuation of Chapter 4 in that it analyzes the lived realities of the families of students who fall into the categories 3 and 4 listed above. These are families

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who decided to send their children to private schools. In this chapter I focus more on the opportunities presented to families who have greater sources of capital in a combination of forms. Through illustrating the families' stories, as were told to me through interviews and observations, I attempt to describe how the different forms of capital available to these students and their families work in combination to help open up opportunities, and at times impose limiting constraints, upon families in divergent way. Although each of the families manage to pay for their children to go to an English Medium private school, their experiences are not the same, as some students benefit more from their educational experiences than others.

In this chapter I try to tease out how the structural forces of society differ for these families compared to those who send their children to government schools. I pose questions such as: What is it about these families' lives that allow them to make more beneficial decisions for their children's educational experiences? What role does agency play in these decisions? Do some families succeed simply because they make better decisions or have greater ambitions? Or are there social, cultural, economic, or other structural realities that make it more possible for some families to make certain educational decisions while others cannot? By investigating these issues in detail I attempt to show the complicated nature of how structure and agency play together in the decisions of families and individuals. All families use their agency to make decisions, but the sources of capital available to them have a strong impact on shaping the range of choices which are available to them, thus limiting the power of agency for some families compared to others.

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Chapter 6: Ideological Influences on Language Policy in Lesotho

In Chapter 6, drawing upon the theoretical framework of language ideologies, I discuss the ideological influences, largely from national and global levels, which have helped to shape and maintain the current language in education policy in Lesotho. By drawing upon interviews with ministry officials, teachers, and parents, I argue that there are two main macro-level ideological influences which have helped to shape the language policies in Lesotho as they currently stand. These two influences come from the continued legacy of colonial language policies and educational practices along with the global hegemony of English.

As a former colony of Britain, Lesotho is still largely impacted by its colonial past. In many ways, the education system in Lesotho continues to operate under the structure that was implemented by the colonial regime. Through interviews and observations I provide examples of how this colonial legacy continues to influence the educational practices in Lesotho. Although some policy changes have been made to make education more relevant to the lives of Basotho, there are still many policies which have carried over from colonial days that key stakeholders believe should be replaced by more updated and socially relevant policies. Included amongst these is an examination system which still sends the matriculation exams of high school students to the United Kingdom to be marked and sent back to Lesotho for official results. One of the most lasting legacies which has carried over since colonial times, without much criticism or resistance, is the use of English as the language of instruction at schools. I discuss how this has had a strong influence on maintaining current language policies in Lesotho and

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has led most educational stakeholders to accept the use of English as a medium of instruction at schools as a natural and unquestioned practice.

In addition to the colonial legacy of English, there may be an even stronger global ideology which has helped to maintain the dominant status of English in education in Lesotho. This is the global hegemony of English. Through interviews and observations with various educational stakeholders, I show how the global dominance of English has had a strong influence on how people in Lesotho view the importance of English and its role in education. In this study, the great majority of people stated that they feel it is important for students to use English at schools because in the end it is English that will give people the chance to get a good job. They stated it is important to learn English because it is an international language and is therefore essential to understand. There are many different influences in Lesotho society which have reinforced these sentiments and have caused the majority of people to feel that English should continue to be used as the official language of instruction at schools.

Chapter 7: Ideological Influences on School Practices

In Chapter 7, I describe and analyze the language attitudes and practices of teachers and students in their schools. From my observations there was a great difference between the language practices in the English Medium private schools compared to those in the government FPE primary schools. The English Medium schools begin from day one in Standard 1 (and at some schools even earlier in pre-school) by using English as the language of instruction for all subjects other than Sesotho. At the government schools the official policy states that Sesotho is to be used as the language of instruction up through

Standard 3. Then at Standard 4 they are to switch to using English as the language of instruction. I conducted research in Standard 4 and Standard 7 classrooms, and thus, the policy for both private and government schools was officially the same. But in practice it was very different. At each private school I worked with they strictly stuck to the English-only policy, but in each of the government school classrooms they rarely, if ever, used English only as the language of instruction. This led to interesting questions of why the two different types of schools implemented similar policies in very different ways.

In addition to analyzing the daily language practices in private and government primary schools, this chapter also analyzes the attitudes of different stakeholders towards the use of Sesotho and English in school and outside of school. Through interviews with parents and teachers along with focus group interviews with students I analyze the differing attitudes towards languages and linguistic practices of stakeholders from various backgrounds and social classes.

Overall there is a prevailing attitude that English should indeed be the language of education and that proficiency in English is essential to obtaining well paying jobs and opportunities which will lead to progress and success, both economically and socially. Therefore, nearly all of the participants in this study favored using English as the language of instruction at primary schools. The attitudes of students and parents were complex and varied when it came to using Sesotho versus English in different social contexts. The majority of students from both private and government schools discussed how they were embarrassed to use English on the playground or in their neighborhoods because they would be made fun of by their peers. Parents also commented on how they

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privileged Sesotho over English in most contexts of their lives, but when it came to formal education and the economic sector of society, English was usually aspired to.

The analyses of these attitudes and practices show that the language practices of groups and individuals are complex and largely influenced by a number of conflicting ideologies at the same time. Nearly all of the participants stated that they were proud of their Sesotho language and felt it was important to continue to teach their children the local language and culture in school. By exploring the different practices and attitudes stakeholders have towards languages we are able to move beyond the assumption that oppressed populations are merely "colonized" in their minds by favoring colonial languages over their own. They have many legitimate reasons from their own lived experiences to favor English over Sesotho under certain contexts.

The theoretical concept of language ideologies is helpful in analyzing these issues because it focuses on the diversity of ideological influences which play into these attitudes and practices. Both global and local ideologies play a role in the ways local actors perceive of and utilize language in their lives. By investigating how these different ideologies work in combination, and sometimes in conflict, with each other we can gain a better picture of the complexity involved in language choice and language practice at schools.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the concluding chapter I tie together the main points which I feel are emphasized from this dissertation. The overall argument of the dissertation is that language policy issues in education, at least in Lesotho, need to be understood within the

particular social, historical, economic, and linguistic context of the country, especially at the local level. If you fail to take into account the complexities and conflicting interests and needs manifested in the attitudes and realities of local stakeholders' lives, then it becomes easy to oversimplify LiEP, or any other educational policy issue, to macro-level ideological debates over neo-imperialistic interests versus local indigenous interests. By focusing on micro-level ideological issues, the differing sources of capital available to individuals and communities, and the role of agency in their decisions, then we can gain a more sophisticated understanding of the complexities involved in educational, linguistic, and other policy issues and how they are inherently connected and intertwined with conflicting pushes and pulls of individuals' lives and the larger society's interests. With such an understanding we may be in a better position to influence policies which will have a better chance of being effectively implemented and address the educational needs of students.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review/Conceptual Frameworks

Introduction

Language policy has been a highly debated topic in many countries and regions

throughout the world. This is especially true in most African countries which are faced

with a number of factors impacting language policies and practices, including a deep,

persistent colonial legacy, great linguistic diversity, powerful global pressures, and

divergent national interests. The language debate often intensifies when it comes to

policies that specifically pertain to language-in-education (LiEP) policies and practices.

Unfortunately, in many cases this debate, especially in Africa, usually gets reduced to a

dichotomous dispute over whether, and when, schools should use ex-colonial languages,

such as English, versus indigenous, national languages as the medium of instruction. The

prominent voices in this debate have often been academic scholars, educational and

linguistic activists, and national policy makers. The voices of teachers, parents, students,

and other local stakeholders are seldom heard and frequently ignored in these debates,

even though they are the actors most directly impacted by language and education policy

decisions.

The main objective of this study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the

various social and cultural factors which influence the attitudes and practices of local

stakeholders in response to the language-in-education policies (LiEP) placed upon them

in their schools. Among these factors include: competing language ideologies (local,

national, and global); various social, material, and structural constraints imposed upon

them; and the extent to which agency provides groups and individuals with the ability to

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respond to their particular circumstances in a diversity of ways. In an attempt to better understand how and why language and educational policies end up being interpreted and implemented in specific ways in actual practice, it is important to look at the complex mix of factors which influence local stakeholders' attitudes, actions, and reactions to these policies. In order to do so I use an approach which I call "policy as practice". I will discuss this approach in more detail later in this chapter. In short, a policy as practice approach analyzes policies through the ways policies are realized and appropriated in actual practice by focusing on the local and global factors which influence these practices.

For this study, I initially set out with the goal of seeking a better understanding of this complex mix of factors in the lives of local educational stakeholders who are most directly impacted by language and school policies in actual, everyday practice; namely, teachers, students, and their families. With this goal in mind, I originally set out to conduct field research with the overriding questions of:

1. What are the extent and variety of local viewpoints about and attitudes toward language use at primary schools in Lesotho?

2. What factors in local stakeholders' lives influence these various viewpoints, attitudes, and practices with regards to language and school practices?

These questions became quite significant to me as I became more familiar with the research and scholarship on LiEP issues in Africa and eventually noticed what seemed to be a lack of local voices in the literature. Much of the research on LiEP in Africa has been dominated by prominent voices of scholars and activists with their own ideas about how and why current policies do not serve the needs of the great majority of

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Africans. Their arguments often come with recommendations on how to remedy or change these policies to better serve common Africans. They are usually couched in language which claims to be speaking for, or on behalf of, the underprivileged and oppressed populations of Africa, but they rarely have empirical evidence which documents the attitudes, perceptions, and practices of the local stakeholders they claim to be speaking for. Most of their claims and recommendations are based on well-established theories developed through macro-level, comparative international research, but they often make considerable assumptions about the attitudes, needs, and perceptions of local actors which are often not accompanied by micro-level empirical evidence on the ground.

In my initial studies on LiEP in Africa, I found these theories very useful in explaining the role that language policies play in establishing and perpetuating the inequalities found in many African societies. But through my own experiences of living and conducting research in different parts of Africa – especially through my research in Lesotho – I began to question some of the assumptions upon which these claims have been made. For example, there are many LiEP scholars who claim (based on linguistic, cognitive, and educational theories) that it is in the best interest of local African populations to use a local, indigenous language as the medium of instruction at schools rather than an outside language, such as English. When I first began my research, I also felt it was best for students to be instructed in a familiar, indigenous language at school. But through various conversations over the years with local stakeholders, the prominent viewpoint has been that the majority prefer English as the language of instruction at their schools rather than local, indigenous languages. Academic scholars and activists have often dismissed these local attitudes as a confirmation of their theories of hegemony and

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neo-imperialism (which I will discuss in more detail in the next section) and see it as evidence that local actors have become "colonized" in their minds (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986). This explanation seems to disregard many of the lived realities of people on the ground level. Therefore, I felt there was a need for more research which documents how LiEPs are perceived of, received and/or resisted, and implemented in practice on the ground level in Africa in order to know whether or not these assumptions are justified. That is why I decided to conduct an ethnographic study of the attitudes, perceptions, and practices of local stakeholders at a few primary schools in Lesotho.

In order to better understand where this study potentially fits within the literature on LiEP issues in Africa and how it may contribute to the field, I will first discuss the history and developments of the many different theories and trends which have influenced the study of language policy and planning (LPP) in general. I will also discuss how these ideas have been applied more particularly to Africa and where research in the field seems to be heading these days. After a discussion about the field of LPP, I will then follow with a few sections discussing the major theoretical frameworks which have been utilized to analyze the ethnographic data from this study.

Language Policy and Planning

The role of language in society has been debated for centuries. Philosophers throughout history have discussed the importance and complexity of language and its role in society. During the transformations of European society in the 17th and 18th century, Philosophers such as Locke and Herder paid particular attention to language and its role in the development of modern nation states (Bauman & Briggs, 2000). In the

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contemporary era of academic scholarship, language has become a contested topic in a variety of disciplines, including: anthropology, sociology, political science, education, and linguistics. Even with this strong tradition of contemplating the role of language in society, the study of language policy and planning (LPP) was not formally recognized as an identifiable field of scholarship until the 1960s.

Thomas Ricento (2000) helps us to understand the historical developments of LPP as a field of research ever since World War II by dividing the field into three different "stages" or "phases" of development. In determining these stages he identifies prevailing macro sociopolitical, epistemological, and strategic factors which have influenced each phase in different ways. Drawing upon Ricento (2000), I will label the three stages, with there accompanying prevailing influences, as follows: (1) *Technocratic state formation –* decolonization, structuralism, and pragmatism, (2) *Disillusion and criticism of LPP –* failures of modernization, critical sociolinguistics, and access, and (3) *Focus on the local – postmodernism,* linguistic human rights, and attention to local agency. In the sections that follow I will discuss each of these stages in greater detail.

Phase 1: Technocratic state formation

The first of these stages arose during a time of great transition and change in many parts of the world. With a large number of nations having recently gained independence from their colonial rulers in the 50s and 60s there was a push to develop "scientific" and systematic approaches to assist in the formation of these new states. LPP was determined as one of these national development approaches. Das Gupta & Ferguson (1977), two of the leading LPP researchers of this first stage, described the field as "a latecomer to the family of national development planning" while suggesting that

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"developing language, education, communication and the economy needs to be considered in a systematic way" (p. 4). Joshua Fishman (1974), arguably the most influential LPP scholar of this early phase, described language planning as "merely an attempt to influence [language] usage more rapidly, more systematically, and more massively" (p. 26).

In an effort to address what was perceived as the "language problem" for these new, developing nations LPP scholars focused on developing typologies, strategies, and approaches that would promote unification, modernization, efficiency, and democratization (Ricento, 2000, p. 199). Researchers developed different models and typologies with which to approach LPP issues. According to Spolsky (2004), much of the field's approach at the time was based upon Haugen's (1966) model for language planning and Kloss's (1969) concepts of "corpus planning" and "status planning".

Haugen's (1966) model suggests four main areas of focus in language planning: (1) identifying a language problem and establishing goals, (2) codifying languages through grammatical and lexical developments, (3) implementing the plans, and (4) elaborating and revising language plans and policies. Kloss's (1969) designation of corpus planning and status planning, on the other hand, influenced the field to specify its research along the lines of linguistic (corpus planning) and sociocultural/political (status planning) aspects of LPP. Corpus planning, under this designation refers to the planning of the language aspects themselves, meaning the development of an appropriate orthography, lexicon, and overall language standards. Status planning refers to planning the role and status that specific languages will have in society.

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Viewing their models and approaches as scientific and systematic, LPP practitioners believed their work was largely apolitical and ideologically neutral. But the decisions they made had long-term ideological and sociopolitical impacts wherever their models were adopted and implemented. The common view was that nations needed a single, unifying language which would lead them to modernization and development. Ricento (2000) suggests that "a consensus view… was that a major European language (usually English or French) should be used for formal and specialized domains while local (indigenous) languages could serve other functions" (p. 198). This was because European languages were deemed to be the only languages "developed" enough to fulfill the role of national language. Linguistic diversity was viewed as an obstacle to national development, while linguistic homogeneity was associated with the ideals of modernization and Westernization. As a result, these sociolinguists and policy analysts ended up "facilitating (wittingly or not) the continued dominance (if not domination) of European colonial languages in high status domains of education, economy, and technology in developing countries, a situation which persists to the present day" (*ibid*, 199).

Luke, McHoul, & Mey (1990) describe the work of these LPP scholars as one in which they saw their task as "ideologically neutral" which simply entailed the description and formalization of language(s) (corpus planning) and the analysis of the sociocultural statuses and prescription of the official uses of language(s) (status planning). They "tended to avoid directly addressing larger social and political matters within which language change, use and development, and indeed language planning itself are embedded" (p. 27). As was common in the larger field of linguistics at the time,

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languages were abstracted from their sociohistorical and cultural contexts and studied as an object in solely structural terms. Therefore, there was justification for viewing language as a "neutral" tool that could be used for "national" interests. The ultimate goal at the time was the formation of unified and modern nation states, but in the process they overlooked more complex, yet fundamental, issues such as language choice, individual and group identities, socioeconomic structures, and hierarchies of inequality (Ricento, 2000).

Therefore, the early stage of LPP can be viewed as a major sub-field of national development planning, in which one of the main goals was to develop policies and plans that would lead to progress, development, and modernization for nation states. Its endeavor was rather technical in nature with a focus on how to address various kinds of "language problems" in the most scientific, efficient, and systematic way possible. As Pennycook (2001) describes the field during this phase,

> language planning as an academic area grew up at the same time as the more
>
> general social scientific orientation toward positivism, and thus its practitioners
>
> tended to work with the belief that questions of language policy could be solved
>
> by the application of scientific and technical models. (p. 55)

Phase 2: Disillusion & criticism of LPP

As the modernization and national development projects in post-colonial states began to be regarded as largely unsuccessful, and even detrimental, by many scholars and practitioners, the approaches taken towards LPP also began to shift and change. Instead of being seen as an endeavor for national development for the good of developing nations, these efforts began to be criticized for the negative impact they were having on

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their societies. Ricento (2000) claims that many "newly independent states found themselves in some ways more dependent on their former colonial masters than they had been during the colonial era" (p. 200). This new sense of uneasiness with the field of LPP, combined with new epistemological approaches to sociolinguistics and other social sciences, led to a phase of criticism and introspection about the goals, and ultimately the consequences, of LPP research and practice.

Gibson Ferguson (2006) succinctly describes the state of LPP during this phase:

By the 1980s and early 1990s language planning…, as a discipline and an activity, had also become the object of a battery of criticisms deriving from Marxist, post-structural and critical sociolinguistic perspectives. It was accused, for example, of serving the interests and agendas of dominant elites while passing itself off as an ideologically neutral, objective enterprise; of embracing a discourse of 'technist rationality' that transformed into 'simple matters of technical efficiency' problems that were actually value-laden and ideologically encumbered; of neglecting the inevitable implications LP enterprises held for power relations and socioeconomic equality. (p. 3)

Scathing criticisms of LPP and the global linguistic situation have been produced during this phase. These criticisms are still prominent in a large portion of the LPP literature today. Most prominent among these criticisms has been Phillipson's (1992) controversial book *Linguistic Imperialism* in which he critically analyzes the ways in which dominant global languages (especially English) are used and promoted in today's global society by powerful institutions (e.g., the British Council, the UN, World Bank, IMF, and the U.S. TESOL industry) along with global corporations (e.g., McDonalds,

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Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Disney) to the extent that the speakers of these languages have an unfair advantage in societies throughout the world. In his argument, Phillipson claims that dominant global languages are spread in a similar manner as economic, political, and cultural imperialism are spread. He claims that this has created a global "English linguistic hegemony" (p. 73) which not only perpetuates the advantages of those in the center[1] but also creates a sense of inferiority and dependency for those in the periphery. In a later work, Phillipson (1997) describes linguistic imperialism as a "shorthand for a multitude of activities, ideologies and structural relationships ... within an overarching structure of asymmetrical North/South relations, where language interlocks with other dimensions, cultural ... economic and political" (p. 239).

There has been a great amount of criticism of Phillipson's concept of linguistic imperialism. Pennycook (2000, p. 114) claims the notion "is in many ways too powerful" in that it attempts to go beyond what it can explain by assuming "that choices to use English are nothing but an ideological reflex of imperialism." Ferguson (2006) sums up the major criticism of linguistic imperialism in the following statement:

> this leads us to what is perhaps the greatest single weakness of the linguistic imperialism hypothesis, one noted by a number of commentators (e.g. Bisong 1995; Pennycook 1994, 2001; Canagarajah 2000; Ridge 2000; Brutt-Griffler 2002), which is that it denies significant agency to speakers in the periphery, portraying them as passive recipients, or dupes, of imposition from the Centre.

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[1] The terms "center" and "periphery" are commonly used in postmodern literature to refer to the ideologies, epistemologies, and strategies used by Western(ized) scholars, policymakers, practitioners, etc. as the center and those who come from disadvantaged or subordinate cultures and ways of thinking as the periphery. The concept entails that scholars from the center have dominated research and policymaking throughout the world, which has had a detrimental impact on those from the periphery because their ideas and worldviews are discredited or overlooked by the center.

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In a similar tone to linguistic imperialism, Skutnabb-Kangas (1986) uses the phrase "linguicism" to describe the effect these language policies have on minority language speaking communities. Comparable to the concepts of racism, sexism, and ethnicism, linguicism refers to the discrimination of groups and individuals based on the languages they speak, or do not speak. By promoting European languages (especially English) as the official language of developing nation-states, while advancing them as the unofficial languages of international politics, media, and commerce, policymakers are, in a sense, discriminating against the speakers of non-dominant languages and magnifying inequalities throughout the world.

This concept of linguicism has also received great criticism by other scholars because it presumes too much power in the dominant languages and those who promote them while treating speakers of minority languages simply as victims of a unidirectional domination of languages. It is too deterministic in its assumptions and does not explain why some communities are able to effectively maintain their local languages while also incorporating outside languages into their linguistic repertoire. It also does not leave any room for the possibility of some language speaking groups to utilize their agency and choose a dominant language over their own. This approach assumes too much and does little to explain the great variety of ways in which dominant languages are incorporated, accepted, rejected, or transformed into different societies.

A key concept in these arguments of linguistic imperialism and linguicism is that of hegemony. Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony claims that dominant structures

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and ideologies gain their power when they become internalized and accepted by the majority of people. In effect, these structures come to be viewed as "natural" and taken for granted. Therefore, those who are oppressed under these structures do not question or resist them because they are seen to be merely "how things are" and how they always have been. Pennycook (2000) questions the way in which these theories of linguistic imperialism and linguicism assume the overriding global hegemony of English. He claims that rather than viewing the global dominance of English "ultimately as an apriori imperialism" we must understand it "rather as a product of the local hegemonies of English" (p. 117). He goes on to state that,

> Any concept of the global hegemony of English must therefore be understood in terms of the complex sum of contextualised understandings of local hegemonies… And such hegemonies contribute towards a larger position of hegemony. But such hegemonies are also filled with complex local contradictions, with resistances and appropriations that are a crucial part of the postcolonial context. (p. 117)

Many Africanist scholars have argued that most sub-Saharan African states have experienced some of the worst effects of linguistic imperialism and linguicism. This topic has received a great amount of attention by scholars and critics focused on LPP issues in Africa. One of the early leading scholars of LPP studies in Africa, Ayo Bamgbose (1991), claimed that language issues in the region are further complicated by

> the fact that not only are most of the countries multilingual, the colonial experience has led to the importation of foreign official languages which have taken on the roles of national communication, administration and medium of

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education from early or late primary to university level. Thus, the existing multilingual situation is compounded by the addition of imported languages whose strength does not lie in numbers of speakers, but rather in the superior roles assigned to them. (p. 1)

At the heart of Bamgbose's argument is that indigenous languages in Africa have traditionally been neglected and excluded from the language planning process (Bamgbose, 2000). He claims this has led to massive language questions and problems throughout the continent which many nations continue to struggle to address. Bamgbose was one of the early proponents for the use of children's mother tongue as the medium of instruction in African schools (Bamgbose, 1976) and supported a number of quasi-experimental studies which attempted to show the educational benefits of teaching children in their mother tongue (Fafunwa, Macauley, & Sokoya, 1989). Work from scholars such as Bamgbose has been influential in developing various critical approaches to LPP issues in Africa.

Other prominent voices critical of LPP in Africa include Prah (1995), Brock-Utne (1999, 2002), Alexander (1989, 1999), Mazrui (2002), Mazrui & Mazrui (1998), and Ngugi (1986). These scholars argue that the continued practice of using colonial languages in official realms, especially when it is used as the medium of instruction at schools, has benefited the educated elite – who have a strong grasp on and access to the ex-colonial language – while the majority of African populations continues to be excluded from important political, economic, and social institutions, largely due to linguistic inequalities. As such, those in power in Africa, along with powerful international institutions, have little incentive to change the current language policies.

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These scholars contend that changes must be made both in structural and ideological terms in Africa, meaning that indigenous African languages must begin to be utilized and privileged to a greater degree in order for African nations to develop along their own terms and for their own benefit. One set of scholars has even gone as far as to claim "the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction is the greatest educational problem in Africa" (Brock-Utne, Desai, & Qorro, 2003, p. 182).

Most of these scholars base their criticism of current LiEPs upon postcolonial and structuralist theories which focus on macro-level global dynamics. They are therefore often too deterministic in their analyses. Their theories possess little explanatory power for understanding how and why people on the ground level appropriate various African language policies in diverse and complex ways. Under this approach to LPP issues, the only real way that solutions can be made is by changing current macro-level language policies to favor indigenous African languages more than they currently do. I feel this is a somewhat simplistic response to a much more complex problem because there is little evidence that such actions of changing policies from the top-down would do much to change the social and economic inequalities in African societies. It also would do little, if anything, to change the ways in which local stakeholders interpret, receive, and implement LiEP policies. Ferguson (2006) claims that such "calls for the revalorisation of indigenous African languages…may draw attention to an inequitable situation but do not of themselves provide the resources nor create the political will necessary for their implementation" (p. 132).

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act to perpetuate and magnify the inequalities inherent in many African societies. Certainly, they have helped me to make sense of how and why the great majority of Africans continue to live in subordinate positions within their societies. They help to provide a better understanding of the role language policies play in contributing to and maintaining social inequalities. These theories have led me to question who benefits from policies which favor English over local languages and the consequences of maintaining such policies. Indeed, in some of the analyses in this dissertation (see Chapter 6) I utilize such structuralist theories in order to understand the ideological influences and structural constraints which are imposed upon local stakeholders in Lesotho. But these theories are only useful to the extent that they describe the role in which language policies and practices contribute to structural inequalities in society.

One of the major problems with the critical theories produced during this second phase of LPP research is that they are too deterministic in nature. Canagarajah (1999) claims they do little to explain "how linguistic hegemony is experienced in the day-to-day life of the people and communities in the periphery. How does English compete for dominance with other languages in the streets, markets, homes, schools, and villages of periphery communities?" (pp. 41-42). Pennycook (2001) argues that "such a position lacks a sense of agency, resistance, or appropriation" and does not explain "how English is taken up, how people use English, why people choose to use English" (p. 62). As a result, their analyses are too deterministic by presuming that power structures in society effectively decide *for* groups and individuals which languages are important and for what purposes. They largely ignore the agency of groups and individuals on the local level and

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In my own research I have seen that language policy issues are far from deterministic. The people and schools I lived and worked with did not seem to fall into the categories and explanations of these theorists. They did not simply "buy into" the hegemony of English and were not merely individuals being acted upon by more dominant global forces. They were active agents making decisions based upon their own lived realities. Certainly, they had many constraints in their lives which limited their opportunities and led to their inequalities, but individuals made conscious decisions that impacted their lives in diverse ways. I wanted to understand the dynamics behind these local realities, and this second, critical phase of LPP scholarship did not satisfactorily address those questions. LiEP issues did not seem to entail merely which language – whether it is an ex-colonial or indigenous one – is declared as the official language. It had much more to do with the ways in which local actors appropriated different languages and policies in practice and incorporated them into their lives.

Phase 3: Focus on the local

As a result of this growing skepticism and criticism of the value and impact of LPP during the second phase, the field began to approach language policy issues in a much more careful, and in some instances, a reactionary way. Ricento (2000) claims the third phase was, by the year 2000, "still in its formative stage, and therefore difficult to characterize" (p. 203). In his analysis, Ricento pointed out some of the major themes that were emerging at the time. These major themes include: increased attention to language loss, promotion of linguistic diversity and multilingualism, development of a case for

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In Ricento's (2000) article, he had a difficult time pinning down exactly what the third phase of LPP research looks like. As mentioned above, he felt the stage was still in its formation with the field going in a number of potential directions. In his description of this emerging phase of LPP research Ricento stressed the important impact that work in postmodern and critical theories in general as well as new theoretical developments in the ecology of languages and language human rights research specifically in leading this new phase. In his article, he seemed to believe that the ecology of languages paradigm would emerge as the most important conceptual framework for future LPP research. Although this theoretical concept has allowed researchers to look at LPP issues in a new light, as I will discuss further below, I feel the ecology of languages model makes too many assumptions and therefore is too limited in its usefulness. In any case, Ricento (2000) claims that "the key variable which separates the older, positivistic/technicist approaches from the newer critical/postmodern ones is agency, that is, the role(s) of individuals and collectivities in the processes of language use, attitudes, and ultimately policies" (p. 208). He proposes that whatever model emerges as the dominant conceptual framework in this new phase, it will answer what Ricento (2000, p. 208) refers to as "the most important, and as yet unanswered question", which is:

> Why do individuals opt to use (or cease to use) particular languages and varieties
> for specified functions in different domains, and how do those choices influence –

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and how are they influenced by – institutional language policy decision-making (local to national to supranational)? (p. 208).

Six frameworks of LPP research

Perhaps more useful for understanding the developments which have emerged during this third phase of LPP research is Pennycook's (2000) assessment of what he categorizes as six divergent "frameworks for understanding the global position of English" (108). As I discuss these six frameworks, I must note that Pennycook did not use Ricento's framework of three phases of LPP research in his analysis, so some of these six frameworks belong to Ricento's first two phases rather than the final phase under discussion in this section. It is also important to realize that the emergence of one phase did not necessarily overtake another. There are many scholars and policymakers who continue to favor technocratic and prescriptive approaches to LPP today which would best be categorized in the first phase, while there are others who remain in the second phase with a focus on critiquing language policies in structuralist terms. I would argue that the majority of LPP scholars today, especially with regard to LiEP in Africa, continue to best fit within the second phase, as described above. But there seems to be an increasing number of scholars who are beginning to view LPP issues under this third phase with a larger focus on local dynamics and the role of group and individual agency in appropriating language policies on the ground.

The first two frameworks which Pennycook describes – *colonial-celebration* and *laissez faire liberalism* – most closely correspond with the first phase of LPP in that they take an unabashed view on the favorable role of English in these days of internationalism and globalization. The *colonial-celebration* framework "trumpets the benefits of English

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over other languages, suggesting that English has both intrinsic ...and extrinsic ...qualities superior to other languages" (Pennycook, 2000, p. 108). Although this view would probably acknowledge there are ideological implications of the spread of English, it would find this as a positive notion of English because these are seen to be as good implications. This is still a very popular view in the world today as is seen in the global TESOL industry, as one example.

A similar framework is *laissez faire liberalism* which, rather than explicitly promoting the spread of English based upon its perceived superiority, claims to take an apolitical approach to language policies. Instead, this view takes a free-market economic approach to languages, arguing that people will choose the language that is most beneficial to their lives. It claims to promote the importance of multilingualism with a dual relationship between English and vernacular languages, where English takes on the role of "international intelligibility" and local languages the role of "historical identity". This view is promoted by scholars such as Crystal (1997) who attempts to explain the extraordinary expansion of global English in, what he claims to be, non-ideological terms. He proposes that when people are free to choose they will choose to use the language that is best for them. Pennycook (2000) argues that this framework may be the most dangerous of all because it "suggests that we should not engage in ideological/political discussions of language and that we should make freedom of choice our central mode of understanding" (p. 111). By claiming to be neutral this view masks what cannot be taken out of any language policy issue: the inherent ideological nature of language.

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The next three frameworks are similar to each other and come from the same core ideas, with small variations. These are: *language ecology, linguistic imperialism,* and *language rights.* All three of these frameworks would best fit in Ricento's second phase of LPP. I have discussed the framework of linguistic imperialism in the previous section, so I will address the other two here.

The main thrust for all three of these frameworks is that minority languages and their speaking communities are under threat by global dominant languages, especially English. The *language ecology* view emphasizes the importance of "the cultivation and preservation of languages" (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 441) and "building on linguistic diversity worldwide, promoting multilingualism and foreign language learning, and granting linguistic human rights to speakers of all languages" (p. 429). The concept is borrowed from biological and environmental ecology. In a similar way to the manner in which environmentalists push for the protection of endangered species and promote for a better respect and appreciation of the biodiversity of natural ecologies, viewing languages through a language ecology model is meant to promote an appreciation of the diversity of languages throughout the world and their structured relations with each other. This, they claim, justifies – and even calls for – efforts to preserve lesser spoken languages and promote multilingualism throughout the world. The weakness of this theoretical framework is in its lack of a broader political, ideological, or social theory (Pennycook, 2000, p. 112).

A similar framework, which is largely based upon the concept of language ecology, is that of *linguistic human rights*. The basic argument for this view is that language speakers should enjoy the basic human right to use their own language

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whenever and wherever they would like, especially in education, despite the number of people who speak their language. Going beyond the ideas of preserving languages under the language ecology model, scholars go on to argue that as a result of linguistic imperialism some languages are under direct threat of becoming extinct and therefore must be protected under universally agreed upon linguistic human rights. This argument may be too impractical to actually be implemented and it "may be too much a dream of modernist universalism to continue to have currency and legitimacy in the current global context" (Pennycook 2000: 116).

The final framework Pennycook discusses is what he calls *postcolonial performativity.* This framework, in a sense, is in reaction to the shortcomings of the other five frameworks. If the first two views tend to ignore, discredit, or overlook the ideological and political nature of language issues in society, then the next three views tend to put too much stress on the macro level politics and hegemony of English and other dominant languages. In short, they are too deterministic in their assumptions. Therefore, Pennycook (2000, p. 117) asserts that "we need both a more complex understanding of globalization and a more complex understanding of language than those offered by the frameworks above".

To do so he proposes that we look at the global dominance of English as a product of "local hegemonies" rather than as a product of an all-encompassing linguistic imperialism or global hegemony, with its deterministic implications. He goes on to suggest that we need to get beyond viewing individuals in subordinate societies as "mere reflexes of colonialism and neocolonialism" but rather as "resistant, hybrid beings" (*ibid,* p.11 7) who use aspects of their own indigenous languages in combination with English,

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for a new approach to LPP which can address the macro-level ideological dynamics of

linguistic imperialism in a globalized world but do so through a more complex

understanding of how these dominant languages and identities have been "taken over,

appropriated, adapted, adopted and reused" (2000, p. 116) by local populations.

In his work on the teaching of English in Sri Lanka, Canagarajah (1999) proposes

that we use what he calls "resistance theories" to better understand how local actors

appropriate English into their lives. As he describes it, a resistance perspective

>provides for the possibility that, in everyday life, the powerless in post-colonial
>
>communities may find ways to negotiate, alter and oppose political structures, and
>
>reconstruct their languages, cultures and identities to their advantage. The
>
>intention is not to *reject* English, but to *reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical
>
>and democratic terms. (p. 2, italics in the original)

Canagarajah contrasts this type of a resistance theoretical perspective to what he

refers to as "reproduction theories". These reproduction theories would include those in

Ricento's second phase of LPP such as linguistic imperialism, language ecologies, and

the like. Canagarajah acknowledges that these theories have been extremely important in

showing us how dominant ideologies are passed on to subordinate groups in powerful but

subtle ways. He claims that, "Such a perspective alerts us to interrogate all aspects of the

learning process – curriculum, pedagogy, classroom interactions, school regulations, and

educational policies – with a critical eye" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 25). But he goes on to

argue that these reproduction models "appear to overstate the case somewhat, by

developing a deterministic and impersonal perspective" (*ibid*, p. 25). One of the main

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problems Canagarajah has with these theories is that they make too many assumptions about the power of hegemonic forces. He states that "domination is never wholesale or inexorable. The process of domination and reproduction are even more complex, and always involve multifaceted forces, responses, and implications" (*ibid,* p. 25).

Although Canagarajah's call for a resistance model in analyzing LPP issues brings into question the deterministic nature of reproductive perspectives, his resistance approach runs the risk of assuming too much power in the agency of subordinate groups and individuals to resist and change their circumstances. There have been a number of studies which have questioned the extent to which groups and individuals can change their own social position. In an ethnographic study of U.S. inner-city youth in a low-income urban neighborhood, MacLoed (1987) provides a bleak outlook of the extent to which agency can operate in changing people's situations. Similarly, in his seminal study *Learning to Labor,* Willis (1977) shows how supposed acts of resistance by working class youth against the system actually act to perpetuate their subordinate social positions. Although these two studies are informed largely by reproduction-oriented critical theories, they do alert us to the importance of being cautious about placing too much credence on the influence of agency in these social dynamics. The key is to find a balance between global forces and local agency. Investigating these dynamics through a more local, contextualized perspective may lead to a more sophisticated understanding of their interrelationship. This is what I call a "policy as practice" approach to investigating language and educational policy issues. I will discuss this approach in more detail later in this chapter.

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Therefore, many scholars interested in LPP and its impact on social institutions are increasingly making a call for more localized research which investigates the complex interaction of local and global forces in the development of language policies, but even more importantly, how they play out in actual practice. In response to these calls there has been a great amount of research which has shifted its focus to more localized, contextualized analyses of language policies and practices. Much of this research has focused on language policy in education and, more particularly, in schools. This is because schools are one of the most powerful places where ideological values are passed on, reified, contested, and reshaped. Examples of such research include: Canagarajah (1999, 2005), Ramanathan (2005), Lin & Martin (2005), Wortham & Rymes (2003).

I would argue that much of the LPP and LiEP research in Africa has tended to take a reproduction-oriented approach rather than a localized, resistance perspective. This can partially be attributed to the robust colonial history of Africa and an almost obsessive reaction by some Africanist scholars to blame much of the continent's problems on the impacts of colonialism and neo-imperialism. But the scholarship has changed in recent years to take a more nuanced approach to the complex nature of these dynamics and to look more at how global ideologies are not just imposed by dominant forces, but also appropriated and perpetuated in divergent ways by local populations.

An example of such a change in approach is in a recent dissertation where Holmarsdottir (2005) claimed that:

Despite the abundant literature available on the language-in-education issue in South Africa the majority of the data is theoretical or policy based as opposed to ethnographic classroom studies. Few researchers spend time at the grassroots

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Many of such ethnographic studies have begun to be conducted in different parts of Africa. Holmarsdottir (2005), Setati and Adler (2000), and Setati (2002) have focused on the communicative dynamics in South African schools as teachers attempt to teach through the medium of English to students who do not have a full grasp of the language. Similar studies have been conducted in Botswana ((Arthur & Martin, 2006; Kasule & Mapolelo, 2005; Mooko, 2004), Tanzania (Barrett, 2007; Brock-Utne, Desai, & Qorro, 2004, 2005; Vavrus, 2002), Uganda (Kyeyune, 2003), Kenya and Nigeria (Abd-Kadir & Hardman, 2007). Although these studies focus on local dynamics, most of them are largely descriptive in nature and do not take much of a critical or resistance oriented perspective in their analyses. Nevertheless, their work is important in gaining a better understanding of how LPP issues play out in actual practice in schools.

In summing up his assessment of the field of LPP, Ricento (2000) proposes that in order for the field to better address its key issues, he believes that

micro-level research (the sociolinguistics of language) will need to be integrated with macro-level investigations (the sociolinguistics of society) to provide a more complete explanation for language behavior – including language change – than is currently available....What is required now is a conceptual framework ...to link the two together. (pp. 208-209)

In this dissertation I have attempted to conduct such a study which focuses largely on the local dynamics of how actors appropriate and/or resist language and educational policies through their attitudes and practices, while also attempting to frame these local

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dynamics within the structural constraints and ideological influences imposed from outside of local stakeholder's power. Rather than just describing the practices which occur in their schools and communities, I attempt to take a more socio-culturally situated critical approach by investigating their actions within the larger historical, social, cultural, and political contexts of local stakeholders' lives. In doing so, I hope to gain a better understanding of how macro-level factors interact with micro-level dynamics in the choices and actions that individuals make. In the next section I will discuss a theoretical framework of language ideologies which has been highly influential in the field of linguistic anthropology in understanding how the dynamics of macro and micro level forces come together in the language practices of groups and individuals.

Language Ideologies

For this dissertation, I originally set out to provide an ethnographic account of the local dynamics of language practice and language attitudes in Lesotho primary schools, much like the descriptive studies in other parts of Africa mentioned above. But I also wanted to provide a resistance oriented approach, or something like it, that would focus more on the role of local realities and local agency in appropriating – sometimes resisting, sometimes accepting, and at other times reconstructing and reconfiguring – language and education policies through the attitudes and practices of local educational stakeholders. A conceptual framework which has helped me to better understand these dynamics is the concept of language ideologies as it has been recently explored within the field of linguistic anthropology.

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The concept of language ideologies as it is currently considered in linguistic anthropology was first attributed to Silverstein's (1979) definition as: "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (p. 193), but the concept has gained more prominence since the early 1990s. The theoretical framework evolved out of dissatisfaction with traditional linguistic anthropological approaches to studying language practices which were seen to focus too much on the description of specific aspects and mechanisms of speech events without sufficiently taking into account the beliefs and perceptions of language speakers. This can be attributed to the fact that linguistic anthropology developed out of the two fields of anthropology and linguistics, both of which have historically favored a descriptive approach to research, with their major focus on the documentation and explanation of cultures and languages. In recent decades this focus has shifted in both fields to a greater appreciation of the role that groups and individuals play in constructing, interpreting, implementing, and reconfiguring cultural and linguistic practices. Therefore, a concept such as language ideologies came to be seen as both necessary and useful in pushing the field of linguistic anthropology forward in its analyses and interpretations. In a similar strain, I believe that using this conceptual framework of language ideologies will make it more possible to conduct the type of research which Ricento (2000) claims is greatly needed for a new phase of LPP research, namely, research which integrates "micro-level research (the sociolinguistics of language)...with macro-level investigations (the sociolinguistics of society) to provide a more complete explanation for language behavior – including language change – than is currently available" (pp. 208-209).

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Previously, much of the work in linguistic anthropology focused on detailed descriptions of language practices, such as the ethnography of communication (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972; Hymes, 1964) and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), in which the locus of analysis was within the specific context of a communication event itself. A common research methodology used in studying these interactions has been micro-ethnographies where the focus of research is on "particular scenes within key institutional settings" (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982, p. 137). According to Kroskrity (2004), most linguistic anthropology studies have been preoccupied with strategies of microanalysis, such as details of phonetic transcription, complexities of verb morphology, ethnographic detailing of specific speech events, and sequencing of talk within a conversational "strip" while overlooking the connection of these linguistic features and practices to "political-economic macroprocesses" (p. 2).

In response to this lack of contextualization within larger social structures linguistic anthropologists have increasingly pursued the concept of language ideologies and have sought to develop it into a theoretical framework which can be utilized to situate anthropological studies of language practices within macro-level social, economic, and political processes. Influential works in this effort include Kroskrity, Schieffelin, and Woolard (1992), Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), Gal and Woolard (1995), Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity (1998), and Kroskrity (2000).

A number of definitions have been offered for language ideologies (Heath, 1977, p. 53; Irvine, 1989, p. 255; Rumsey, 1990, p. 346; Silverstein, 1979, p. 193). These definitions together refer to the shared beliefs of group members about language and its role in society along with their loading of moral and political interests. The concept

underscores the ability of language users to be consciously aware of their communication patterns which "permits speakers to rationalize and otherwise influence a language's structure" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 497). This definition goes beyond describing language ideology as merely a conscious awareness of language use (as in Silverstein's (1979) original definition), but also emphasizes the connection of language ideologies to social, cultural, and political interests. Language ideologies are developed through "the experience of a particular social position" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 58) and through shared group membership. They are complex, and often contradictory, because every individual experiences a different combination of social relations and group memberships which, in turn, influences their own individual ideologies. As Kroskrity (2004, p. 503) reminds us, social experience "is never uniformly distributed throughout polities of any scale".

Five dimensions of language ideologies

In his overview of language ideologies Kroskrity (2004) refers to the theory as "a cluster concept, consisting of a number of converging dimensions" (p. 501). He discusses five overlapping dimensions which make up language ideologies:

1. group or individual interests
2. multiplicity of ideologies
3. awareness of speakers
4. mediating functions of ideologies
5. role of language ideology in identity construction

In the following paragraphs I will briefly discuss these five dimensions and their significance to research on language. In doing so, I will also discuss how these dimensions of ideologies can apply to more general educational and social issues as well.

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The first dimension states that "language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 501). Language ideologies are acquired, developed, maintained, and changed through social experience, which never happens in isolation, but within social and group contexts which are "demonstrably tied to political-economic interests" (*ibid,* p. 501). This becomes complicated because of the second dimension which refers to the multiplicity of language ideologies which "have the potential to produce divergent perspectives" (*ibid,* p. 503). Therefore, although individuals develop their language ideologies through group membership, the particular milieu of group memberships differ for each individual in both kind and scale. For example, although every citizen of a nation theoretically experiences the same ideological discourses of national language policies, formalized language standards, and the hierarchization of language varieties, every individual experiences or interprets these discourses in different ways because they are filtered through their various experiences as members of divergent social groups and/or divisions. Thus, the experience of a woman will most surely be different from that of a man, while a doctor's interpretation of discourses will differ from that of a street vendor, and so on.

This multiplicity of ideologies is most evident during moments of contestation and clashes where divergent ideological perspectives are juxtaposed. These offer spaces where changes may occur, resulting in a variety of outcomes. Woolard & Schieffelin (1994, p. 71) address this in the following statement:

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The third dimension states that "members may display varying degrees of awareness of local language ideologies" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 505). This is important for understanding the complexity of how some ideologies are effectively internalized and unquestioned while others may be resisted or reshaped to fit the particular interests of groups or individuals. As Bourdieu (1977) has argued, the most effective and pervasive ideologies are those which are unconsciously accepted as "natural" and internalized by groups and individuals. These ideologies become the most difficult to change or confront because they are taken for granted and operate below the conscious awareness of their recipients. In contrast, ideologies which are explicitly acknowledged and understood become sites of contestation and create spaces for change to occur. Therefore, it is important to recognize the degree of awareness to which different ideologies are displayed.

The fourth dimension states that "members' language ideologies mediate between social structures and forms of talk" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 507). In other words, we can come to a better understanding of the relationship between acts of agency by groups and individuals to the social structures within which they operate through the concept of ideology. With regard to language we can better understand the relationship of individuals' language practices with those of larger discourses through the language ideologies which inform these practices. For instance, if the official policy is to teach in English at school, but the teacher ends up using a local language for the majority of

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The fifth dimension listed by Kroskrity (2004) states that, "language ideologies are productively used in the creation and representation of various social and cultural identities (e.g., nationality, ethnicity)" (p. 509). This dimension emphasizes the important role that ideologies play in forming individual and group identities. The ways in which people perceive of themselves is largely influenced by their ideologies. Bourdieu (1977) argues that schools act as a powerful institution to instill certain ideologies in subordinate populations which act to maintain and legitimize their subordinate status in society. This operates most powerfully when certain ideologies are accepted, internalized, and people come to believe that their cultural and linguistic practices are inferior to others in society. This can also work the other way around in which ideologies promote pride in particular groups' cultural or linguistic practices. Ideologies can either help to legitimize the oppression of certain groups, or, in contrast, bring about a new awareness of social relations and promote subordinate groups to work against the structures imposed upon them.

In this study I use these five dimensions of language ideologies to inform my analysis of the extent different ideologies influence the language and educational choices of local educational stakeholders. More specifically, I will attempt to understand what influences the language and education practices of teachers and students in the classroom and communities while also looking at the different ideologies, from various levels, which impact the attitudes and perceptions that groups and individuals have towards language use and language preferences at school, as well as other educational practices.

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The nature of schooling is complex and often contradictory. There are many competing interests, purposes, and philosophies of education which intersect – and often collide – at the site of schools. David Labaree (1997) illustrates the contradictory nature of schooling in his analysis of the American education system, where he claims there are three major educational goals (democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility) which, in their very nature, are "contradictory and frequently counterproductive" (p. 70). He argues that the most central problems at American schools are, at their core, political in nature rather than pedagogical, organizational, social, or cultural – the aspects to which most educational researchers traditionally attribute the shortcomings and failures of schools. Therefore, if we are to understand why particular schools are not accomplishing their expected outcomes, or just to understand how and why they operate the way they do, then we must investigate the competing and contradictory goals which drive schools and often lead to unexpected outcomes

These three competing goals of education, which Labaree describes, are derived from rather distinctive ideological influences. The goal of democratic equality derives from an ideology which stresses the collective nature of society and the duty of citizens to take their rightful role in participating in their community or nation, for the good of the whole. The goal of social efficiency, on the other hand, stems from an ideology which focuses on the importance of the economy in developing nations, and therefore leads to a more pragmatic and prescriptive approach to education. The final goal of social mobility originates largely from an individualistic ideology which focuses on the interests of individuals and their immediate family and peers. These three operate simultaneously at the same site of schools and concurrently influence what happens in practice at the

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schools. They also have a strong influence on which policies are developed and implemented at schools, which often contradict and counteract each other. This example of competing goals and ideologies at American schools helps to illustrate how the converging dimensions of ideologies, as Kroskrity (2004) outlined, work together to create a complicated mix of differing goals, needs, values, and assumptions at schools. Therefore, not only does the concept of language ideologies help us to see the complex mix of forces influencing language attitudes and practices, but it can also be usefully applied to other contexts which relate less directly to language practice itself, but to other ideologies related to education and schooling.

Definition of ideology

The term ideology itself can be quite problematic because the concept has been conceptualized and utilized within such a wide range of disciplines, including political science, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and education. The definitions offered for ideology differ nearly as much as these fields of study differ. In his book *Ideology: An Introduction,* Eagleton (1991, pp. 1-2) demonstrates the contested nature of the concept by providing an extensive list of possible meanings for the term ideology within different fields of study. Therefore, for this study it is important to be clear about which perspective of ideology I am utilizing.

In her introduction to *Language Ideologies*, Woolard (1998) provides a useful discussion of four recurrent strands, or themes, that are commonly adopted in conceptualizing ideology. The first strand views ideology as an ideational, mental phenomenon which comprises of the shared cultural understandings and beliefs of members of society in general. The second strand views ideology as being "derived from,

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rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular position" (p. 6). It differs from the first strand in its emphasis on the individuality of ideology as being rooted in the experience of a particular position. These first two strands both perceive of ideology in rather neutral terms with little, if any, reference to power and/or distortion. The third strand is more critical in nature as it conceptualizes ideology as having a "direct link to inhabitable positions of power – social, political, economic" (p. 7). It is seen as "ideas, discourses, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power" (p. 7). The final strand Woolard suggests is quite similar to the third, but takes ideology's relationship to social power to another level by viewing ideology as "distortion, illusion, error, mystification, or rationalization" (p. 7). A well-known expression representing this fourth strand of ideology is Engel's description of ideology as "false consciousness". These last two strands view ideology as a mechanism for the acquisition and maintenance of power. They differ from each other in how they conceptualize ideology to operate, with the third strand placing the site of ideology within the consciousness of groups and individuals while the fourth strand places ideology beyond human consciousness, operating as an overriding social influence.

Woolard contends that anthropologists have traditionally been split between the second and third strands of ideology. That is to say, some anthropologists utilize the concept of ideology in neutral terms while others attempt to do so with a more critical perspective by analyzing the power relations inherent in ideologies. The approach researchers decide to take has great implications on how social phenomena are studied. If ideology is viewed as neutral, then the primary role of a researcher is to describe the ideological practices of social groups and attempt to understand their meanings within

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particular contexts. Although this approach is seen by some to be "neutral" it privileges the researcher's analytic perspective over others and therefore is ideological by promoting the researcher's analyses and interpretations at the cost of other possible viewpoints. This does not mean that analyzing social and linguistic dynamics through a more critical lens automatically makes researchers immune to their own biases and the imposition of their ideological perspectives. Therefore, it is important to be mindful and upfront about one's own ideological influences and incorporate a critical introspection of what is "objective", "scientific", or "theoretically sound".

In this study I utilize a critical approach that views ideology through a combination of Woolard's second and third strands. This is to say that I define ideology as being developed through the experiences and interests of individuals (2nd strand) which operate within the contestation of power (3rd strand). In doing so, I attempt to be mindful of my own ideologies which influence and bias my own observations and interpretations.

In summary, the theory of language ideologies, as has been discussed above, becomes a useful analytic tool to interpret "the intersection of language and human beings in the social world" (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). It acts as a "much-needed bridge between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture and communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 72). It can be used to better understand the language practices of groups and individuals by placing these within the sociocultural context of the larger society.

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Within the context of this study, I borrow from the linguistic anthropological concept of language ideologies and expand it to apply to larger social contexts, especially within education, beyond just language practices. In doing so I attempt to make sense of the attitudes and practices of local stakeholders in Lesotho as they interact with the language and education policies placed upon them. By analyzing the multiplicity of ideologies that influence groups and individuals in diverse ways, and, more specifically, by focusing on (1) the specific interests that ideologies represent, (2) to what degree these ideologies are internalized or made aware, (3) how they combine with complementary and/or competing ideologies, and (4) how they influence practice and identity within social structures. By utilizing the concept of ideologies and their influence on people's attitudes and practices, I hope to be able to place the acts of agency (resistance or complicity) of local actors within the context of their deeper meanings and within the structures of their lived realities.

Forms of Capital

The term ideology reminds analysts that cultural frames have social histories and it signals a commitment to address the relevance of power relations to the nature of cultural forms and ask how essential meanings about language are socially produced as effective and powerful. (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 58)

This statement by Woolard & Schieffelin helps to put into perspective the utility of language ideologies as an analytic tool. Although the concept can be helpful by providing a link between local practices and beliefs to more global ideologies and structures, in order to understand that link we must also understand the nature of the

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In utilizing these concepts I draw largely upon the theories of Pierre Bourdieu who defines these different types of capital in much of his work, including his 1986 essay "The Forms of Capital". In this section I provide the definition of each form of capital which I will utilize in the analysis of this study. These include economic (or material) capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital.

Economic capital

One of the most prevailing forms of capital is that of economic capital. Although Bourdieu's theories are best known for their contribution to the ideas of cultural and symbolic capital, these different forms of capital would have little meaning if it were not for economic, or material, capital. Bourdieu states that "economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital" (1986, p. 252). This is because the ultimate goal of obtaining other forms of capital is to ensure access and power to economic capital.

In this study I define economic capital to mean the economic resources available to groups or individuals. This is usually in the form of money but can also be manifested in the form of other resources which hold trading value in the economy, such as livestock, crops, land, and skills. Therefore, economic capital in modern economies is usually measured in how much money a family has access to through employment, savings, and other sources of income. Economic capital has a great influence on the

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educational choices available to individuals and families because of the specialized

nature of formal education. It can either act as a constraint or open up opportunities

depending on the family's particular economic circumstances.

Cultural capital

Another source of capital which plays a significant role in the constraints or

opportunities of groups and individuals is that of cultural capital. Bourdieu

conceptualizes cultural capital through relations of power. Cultural capital is defined as

certain non-economic resources upon which people can draw to gain access to power and

opportunity. Cultural resources differ from economic, or material, resources because they

only gain significance, and thus can be appropriated and utilized, by apprehending their

meanings. Therefore their significance is culturally, or symbolically, determined. In other

words, cultural capital is not merely obtained through ownership and exchange, as

economic capital is typically distributed, but rather must be taught and acquired through

cultural means. In this way cultural capital can be seen to be more subtle in form, but also

more pervasive in impact.

In describing this concept, Bourdieu refers to three different states of cultural

capital: *embodied, objectified,* and *institutionalized.* First, cultural capital exists in an

embodied state. This means that it is acquired over time through enculturation, education,

and social experiences. Cultural capital is embodied in what Bourdieu refers to as the

dispositions people develop through their socialization. Due to this nature, cultural

capital, according to Bourdieu, is not something that is consciously learned or developed

but is accumulated and internalized over time. Certain types of cultural capital become

more valued than others within society, which helps to create and maintain social

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inequalities. As families gain more valued cultural capital they are able to pass it on to their children who come to embody this valued capital in their own dispositions and pass it on to their children. The opposite is true of those families who do not possess valuable cultural capital. Due to their social position, they have difficulty obtaining such valued capital, let alone passing it on to their family members.

The second state of cultural capital is the *objectified* form, which refers to objects, such as books, works of art, scientific instruments, and other such things that require certain cultural knowledge to effectively utilize and appreciate. These objects are often acquired by families and members of more powerful social groups, which make these resources available for their children to learn to understand, appreciate, and exploit for their own social advantage.

The third state exists in an *institutionalized* form. This is most powerfully operated through the educational credential system. Those who possess valued cultural capital and their accompanying knowledge and skills are rewarded at schools by receiving credentials. Those who do not posses such cultural capital have a difficult time gaining such credentials. This concept is important because it acts to legitimate the valued cultural capital of more powerful social groups within an institutional form, which gives extra recognition in an objectified form which can then be exchanged for obtaining high-status, well paid employment, or other beneficial opportunities. Therefore, the education system, under Bourdieu's theory, is seen to act more to legitimate and reproduce the inequalities of society rather than to provide opportunities for the whole population to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in society.

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A large benefit of cultural capital for those coming from educated families is that the knowledge and skills they are raised with are valued within formal education and rewarded at school. There have been a number of studies which have investigated the impact of cultural capital on school knowledge and academic performance. In their studies on white and black families from both middle class and working class backgrounds in the United States, Lareau (1987, 2002) and Lareau & Horvat (1999) effectively illustrate how different sources of cultural capital impact the educational performance of students. They show that the knowledge and skills which middle class white families possess translates into better relationships with the schools, more engagement and support in their children's schoolwork, and a greater understanding of the expectations of formal education systems. In an ethnographic study of poor white families in the Appalachia, Purcell-Gates (1995, 2002) illustrates how lower class families are at a distinct disadvantage when they begin school because they have not gained the necessary cultural capital needed to succeed at school. An example she gives is about children who are not raised around books and whose parents seldom, if ever, read. These children often encounter books in a very real way for the first time when they enter schools. There are many basic assumptions and knowledge of reading which they lack (i.e. reading from left to right, turning the pages, tone and pace, etc.) which makes it much more difficult for them to learn the basics of reading compared to children who are raised within a reading environment.

Social capital

Social capital is often defined as the access to knowledge and power which individuals and groups gain through their social networks. In comparing social capital to

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physical and human capital (which come from a capitalist economic theory of capital), Coleman & Hoeffer describe social capital as "less tangible yet, for it exists in the *relations* between persons" (1987, p. 221, italics in original). Lareau (2000) helps to distinguish social capital from cultural capital by stating that in social capital the "focus is on the transformation of social position into social advantage, particularly by the use of networks" (p. 80). Therefore, social capital is not only the social networks people possess, but also how these networks must be "activated" in order for social capital to be put into effect and transform people's social position.

Bourdieu does not explore this form of capital in as much detail as cultural and symbolic capital, but he does claim that cultural and social capital are much more related to each other than to economic capital (Swartz, 1997, p. 80). This is partially because both are obtained through social relations. They differ in the way in which they are obtained and utilized. In contrast to cultural capital, which entails the embodied knowledge and dispositions acquired through socialization, social capital entails the access to knowledge and power which individuals gain through their social networks. Therefore, if an individual is seeking for an influential position or entrance into a prestigious school, they gain access to these institutions through their social networks. But having these social networks is not always enough. In order to be awarded a desired job or entrance into particular schools, individuals must also display sufficient cultural capital to be deemed suitable for such recognition.

Symbolic capital

The final form of capital I will discuss is symbolic capital. This also is closely interrelated to cultural capital in that it is a form of capital which gains its significance

through culturally constructed meanings. Symbolic capital can take many different forms, including, art, religion, science, and language. In each of these forms symbolic capital operates to structure society as to what knowledge is of value and what is not. Bourdieu claims that symbolic capital "simultaneously performs three interrelated but distinct functions: cognition, communication, and social differentiation" (Swartz, 1997, pp. 82-83). Symbolic capital develops cognition in that it "provides a means for ordering and understanding the social world" (p. 83). Whichever type of symbolic capital a group utilizes helps to shape how they see the world and approach social relations. Those with access to highly valued symbolic capital, therefore, gain the dispositions that help them approach the world in ways which benefit them socially and economically. Similarly, by performing communication functions, symbolic capital helps to provide social integration into positions and relations of power, if individuals possess the properly valued symbolic capital. The third function serves as an "instrument of domination" (Swartz, 1997, p. 83) by developing symbolic systems which "provide integration for dominant groups, distinction and hierarchies for ranking groups, and legitimation of social ranking by encouraging the dominated to accept the existing hierarchies of social distinction". Thus symbolic capital helps to create social integration within social groups and social classes while also setting up hierarchical divisions between these groups and classes.

The main form of symbolic capital I focus on in this study is that of linguistic capital. Bourdieu argues that some forms of language are more highly valued than others and therefore hold greater social value. Most of his studies were largely focused on French society, therefore when he refers to language differences, these are within a French language-speaking society, or in other terms, different dialects, registers, and

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especially, varying degrees of command with the standardized form of the French language. Bourdieu argues that those who have the greatest command over the prestigious, standardized form of language hold the greatest linguistic capital and are rewarded for it in society.

This concept becomes even more explicit in multilingual and post-colonial societies where there are a number of languages spoken in a particular society (such as in South Africa with 11 official languages), with each language holding varying degrees of prestige. In most developing countries, especially in Africa, foreign languages, such as English, hold the greatest prestige. Therefore, the disparity between highly valued linguistic forms and less valued forms becomes even larger and more difficult to overcome because this disparity is not only within a particular language but across languages with very different lexical and grammatical structures. On the other hand, the dynamics presented in multilingual societies also make the linguistic divide more explicit and may provide subordinate groups with a more conscious knowledge of the power values placed on different language forms. The subtlety between differences of forms *within* a language (i.e., dialects, standard vs. non-standard, or register) may help to mask the inequalities inherent in them. It is more obvious when someone is discriminated against because they cannot even speak English than when they speak a less valued dialect (e.g., African American Vernacular English) within the same language of English. In any case, the hegemony of language still holds great power in post-colonial, multilingual countries where it the hierarchy of languages is often internalized by individuals who come to believe that foreign, imported languages are more prestigious and valuable than indigenous ones.

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These different forms of capital discussed above are inter-related and feed off of each other. One form of capital may compensate for another, such as, a family with great economic capital but little social capital can still afford to send their children to private schools, but they often complement each other. Those families with greater cultural capital usually possess more highly valued economic, social, and symbolic capital as well. Every individual's situation is different and the different forms of capital play roles of varying degrees in the constraints or opportunities placed before them. In this study it will be important to explore the different combination that these various forms of capital play in the lives of educational stakeholders and how they impact their attitudes and practices towards language and education.

Habitus

In order to understand how these different forms of capital operate in the lives of individuals it is important to understand Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Eagleton (1991, p. 156) defines habitus as "the inculcation in men and women of a set of durable dispositions which generate particular practices". Building upon the discussion above about cultural capital, this means that individuals are socialized with certain "structured dispositions" which act to reproduce the social order which is established through the acquisition and enactment of cultural, social, and symbolic capital. What makes this concept so powerful in Bourdieu's theory is that these dispositions become naturalized and legitimated through social structures and institutions so that individuals in society internalize their own dispositions as natural, and more importantly, do not question their social position.

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An important contribution of the concept of habitus in social theory is that it addresses the divide between social structures and individual agency. Bourdieu's conceptualization of agency is that through the dispositions which make up one's habitus, individuals exercise their agency. A key point about Bourdieu's conceptualization of agency is that it is not seen to be conscious agency, but rather agency is based upon the interests, values, and dispositions of agents, which have been socialized by the influence of social institutions. Therefore, although Bourdieu brings into his theory a model that incorporates the role of individual agency in negotiating social structures, this agency is unconscious and basically determined by habitus. This notion of agency is problematic because it does not sufficiently address the complex contradictions that often are displayed in acts of agency. By attributing agency to an unconscious enactment of interests which are determined by an individual's dispositions, which in turn, are ultimately determined by social structures, seems to be a circular way of saying that agency is determined by social, cultural, and symbolic structures, which could be interpreted to be contradictory to the concept of agency itself. Swartz (1997, p. 291) comments on the limitations of such a view:

> While habitus calls attention to the dynamics of self-selection in competitive social processes, the internalization of objective chances into expectations and the adaptation of aspirations to actual opportunities are often more complex and contradictory processes than the concept suggests. Moreover, both adaptation to external constraints and distinction from competing actors are two distinct types of agency juxtaposed in Bourdieu's concept without their exact relationship being clarified. Bourdieu calls upon one or the other dynamic depending on the issue he

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In this study I utilize Bourdieu's different forms of capital to illustrate the various influences that come together in individuals' and their families' lives which act to constrain or provide opportunities in their lives. These theories are helpful to show that groups and individuals are limited in the power to act for themselves and change their own lived realities. They have limited, if any, control over the types of capital they are endowed with when they are born into their particular family situation and social class. These forms of capital act to strongly influence the constraints and opportunities in their lives. The main problem with Bourdieu's theory of capital is that it is seen to be too deterministic in its assumptions. Although he attempts to account for acts of agency through his concept of habitus, his conceptualization of agency is still rather deterministic. Therefore, there is little space provided in his theories of capital and habitus for variations and changes to come from the local actors. Instead, their social status is largely determined by the sources of capital available to them.

Consequently, I will use Bourdieu's concepts of capital to illustrate the structural constraints which are imposed by society upon the families and individuals in this study. This is because structural constraints are very real and extremely influential in their lives. But I will need to turn to a different definition of agency, in contrast to that provided in Bourdieu's theory of habitus, in order to have a theory which is less deterministic as Bourdieu's. Although social structures are real and powerful in shaping people's lives, they do not determine their lives. Groups and individuals do possess the power, although limited, through their agency, to change their own situations, but it is important to

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Agency

Bourdieu's concepts of various forms of capital are helpful in understanding the complex ways in which societies reproduce their inequalities and why most people are complicit in this process and thus remain within the social class in which they were raised, having a difficult time moving into higher levels of society. His theory shows that there are very strong socializing mechanisms which act to perpetuate the structures of society and maintain them through the social and cultural practices of members of society. On the other hand, Bourdieu's theories have also been criticized for being too deterministic in nature. They do not sufficiently explain exceptions to the rule when certain groups or individuals are able to effectively move up the social hierarchy or how social values and conditions can be changed to close the gap between social classes and/or provide spaces for societal changes to occur.

This is where the linguistic anthropological theories of language ideologies and those of Bourdieu, as discussed above, both come together, and collide. On the one hand, Bourdieu's theory helps to provide a greater understanding of the societal and cultural structures which operate in developing, maintaining, and reproducing various ideologies in society. On the other hand, his theory also limits the power of agency in linking people's actions and beliefs to the larger structures and ideologies of society, which has been the pursuit of the linguistic anthropological theories of language ideologies.

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Therefore, in order to bridge the two I will need to explore a different concept of agency than that proposed by Bourdieu within his concept of habitus.

The definition of agency can be quite problematic and difficult to pin down. It has become a very common component of contemporary theories in a number of different fields. In her article "Language and Agency", Ahearn (2001) discusses the complexities of attempting to utilize the notion of agency within particular theoretical frameworks. In her introduction she asks the question of why the concept of agency has become so popular in recent decades. She claims this has to do with a combination of factors including historical trends, such as the social upheavals in central and eastern Europe in the 80s and 90s, a dissatisfaction with the deterministic nature of postmodern and poststructural critiques, and an increased interest in issues of social transformation and resistance. As a result of this increased interest in agency there has also been an increase in the number of different definitions and approaches to agency. Therefore, defining agency is a complicated endeavor but also important in establishing how it can be used for analysis. Along these lines Ahearn (2001, p. 112) argues that "scholars often fail to recognize that the particular ways in which they conceive of agency have implications for the understanding of personhood, causality, action, and intention. Agency therefore deserves 'deeper consideration and more extensive theoretical elaboration' (Dobres & Robb 2000, p. 3)."

There have been a number of different approaches to agency in recent literature, each of which has its particular advantages and weaknesses. One common theme is to view agency as "free will". This approach attributes a rationality to agency, but it seems to be a bit misleading. Although theoretically individuals have the power to choose to

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respond to their social circumstances in whatever way they would like, it is important to recognize that structural realities nearly always weigh into the choices individuals make through their acts of agency. Therefore, although agency can be seen as "free will", this view does not place enough appreciation on the dynamics between structure and agency in influencing the choices individuals are faced with in the actual realities of their lives.

Another common approach is to equate agency with resistance. This can be a useful way to investigate agency because spaces of resistance are often fruitful sites to see agency in action. But if one goes so far as to equate all acts of agency to resistance it becomes difficult to explain why individuals often choose to comply with social structures rather than resist them. If resistance is used to define agency, it must be placed within the context of larger social structures which can incorporate and explain acts of non-resistance as well. Paul Willis's (1977) book *Learning to Labor* helps to show the complexity of the concept of resistance. Although the lads in his study feel as though they are resisting against the oppression of society, their acts of agency actually operate to keep them within their own social class and do not help them change their social situation. Therefore, attributing agency solely to acts of resistance is not as straightforward as may be assumed. Individuals often use their agency in different forms and to varying degrees, whether it is for conscious resistance or complicit acceptance of social norms. Therefore, agency cannot effectively be equated with resistance, per se.

In developing a definition of agency one needs to keep in mind a number of issues. These include: where does agency lie (in the individual, collectively, or outside of the individual)? Is it intentional or conscious? What role does rationality play in agency? Does any of this matter? In providing a definition for agency I will begin with Ahearn's

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provisional, "bare bones" definition: "Agency refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112). But I will need to expand upon this definition.

Agency lies within the individual, but only as a social being embedded in a larger, collective sociocultural context. Therefore, agency may be used for collective action when performed by groups of individuals with common interests. Although agency could be considered as free will, it still must be utilized within the constraints of social, cultural, and symbolic structures placed around the individual. But agency is conscious action which is not determined by outside structures or institutions. Agency is rational in the sense that individuals make choices based upon self interest, whether these actions may seem rational to others or not. Agency can be performed through acts of resistance, but does not necessarily need to be so. Indeed, many acts of agency are accommodating and conforming to social norms. Agency is conscious in the sense that individuals make decisions based upon what they know, although this "knowledge" may be impacted by unconscious (or below conscious) ideologies imposed upon them by hegemonic forces. Therefore, referring back to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, agency is limited within the constraints placed upon individuals by economic, social, cultural, and symbolic structures, but, in contrast to Bourdieu, it is not necessarily determined by these structures. Structures limit the choices available to individuals, but agency allows individuals to act against, or within, these structures. One of the main points about agency is that even though individuals can choose how to act, they cannot choose the consequences of those actions. Therefore, agency allows for individuals to attempt to make changes to their lives, but individuals do not have control over what their acts of agency end up producing in actuality.

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With this multifaceted definition of agency I will attempt to gain a more complex understanding of the actions and attitudes that local stakeholders in Lesotho take towards language and education policy. By utilizing Bourdieu's theory of different forms of capital, I will analyze the constraints and opportunities placed upon these stakeholders by the larger society, and attempt to understand how society (from local to global) restricts the consequences of agency in individuals. At the same time, by investigating the various ideologies which influence people's choices and acts of agency, along with the realities of their lives, I will attempt to illustrate the link between macrosocial structures and microlevel acts of agency.

Policy as Practice

In this study I incorporate the theories of ideology, capital, and agency, as discussed above, to utilize a *policy as practice* approach for analysis. A policy as practice approach views language and education policy issues from the ground up, placing policies as only one factor involved in what happens in actual practice. This is in contrast to the traditional approach to education policy studies, which typically analyze policies from the top down, starting at the policy itself and investigating its effectiveness as it is applied on the ground.

In more traditional policy studies scholars analyze the theoretical foundations of policies, investigate their effectiveness under various contexts, compare findings from different studies, and then use these findings to try and develop the most practical and useful policies available to particular contexts. Indeed, the local contexts for which the policies are intended become an important consideration in the development of policy

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choices, but they are the end point, rather than the beginning. Traditional education policy studies tend to begin with identifying "problems" that need to be addressed and go about researching the best ways in which to address those problems. This can be problematic because local stakeholders are often not involved in the process of determining what the "problems" are and how they can be addressed, even though they are the people who are most directly impacted by policy decisions. Even in cases where local stakeholders are incorporated into the process of determining which problems need to be addressed and in the formulation of policies, the ultimate decisions are most often made at the top levels after taking into consideration the voices of local stakeholders and their particular contexts.

A policy as practice approach, in contrast, takes the actual practice, non-practice, or counter-practice of policies as the unit of analysis rather than the policy itself. Instead of trying to determine what problems need to be addressed and which policies are most likely to appropriately and effectively address them, a policy as practice approach investigates how policies are appropriated through actual practice on the ground level and the factors which influence those practices. Therefore, instead of analyzing whether and why policies work, a policy as practice approach attempts to examine all of the factors involved in the actual implementation, reconfiguration, and/or rejection, of language and educational practices, of which the policy itself is only one factor. In other words, it attempts to understand the extent to which policies play as one of many different factors influencing language and educational practices on the ground. Under this type of analysis, language and education policies are viewed as only one of many influences that play into the actual practices of local educational stakeholders. Other such factors include

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those discussed earlier in this chapter, namely, ideological influences, sources of capital, and acts of agency. Within this study, language and education policies are analyzed largely as one of many ideological influences which are imposed at the national level, in the form of the national language-in-education policy, and implemented at the local level, in the form of each school's stated or assumed language policy.

The intent of this study is to understand what role, if any, policies have in the decisions and practices of local educational stakeholders in Lesotho primary schools. If we can better understand the role and degree that policies play in educational practices, from the ground up, then we can gain a more realistic perspective on the influence policy decisions have on the actual attitudes and practices of local stakeholders.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the field of language policy and planning (LPP) with its implications on language in education policies (LiEP) in Africa. As was discussed earlier, the field of LPP has gone through numerous changes in focus and perspectives. Many of the theories and models used in the past have been criticized for being either too prescriptive (as was the case in phase 1 of LPP) or too deterministic (as was the case in phase 2 of LPP), and therefore, they do not provide sufficient explanatory power to understand how and why language policies are implemented in a diversity, and unexpected, ways by local stakeholders in their schools and communities. In addition, these appraoches have tended to focus more on language policy issues at the macro-level with a propensity to address issues from the top-down. As a result, the attitudes, needs, and interests of local stakeholders are often assumed – and sometimes

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disregarded or ignored – within their theories. Consequently, the complexity of local realities, along with the diversity of ways in which different groups and individuals can interpret language policies and apply them in practice, is overlooked, or at least not sufficiently appreciated. Therefore, endeavors to better understand the dynamics of language policies in Africa and efforts to improve their impact at schools have often been ineffective and incomplete.

In this study I propose to take a more micro-level, policy as practice approach to LiEP issues in Lesotho by looking at the ways local stakeholders at various primary schools perceive of language and education policy issues at their schools along with how they implement, or do not implement, the policies in practice through their own choices and actions. As has been discussed above, in order to understand local stakeholders' attitudes and practices, I will utilize three different theoretical frameworks. These include (1) the concept of language ideologies and how ideologies from a multiplicity of levels impact people's attitudes and actions towards language policy and practice, (2) Bourdieu's concepts of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital and how they act to constrain and limit the choices which are available to different stakeholders in a diversity of ways, and (3) a concept of agency which provides space for individuals to make choices for their own lives and their families' lives, but only within the limitations and constraints imposed upon them by larger societal structures and ideologies. By utilizing these three theoretical frameworks I hope to come to a better understanding of how local stakeholders perceive of language policy issues at their schools and why they decide to implement and act towards these policies in a variety of ways. In doing so, I hope to gain a better appreciation of the complex mix of factors which contribute to the

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ways in which policies are put into practice at the ground level. By understanding the

local dynamics involved in policy implementation at the micro-level we will hopefully

better understand the implications of policy decisions which are made at the macro-level.

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Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Setting

Introduction

One of the main motivations for this study came from what I saw as a lack of appreciation for local perspectives and an understanding of micro-level dynamics in the literature on language in education policy issues in Africa. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the great majority of research on language policy and planning has focused on macro-level dynamics which make broad assumptions about the implications of language policies throughout the world and/or at the regional and national level. As a result, this research has often discounted, or even ignored, the perspectives, practices, and attitudes of local stakeholders. In recent years, there has been an increasing push for research which takes a greater look at local dynamics and attempts to better understand the perspectives and realities of those affected directly by policies on the ground level. This dissertation is intended to contribute to that research endeavor.

In this study I hope to gain a better understanding of the perceptions, attitudes, constraints, and opportunities which play into the ways that language and education policies are received and implemented by teachers, students, and their families at the school level. By doing so, I hope to gain a better appreciation of how and why policies come to be realized in diverse, and often unexpected, or unintended, ways. With these research goals in mind, I must also be mindful that in conducting such a study I run the risk of imposing my own assumptions and prejudices into the study's research and analysis. Therefore, I must be careful to acknowledge and clarify my own situated position within this study while also taking precautions to utilize methods which will help

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to mitigate, or at least account for, my own biases. In this chapter I intend to explain my own positionality with regards to why I have selected certain methodologies in approaching this study, what has motivated me to conduct this research, how I view my role as a researcher, and how this all impacts my relationship with, and understanding of, the participants from this study. In addition, I will describe the methods I have adopted in this study for data collection and analysis and give a description of the various sites in which the research for this study took place.

Epistemological Considerations

Initially for this study I wanted to look at the issues of language policy in education from a local level. I wanted to see what types of lived realities and every day decisions play into the attitudes that parents, teachers, and students have towards the use of language at schools and towards education in general. In doing so, I hoped to gain a better understanding of the role that agency plays in the ways policies become implemented in actual practice. I wanted to understand not only what constraints are placed upon individuals, families, and schools by the structures imposed upon them, but also what opportunities are presented to them through the systems and resources available to them. I hoped to be able to portray a situation in which not only limitations, but also opportunities present themselves to local participants. It is within these limitations and opportunities that actors make decisions which influence not only their own lives, but society around them. By conducting an ethnographic study of local actors in Lesotho schools I hoped to be able to draw out some of the complexities of these lived realities

and come to a better understanding of how they influence larger policies and practices in

education.

In order to accomplish this type of study, I felt it was best to use a qualitative

approach which incorporated a number of different ethnographic methods. I planned to

be in Lesotho for close to a year, so I would have the time to delve deeper into the

everyday interactions and issues facing the lives of local stakeholders. This would allow

me to gain a more complex understanding of the dynamics involved in language policy

and practice at the school level. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) point out, qualitative

research has gone through a rather long history of transitions, changes, introspection, and

uncertainty. It has often been questioned on its merits as "scientific" research, and, at

times, qualitative researchers have succumbed to these criticisms by trying to follow the

lead of quantitative "hard" research by incorporating systematic, verifiable methods and

expectations. Although these efforts have helped to develop a variety of approaches to

conducting qualitative research, and have established rigorous standards, the quest for

validity has often overlooked the inherent nature of qualitative research. That is to say

that qualitative research, in its very nature, is an interpretive process. As Geertz (1973)

points out, what ethnographic researchers are actually doing is making interpretations of

interpretations. Therefore, qualitative research is always socially situated from the

perspective of the researcher as he or she attempts to interpret the things he or she comes

across through observations, personal experiences, the accounts of others, and various

artifacts. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) help to elaborate this point in the following passage,

> There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the
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> worlds of – and between – the observer and the observed. Subjects, or individuals,

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are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they have done and why. No single method can grasp all the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. Consequently, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience they have studied. (p. 21)

Consequently, in this study I do not claim to speak for or fully represent the schools and participants I worked with, but I have rather attempted to provide as complete of an account of what I came across in my field research and what study participants decided to portray to me, keeping in mind that I come from my own socially situated position which both influences my own approaches and interpretations of the data, as well as the ways in which individuals positioned themselves and their responses with respect to me. As such, I can never dispense of the interpretive nature of this research and the great influence of my own biases and positionality. I can only attempt to account for it and take as many precautions as possible by incorporating what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) refer to above as "a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods (p. 21)."

Keeping this in mind, along with the initial questions driving this research, I decided to incorporate a grounded theory approach to this study. Grounded theory was first introduced as method of research by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. Charmaz (2005) claims that this method of research was first created in response to positivist criticisms of qualitative research, claiming it is not founded in valid methodology and is not sufficiently objective. In response, they claimed to have developed a method which

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derived from inductive rather than deductive processing. Therefore, rather than beginning a research project with questions and hypotheses that can then be tested through carefully designed experiments or "objectively" procured statistics, which was regarded as the true way to understand things, grounded theory proposed to allow the questions to be derived from the context and findings of the research endeavor itself. Glaser and Strauss(1967), along with their peers, developed systematic ways to go about this type of research in order to assure validity and verifiability.

Charmaz (2005) speaks against this type of grounded theory claiming that it is misguided in its positivistic tendencies. She proposes that researchers interested in adopting a grounded theory approach to their research should adopt what she refers to as a constructivist, interpretive grounded theory. She claims, much as I have discussed above, that it is not possible to perform "objective" qualitative research, because in claiming to do so researchers do not make their own situated position explicit and therefore run the risk of "elevat[ing] their own assumptions and interpretations (p. 510)" as objective and authoritative. She goes on to state that a constructivist approach to grounded theory acknowledges that "what observers see and hear depends upon their prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical materials. (p. 509)" Hence, such an approach should both be explicit about the researcher's own situated position while also incorporating solid data collection methods which document the researcher's observations and interpretations while conducting research.

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Grounded theory calls for constant reflection upon the researcher's experiences and the findings which are being discovered through the interpretive frameworks the researcher brings with him. This then leads to further questions which arise from the interpretation of earlier findings, which can be investigated in greater detail. As such, grounded theory is a constant process which requires reflection, introspection, and reinvestigation on the part of the researcher, in consultation and dialogue with the research participants. Hence, grounded theory has been viewed by many scholars as inductive reasoning, but as Charmaz (2005, pp. 509-510) points out,

> No qualitative method rests on pure induction – the questions we ask of the empirical world frame what we know of it. In short, we share in constructing what we define as data. Similarly, our conceptual categories arise through our interpretations *of* data rather than emanating *from* them or from our methodological practices. Thus, our theoretical analyses are interpretive renderings of a reality, not objective reportings of it.

Research Questions

Therefore, as I prepared to go to Lesotho to conduct field research for this study, I did not have any specific questions, or hypotheses, for which I intended to answer or confirm. Instead, I had overriding issues which I intended to explore and try to understand better. As such, in consultation with my committee, I felt that this study called for a more inductive approach where I would be lead initially by a general inquiry, thus allowing me to develop and explore more specific questions as I came to a better understanding of the specific context and dynamics of the schools and participants I

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worked with. The guiding inquiry which I agreed with my dissertation committee to pursue was stated as follows:

> For this study I will be looking for the extent and variety of viewpoints on language use in schools by seeking as many different views from stakeholders as I can reasonably find.

> With this guiding inquiry in mind I set out to conduct my initial field research. This helped to guide my initial explorations while keeping the study open to various possible research questions and to allow the research context to drive more specific questions. Although the central focus of my field research continued to be on language policy and practice at the school level, early on I began to realize that I needed to expand this scope of inquiry to include non-language issues relating to schools and local stakeholders' lives.

> This was because through my observations, conversations, and questionings, which were, initially, focused solely on language issues from local stakeholders' perspectives, I did not seem to be getting anywhere interesting or new. My findings largely confirmed what I had anticipated; that most local stakeholders preferred to use English as the language of instruction at schools over Sesotho because English was viewed to be more important and valuable as an international language and the language which would lead to greater education and job opportunities. This information did not seem to explain why people felt this particular way and what motivated them to operate in certain ways with regard to language practice at school. Therefore, I expanded my general inquiry to look at larger issues around education and schooling in Lesotho.

One of the major issues that seemed to continuously come up in my conversations and interactions with stakeholders at all different levels (local and national) was the disparity between the quality of education provided at private English Medium schools compared to that being provided at government schools. This was usually brought up within the context of the Free Primary Education (FPE) program which had first been implemented in 2000. Therefore, I decided to pursue more specific questions regarding (1) the differences between private and public schools in Lesotho and (2) the perceptions that people had towards FPE and its impact on primary education in the country, in addition to my more specific questions on language attitudes and practices at schools. These additional research questions helped to open up much more fruitful observations, interactions, and interviews with participants. They helped to put my overriding question into a more holistic perspective. In other words, I began to see that language policy issues at schools only gain relevance when they are placed within the larger context of schooling itself as it is situated in the larger society. I began to recognize that language issues must not be seen in isolation, but rather as one of many components in a much more complex system of education.

With these research questions in hand I was able to conduct more directed research through my participation, observations, interviewing, artifact collection, and data analysis. Upon returning to the U.S. from the field, I struggled for quite some time to make sense of all of these data. I searched for different theoretical frameworks which could help me to analyze and better understand what I had discovered through my field research. Eventually, through writing a series of memos, sharing these ideas with members of my committee and other scholars, and extensive reading of the literature, I

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decided upon the theoretical frameworks which have been discussed in detail in Chapter 2. These concepts of language ideologies, various forms of capital, and the role of agency have helped me to connect the larger issues surrounding education in the context of the study participants' lives to more specific questions related to education and language policy and practice at the schools.

After adopting these theoretical frameworks for analyzing the data, I was able to decide upon the ultimate research questions which have guided this dissertation, which I described in Chapter 2, namely:

1. What are the extent and variety of local viewpoints about and attitudes toward language use at primary schools in Lesotho?

2. What factors in local stakeholders' lives influence these various viewpoints, attitudes, and practices with regards to language and school practices?

With these research questions in mind, I would like to now explore my own socially situated position as a researcher and its implications for my relationship with the participants of this study.

Ethical Considerations

As I have discussed above the importance of being explicit in portraying one's own situated position as a researcher, I intend to do so in this section.

I am a middle-class, white American man who was born and raised in the mountain west region of the United States. I come from a rather well educated (at least in the Western sense of the term) family with a father who has been a law professor for nearly 35 years and a mother who received her bachelor's degree and taught in

elementary education for a few years before becoming a full-time, stay-at-home mother to raise her six children. As a result, I have come to believe in the importance of formal education and the opportunities it brings to one's own life. Indeed, all of my siblings have received a higher education to differing degrees.

In many ways I was raised in a very homogeneous society, growing up and going to school with people who looked and acted just like me with the same expectations and social norms, one of which was to receive a good education and continue on to the college level. We did not question positions of power and the structure of society because life seemed to work out quite well. I largely viewed the world as if the reality I lived in was normal, ideal, and expected.

When I was six years old my family moved to Frankfurt, Germany for two years. There I attended an international school where in my class of 25 students there were 20 nationalities represented. This was an eye-opening experience for me as a young child, which helped me to see the cultural diversity of the world in a very real way as I played and hung out with children from all over the world. In another sense, it gave me a false perception of the diversity of the world because all of us came from similar economic backgrounds, and therefore I did not gain an appreciation of the economic diversity of the world. In any sense, these two years had a great impact on my life and made me see things from a slightly different angle than most of my peers back in the U.S.

My first experience in Africa came in 1995-1997 as a 19-year-old volunteer missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As a Mormon missionary, I spent two years, at my family's own expense, in South Africa and Lesotho. Most of my time on mission was spent in South African townships and in the outskirts of Maseru,

Lesotho proselytizing with families and individuals in their homes. On a daily basis, with the companionship of a fellow missionary, we would go from home to home in local neighborhoods and teach our beliefs to anyone who was interested or willing to hear from us. I spent nearly 11 months of the two years in Maseru, Lesotho, with the majority of the time spent in the area of the city where I conducted research for this study. Through this experience I was able to gain a rather immersed experience of the lives of Basotho from different socio-economic backgrounds as we would discuss family, spiritual, occupational, and other personal life experiences with those who were willing to talk to us. In addition, we spent time providing volunteer service at hospitals, schools, and community centers.

I cannot deny that this experience has greatly shaped my own perceptions and biases towards Lesotho society. Having said this, though, I cannot effectively reflect upon the specific ways in which it has impacted my perceptions and views. I can only acknowledge that it has influenced my biases and try to be aware of the potential influence my own history has impacted my interpretations and approaches to this study. I'm sure in some ways my missionary experience has given me a false sense of "understanding" the people I came in contact with and their way of life, but on another level it has given me some valuable insights into the lives of those I worked closely with in this study. For this dissertation study I worked with two families that I had previously developed close relationships with in those missionary years and have kept in constant contact with ever since. The rest of the participants were people whom I was introduced to during the year of my dissertation field research.

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My other experiences in Africa include five different field studies in which I conducted ethnographic research as an undergraduate student between the years 1998-2002. Each of these experiences were for extended periods of time from three-five months each trip where I lived with families and individuals in their homes in villages of Zanzibar, Tanzania (1998 and 1999), in the capital city of Zanzibar (2000 and 2002), and in the suburbs of East London and Johannesburg, South Africa (1999, 2000, and 2001). Through these experiences I gained a more in-depth understanding of different lifestyles in various parts of Africa as I participated in community activities, played on local soccer teams, helped teach at the local schools, hung out with fellow peers, etc. while also conducting research on village kinship, local politics, personal histories, international development, and language practices.

These experiences were influential in leading me to the initial questions which eventually drove me to conduct this dissertation research. As I worked with primary schools – especially in the villages of Tanzania where the children speak Swahili, but the secondary schools use English for instruction – I began to notice that one of the greatest barriers to students moving on to higher levels of education was their ability, or inability, to speak English. I came across a number of clever students who had a passion for school learning and worked hard to succeed, but ultimately could not move on to high school because they did not know English well enough. From my view, the schools did a poor job of teaching English, and there was no supportive environment outside of schools for children to learn and practice English. Therefore, the system of using knowledge of English as a determining factor for students' progress in school seemed to be an unjust and unfair practice. Consequently, I eventually decided to study linguistics and education

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for my graduate degrees so that I could pursue this topic in greater detail and come to a better understanding of the dynamics involved around language policy issues in Africa, with the ultimate goal of somehow contributing to making the system work better for students who seemed to be disadvantaged under current language and education policy practices.

As a PhD student at Michigan State University I was able to prepare for this dissertation by receiving language instruction in the Sesotho language both on campus and in Lesotho through a combination of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships from the African Studies Center and the Center for Advanced Studies in International Development at MSU. Through this and other funding I was able to return to Lesotho for three months in the summer of 2004, where I studied intensive Sesotho at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and lived with a family I have known since 1995. In the summer of 2005, I returned again to receive further intensive language instruction at NUL for ten weeks and then conducted a six-week pre-dissertation, practicum research study at a local government primary school in the outskirts of Maseru. This school was located in the neighborhood where I had been living with my friend's family in both 2004 and 2005. For my practicum research I conducted a focused study on the language practices of two Grade 5 teachers at the government primary school by video taping their teaching sessions and analyzing with them the motivations and reasons behind their actions.

I then returned to Lesotho in February of 2007 to begin data collection for this dissertation study. For that trip I came with my wife, who is an African from Ghana, and a 6-month old daughter. Due to safety concerns for my family and matters of

convenience we decided to stay in the city limits of Maseru. Therefore, for the majority of time during the study I was not able to live in the neighborhoods of the students and teachers of the schools I worked with, as I had in previous years. This created a greater distance for me from the schools in both geographical and personal terms. On most occasions I drove my own car to the schools, which situated me in a certain social position to the teachers and students. It also kept me away from the everyday experiences and interactions that I could have had outside of the school grounds if we had lived in the community where the school was located. During the last two months of this study, my wife and daughter went to Ghana, which allowed me to move back in with my friend's family, live in the local community of the schools, and focus on interviews and field research within the homes and community of the participating students and their families.

The reason I go over this personal history of my experiences and involvement in Lesotho in such detail is to put into greater perspective where I am coming from as a researcher and what I brought with me into the interpretations of this study and my relationship with the study participants. From my point of view, I have spent over five years living in settings similar to the ones where the schools in this study operated, and therefore I have some basis of understanding different patterns and trends which are common in their communities. On the other hand, I am a white American with my own cultural baggage which can never be unloaded and is often difficult to self-identify. This also places me in a position of privilege and, to some degree, power with the participants of the study. I was free to come and go at the schools and could participate closely in the classrooms or sit back and observe. I did not represent the government or Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), but many participants, especially students and parents,

may have been uncertain of where I stood or who I represented. All of these had an impact on my research findings and the ways in which participants decided to relate and act towards me.

By the time of the study I had achieved advanced level of proficiency in Sesotho, which gave me access to conversations, discussions, and lessons which were conducted in the local languages, but I also had limits to my spoken fluency in the language, which created barriers to full expression on my part and misinterpretations across communication. As a result, I utilized research assistants to accompany me during most of my interviews with students and their families to provide them with the comfort to use whatever language they wanted to. But this also added levels of complexity to the dynamics of relationships and expectations from study participants.

I have my own preconceptions of how education "should" look and what entails a quality education. I tried to make these views explicit and evident during interviews and conversations with participants, but this was not always possible, and I cannot assume that my messages came across as intended. I am sure the ways I approached interview questions and field observations influenced the responses and actions of participants, but I cannot account for all of these. I can only acknowledge that I came into this study with my own personal history, my own experiences, my own preconceptions, my own position of power, and my own biases. I can only try to account for these in this study.

Having said all of this, I must emphasize again that the findings of this study are not meant to be representations of the realities of the schools and lives of those I worked with. They are documentations of my own interpretations and experiences through the different sources of data collected in this study. Because, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005)

remind us, qualitative research is more about the situated interpretations of experiences and observations than it is about the depictions of a single, traceable reality, I believe this does not render the research for this study meaningless, but rather situates it within the interpretive frameworks from which it is derived. This, in turn, should allow the reader to receive the information of this study not as facts of reality, but as one account of the dynamics and interactions which are involved around language and educational policy as it is received and put into practice by local stakeholders at the school level.

Research Methods and Design

The data collected for this study is largely ethnographic in nature. There were three main activities for data collection, namely, participant observation at schools and surrounding communities, interviews with teachers, parents, students, and administrators/education officials, and document analysis of educational materials, studies, and policy statements. Although I was constantly engaged in each of these three data collection activities, they happened in three major phases.

Phase one

The first phase of data collection was participant observation at selected schools. The initial purpose of participant observation were to become familiar with the schools and how they operated on a daily basis, build working relationships with teachers, students, and others involved at the school level. In addition, I used participant observation to specifically observe the language and teaching practices of teachers and students in their classrooms. I started first at a government school in one of the major neighborhoods on the outskirts of Maseru, the capitol city of Lesotho. I specifically

selected this school to start out with because it was the school at which I had conducted pre-dissertation, practicum research two years earlier in 2005. Therefore, I already had a working relationship with the teachers and staff and was quite familiar with the setting within which the school operated. In addition, I was fortunate to be able to work with the same group of students, who were in Grade 5 at the time and Grade 7 for the dissertation study, with whom I had conducted my pre-dissertation research. Thus, not only was I familiar with them, but they were also familiar with me being in their classroom. During my previous study I had video taped the students and teachers in their classrooms, which method I did not use for this study, so, my presence was somewhat less intrusive. I seemed to be able to fit into the classroom setting much more quickly and rather seamlessly the second time around. Another advantage for me starting at this school was that I had a good understanding of the surrounding neighborhoods, because I had previously lived with a family nearby in 2004 and 2005. As mentioned before, I was originally introduced to the neighborhood when I had worked in the area as a young missionary ten years earlier. Since the time of my mission I have made constant, almost yearly visits to friends in the area, so I was able to see how the area has changed, and not changed, over the period of a decade.

I purposefully started participant observation slowly at the school, focusing on working closely with the teachers and students. I spent most of the time helping the teacher with their lessons, marking students' work, eating lunch with the teachers, hanging out with the kids during breaks, and sometimes standing in and teaching when the teachers were not present. I took notes when I had the opportunity, but participation in the classroom was the main priority.

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Through these activities I was able to develop relationships with the teachers and get their feedback on what they were doing and why, learn more about their personal histories, attitudes, and motivations, and gain a more personal account of their lived experiences at the school. To the degree that was possible I attempted to do the same with the students. It was a little more difficult to establish close relationships with the students because of their greater numbers, their young ages, cultural norms, which expect students to show deference and respect to adults, and, at times, communication difficulties (due to my lack of full fluency in Sesotho and their difficulties with English). Nonetheless, by working closely with them in the classroom, and through conversations with their teacher, I was able to get a good sense of the students' backgrounds, their personalities, and their school performance. These were all important pieces of information which later helped guide me in deciding which students' families I would eventually visit and interview. This familiarity with the students also provided me with a richer understanding of the context within which my conversations and group interviews with the students, as well as visits and interviews with their parents were situated.

The field notes I took at the schools focused largely on the teaching practices of the teachers (e.g., methods, strategies, formats), the specific language practices of both the teachers and students, and the academic performance of the students. Initially I wanted to see what the differences in classroom practices were between government and private schools. I recorded specific phrases and statements the teachers used and the responses students gave to their teachers. I noted different teaching strategies utilized by the teachers. I also tried to document other influences on the classroom which would have affected the students and their learning environment. Things like outside

distractions, teacher's presence or non-presence, student disobedience, available materials, classroom objects (desks, posters, chalkboards, chalk), student supplies, etc. were recorded to provide greater description of each classroom and their differences within and between schools.

The most significant observations I was able to make occurred when I was actively involved in the classroom during marking of students' work, assisting in the teaching of lessons, trying to help maintain classroom management, and working individually with students. These instances helped me to see on a more personal, individualized level how students responded to their instruction in the classroom. Through this work I could see when students acted as though they understood and followed along while the teacher taught the class as a whole but were not able to effectively complete the assignments given to them during individual work. I was able to see which students who seemed to be disengaged during instruction time were able to competently show they understood the material being taught on an individualized basis. In short, I was able to see how each student reacted and interacted with classroom instruction and activities in various, individualized ways. I noted these differences whenever I could, which helped to later determine which students would be selected for more focused interviews with them and their parents.

Phase two

The second phase of my data collection was in conducting more focused interviews with teachers, parents, students, and administrators. These interviews came in various forms, depending on who was being interviewed.

Because I spent a great amount of time at schools working with teachers in their classrooms I had many conversations with teachers in a variety of forms. During participant observation I constantly asked questions and learned from the teachers while they also asked questions of me. Through these informal conversations I was able to develop more focused, semi-structured interviews with the teachers. These more formal interviews usually took place after I had worked with a particular teacher for at least a couple of weeks to ensure there was already a relationship built and some common ground to work from. Using open-ended interviews, each went in its own direction, but there were common questions which I used to guide them all. I usually started with questions about the teacher's background and personal history in education and what motivated them to become a teacher. I would ask about their opinions and attitudes towards education in general and how they felt about the education system in Lesotho. I then would ask questions related specifically to language use in school, their attitude toward the current language policy, their thoughts on the importance of Sesotho in education versus that of English and what role each language played at school and in the larger society. I would also ask questions specifically about their particular school and classroom practices which had arisen from my participant observation. The majority of these interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorded and later transcribed. They were all conducted in English with the teachers.

Due to the young age of the students it was difficult to conduct more formal types of interviews with them. Beyond casual conversations with the students during school hours, I conducted a few focus group interviews with groups of 6-12 students. In most cases, even at the best English Medium schools, language was a problem. My proficiency

in Sesotho allowed for me to ask basic questions of the students, but my lack of fluency inhibited me from delving into any topic at any sort of depth. I tried to use a translator with a few groups of students, but I found this got in the way of my main purpose of getting students to express freely their feelings about school and the role of language at school, so I discontinued using a translator. I found that with another adult in the room the students seemed to shy away from more spontaneous and open responses. This meant that my interviews with the students were mainly conducted in English, so the interviews at the private, English Medium schools were much more involved than at the government schools. In the end, though, there was very little in specific content and direct quotes that I was able to use from these student group interviews. On the other hand, they were quite useful in gauging the students' proficiency and comfort with English while also giving me a good sense of their attitudes towards schooling, the English language, the Sesotho language, and their perceptions of other schools.

The most difficult aspect of the interviews was deciding which parents to interview and gaining access to them. As mentioned before, through working closely with teachers and students in the classroom I was able to see which students performed well at school and which ones seemed to struggle. With the help of their teachers I purposefully selected students who represented a wide range of academic and linguistic competence within each class. Therefore, I tried to select a few of the top performing students, a few of the bottom performing students, and a few "average" students from each classroom. After selecting the students I would then gain their permission and try to contact their parents for interviews. This proved to be quite difficult and resulted in a rather sporadic sampling of the students' parents. In the end, I interviewed as many parents as I could

gain access to. Despite these difficulties, I was still able to interview parents of students that represented a variety of competency levels, based on my observations and their teachers' confirmations.

Interviews with the parents lasted between 30-90 minutes. The interviews covered information about the parents' and family's backgrounds, including their educational, employment, and residential background. I then asked them general questions about their feelings and perceptions towards the purpose of education and why they send their children to their particular school. I also asked questions about the parents' involvement in their children's education, finding out how often they helped them with their school work, how often they read with their child, how often they read on their own, whether they had reading materials at home, whether they talked to their child about school and what they learned at school, if they ever talked to their child's teacher or school principal, how often they spoke English at home, if ever, and whether they felt they had any rights or power to intervene in their child's schooling if they saw any problems. A section of each interview focused on language issues in education, especially looking into the parents' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of English as the language of instruction at school, the role of Sesotho at schools, their views of the importance and roles of both English and Sesotho in society, and hypothetical questions about whether they thought it would be good, or even possible, to use Sesotho as the language of instruction and testing at schools. The final set of questions focused on the parents' views about public schools, especially since the implementation of the Free Primary Education program, their attitudes towards private English Medium schools, and their reasons and options for sending their child to either a public or private school.

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The final type of interview I conducted at schools was with the principals and/or vice-principals. These interviews ranged from one to three hours long. In these interviews I would first ask the principals about their own background, especially focusing on their educational background and experience. I then would ask them about their particular school, exploring issues around the school's history, organization, overall philosophy, and performance. Along with these were specific questions about the teachers emplyed at the school, their background and training, their expectations, their compensation and benefits, their strengths and weaknesses, etc. I then would ask questions about the students and their parents, especially about the students' performance and discipline and the involvement of the parents in the school and its everyday operations. Similar to the other interviews, I asked the principals questions about how they felt about the use of English as the language of instruction and the role of Sesotho at their school. I asked for them to explain their school's specific language policy and the reasoning behind their policy along with how they approached it in practice. I conducted at least one interview with the principal of each school at which I conducted participant observation and with about half of the vice-principals.

Phase three

The third phase of research was largely done near the end of my field research. In this phase I focused more on the administrative and policy level by interviewing ministry officials, college officials, and principals from additional schools where I had not conducted participant observations. Early in the field research I had talked to a few officials in the ministry and at the national university to get a basic overview of the current situation in primary education, especially with regards to language policy and

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practice. These later interviews focused on much more specific questions which had been derived from months of participant observation at schools and interviews with parents, teachers, and principals. The two main interviews I conducted with ministry officials were with the heads of the primary and curriculum departments, namely, the chief executive officer of primary education and the chief executive officer of curriculum and assessment. Each of these interviews lasted about two hours and covered a great amount of details. In both interviews I asked questions about the current language policy in primary education, their particular views about the policy, and what direction they foresee things going in the future with regards to language policy in education. A large portion of each interview was dedicated to issues around the Free Primary Education program and their experiences with it. They explained what they have done so far with the program and their reasoning behind these action, their perceived accomplishments and shortfalls, the constraints within which they have had to implement the program, and their vision and plans for the future of the program.

My interviews with college officials were less formal and less structured. Much of what I learned was through general conversations with colleagues and friends at the teacher's college and national university about education in Lesotho in general along with more specific conversations about primary education and language issues in particular. I did conduct one formal, semi-structured interview with an administrator at the Lesotho College of Education (COE). We discussed issues around teacher training, teachers' performance at primary schools, his views on language policy and the role of English versus Sesotho at schools, and areas of focus and concern for the COE. Much of what I

learned from colleagues and officials at the college and university was accompanied with research publications and study reports they provided to me.

In addition to the ministry and college officials, I conducted interviews with five principals from schools at which I had not conducted any participant observations. I selected these schools because of their particular reputations and histories. Two of the schools were private schools which had relatively good reputations, but did not perform quite as well as the private schools at which I conducted research. The other three schools were public schools which had rather good reputations and performed better on the national PSLE exam than the public school I had worked closely with. I interviewed with the two private school principals to gain a better view of the variety of different types of private schools that are operating in the Maseru area and how their experiences with parents and students may differ. I selected the three additional public schools because they had historically had excellent reputations when they were church-run schools before the government took over their funding and operations under FPE. I wanted to learn from them what their experiences with and attitudes towards the FPE program were. These interviews were quite illuminating as to how FPE has impacted schools, both private and public and how the principals have responded to it.

Participant observation

As mentioned above, one of the main methods of research utilized for this study was participant observation. As has been explained, I incorporated different phases of participant observation in this study for a variety of purposes. In her discussion of participant observation, Purcell-Gates (2004) explains that there is a continuum of approaches to participant observation. On one end of the spectrum the researcher largely

takes the role of an observer who is only theoretically participating by being present at the research site. On the other end of the spectrum is where the researcher attempts to fully immerse himself into the context and participate as fully as possible in the research site. Purcell-Gates explains that the main determining factor for where the researcher places himself on the continuum is the relationship that the researcher wants to establish with the study participants. Due to the fact that my purpose of this study was to gain access to local stakeholders' lives and come to a better understanding of their lived realities and the social factors which influence their educational decisions, I placed myself more on the full participant end of the spectrum, although not completely.

As mentioned before, I interacted closely with the students and teachers at the school, often helping the teachers with instruction, marking of students' work, and maintaining classroom management. I also interacted closely with the students by helping them in the classroom, hanging out with them on the playground, and interacting with them in their communities. Purcell-Gates (2004) claims that it is advisable for researchers conducting participant observations in cultural settings very different from their own to try to become as immersed as possible in order "to begin to see and understand a different cultural context" (p. 102). By taking such an approach to participant observation I was able to gain better access to the lives of students and teachers while also gaining a better understanding and perspective of the social and cultural context of their lives and the schools they attended.

Interviews

An important source of data for this study came from interviews. There were a number of different types of interviews I utilized in this study. In this section I will
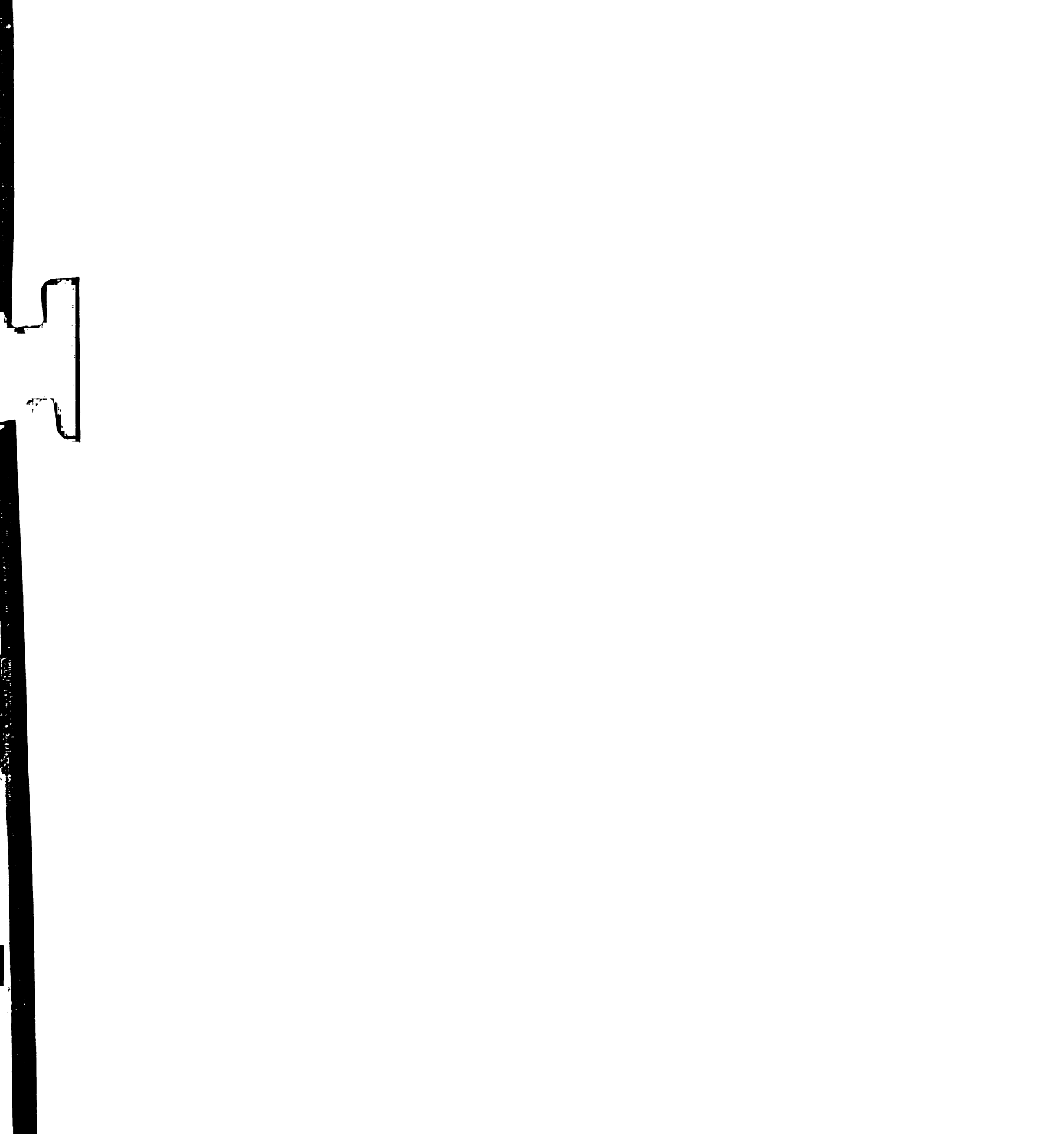
briefly describe each of the types of interviews I used. Spradley (1979) provides some basic categories and explanations of the main types of interviews which are used for ethnographic research. I will use his designations in my explanations of the different types of interviews I utilized.

Informal Interviews – Much of the information I collected was through various types of informal interviews. These are basically interviews conducted while doing participant observation fieldwork. Fontana and Frey (2008, p. 129) state that, "Many qualitative researchers designate between in-depth (ethnographic) interviewing and participant observation. Yet … the two go hand in hand, and much of the data gathered in participant observation come from informal interviewing in the field." Any conversation I had with teachers, students, or other stakeholders helped me to gain a better understanding of the participants' lives and the context within which the schools operated. Whenever I came across information which I felt was significant through these informal interviews I would document them as soon as possible, either in field jottings, or later write ups of my field notes.

Unstructured Interviews – As discussed above, after the first phase of research I was able to identify and formulate more specific questions to pursue with my participants. In order to do so, I utilized an unstructured interview model where I prepared a list of questions to ask the informant during a sit-down session (usually between 30-60 minutes long). The questions were used as a guide to the interview, and were used for all participants from the same category. So, I had the same set of questions prepared for teachers, a different set of questions for parents, etc. As an unstructured interview I allowed the informants the freedom to expand upon my questions, which

made each interview different. Some interviews addressed more questions than others, but they were structured in a way so that I, as the interviewer, and the informant both had the leeway to expand on certain topics, skip some questions, and deviate in other ways.

Group Interviews – As explained above, I utilized group interviews with the students due language and maturity barriers. Much like the unstructured interviews, I had the same prepared set of questions for each group of students I interviewed, but each interview went in a different direction from the other because there was great leeway given to the students in their answers and I adjusted the pacing and sequencing of questions according to the context of the interview and the information I was receiving.

Data Analysis

As an essential component to grounded theory research, data analysis should be a constant process throughout the research endeavor. In this study, I tried to maintain this constant analysis, interpretation, and reinterpretation of the data on a consistent basis. This took the form of three main types of analysis.

The first type of analysis I tried to maintain on a daily basis. As I would conduct participant observations, interviews, and artifact collection during the day I would expand upon the field notes and jottings which I had gathered and expand upon them, adding contextual details, additional findings, and initial interpretation of what the data meant to me and the study. Periodically, roughly every two or three weeks, I would review these expanded field notes and assess what seemed to be significant findings and patterns that were emerging in the data. These assessments would help me redirect the focus of my observations and guide new questions in my conversations and interactions with various

participants. At about the mid-point of my field research, at the time the schools took their 6-week winter break in June and July, I conducted a major assessment of the data I had collected thus far. This was a very useful time for me to get some distance from the data collection context and look at issues from a broader perspective. I took a minor "vacation" from the field to allow the information to be processed in my mind and start afresh. When I returned to interpreting and analyzing the data I found much larger themes which related between issues around public versus private education, along with the implications of FPE on government schooling, and language attitudes and practices of teachers, students, and families. I took the next few weeks of the winter break to consult with scholars, researchers, and practitioners about my findings and ideas. From this mid-study analysis and consultations with colleagues, I was able to design a more directed study program which helped me to come up with more specific interview questions and observational priorities as I began to prepare delving into intensive interviewing with students' families and with teachers. For the final months of the study I was able to focus largely on these interviews, which I constantly reviewed and tweaked to fit more consistently with my overall questions and initial findings.

The second type of data analysis occurred soon after I returned from Lesotho to the U.S. At first, my return was a bit overwhelming as I tried to sift through all of the data I had gathered during an almost year-long field research endeavor. Upon the recommendation of my committee I drafted a number of memos in an attempt to sift through and make sense of all of my findings. I shared the content of these memos with my committee members largely through phone conversations and email exchanges. The main thing I struggled with at the time was making sense of how to connect the two

ajor themes that I saw coming from the data. These were (1) the similarities and

fferences I saw in the language attitudes and practices of government school

keholders and private school stakeholders, and (2) the different ways that government

hools operated and were administrated in comparison to the ways in which private

hools operated. These two issues were equally interesting to me, but I did not know

ow to make sense of them together and whether I could make a connection between

em. With this uncertainty still in my mind, I went ahead and transcribed all of the

terviews which I was not able to transcribe in the field and continued to work on these

nnections.

The third phase of analysis entailed delving back into the literature on language

licy and planning and becoming updated on current research and scholarship in the

ld. Returning deeply into the literature after conducting field research helped me to

ew my initial questions in a new light and to begin making connections across the data.

rough consultation with committee members and other faculty with expertise related to

research I was directed to the three theoretical frameworks which I am using to

alyze the data for this dissertation. These frameworks have helped me to make the

nnections I could not put together when I first returned from Lesotho. Upon

ablishing these theoretical frameworks I was able to go back through the data with

ugh codes to guide my analysis. These codes entailed (1) noting different moments of

eological influences on the language practices and attitudes of research participants, (2)

entifying different forms of capital which played out in the lives and through interviews

ith participants, and (3) moments where acts of agency are revealed and significant.

pon going through the data with these rough codes, I was able to see different patterns

arise and exceptions to these patterns. This led to the analysis which is represented in this dissertation.

Research Sites

The school sites which were selected for this study were purposefully sampled due to a number of factors. The first factor was to find an area where there was both a government primary school and a private English Medium primary school in close proximity to each other. By doing so I hoped to be able to compare stakeholders from these different types of schools who lived in similar settings to each other. The residential patterns of Basotho are somewhat unique in comparison to their surrounding neighbor South Africa. Most of the areas outside of downtown Maseru are sprawling neighborhoods which have incorporated and overtaken what used to be distinctive villages. These sprawling neighborhoods and villages have old traditional huts right alongside crowded lines of one and two-roomed flats with much larger homes dispersed among them. Therefore, the wealthy and the poor largely live side by side. This made it possible for me to select an area where both a government school and a well-respected private school were in close proximity to each other.

Another criterion I had was that the schools were viewed to be quite "typical" in the eyes of most Basotho. I did not intend to find schools which were representative of others, because I do not think that is completely possible. Every school has its own unique mixture of students and teachers and other factors which can not be duplicated. Nevertheless, in trying to identify schools which were viewed as typical, I wanted to avoid the risk of working with schools which were completely out of the ordinary and so

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unique as to be incomparable to others. The final criteria, which I developed later on while in the field was to find private schools which had a different histories, organizational structures, and overall philosophies than the ones I began working with. I added this criterion because as I conducted my research I soon found that there were many different types of private schools, even though most of them referred to themselves as English Mediums. I wanted to gain a better understanding of their differences and see if their differences would lead to any significant findings for this study.

Ultimately, I chose five schools at which to conduct field research. I started with two schools, one government and one private, where I spent nearly half of the year conducting research, visiting each school on alternating day. This helped to keep the contrasts between the two schools fresh on my mind as I saw differences nearly every day. It also helped me to refine my observation and interview criteria as I saw differing patterns and contrasts emerge. The other three primary schools were later added to the study to see how different private primary schools approached their organizational structures, pedagogical practices, and policy implementation. In this section I will briefly describe each school to provide a better context of where the research was conducted.

At each school I worked with Standard 4 and Standard 7 classes. The reason I selected Standard 4 classes is because the official language policy for government schools was that Sesotho is to be the language of instruction for all subjects (other than English) from Standard 1-3, then they are to switch to using English as the language of instruction from Standard 4 onwards. Therefore, I wanted to observe the differences between government schools in this grade where the language transition is made and private schools, which use English as the language of instruction from the beginning of

schooling in Standard 1. The reason for selecting Standard 7 classes is because it is the terminal grade for primary school, and at the end of the school year the Standard 7 students write the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) which determines whether they can move on to secondary school or not, while also ranking students according to different classes, 1st Class being the highest and 3rd Class the lowest passing score. There is also a failing category which means the student must repeat Standard 7. I felt that these two Standards would be the most interesting and fruitful for looking at issues of language use and teaching practices because they are both such crucial transitional years for the students.

The following is a description of each of the schools where I conducted participant observations and worked closely with the teachers, students, and families. The names provided in this study for the schools and participants are pseudonyms, so as to preserve their anonymity. Therefore, any correlation with the names of other schools and/or names of people in Lesotho is a mere coincidence and does not reflect the actual names of those who participated in this study.

Morena Primary School

Morena Primary School was the only government school in which I spent significant time conducting research at the school and with its teachers, students, and families. I did visit other government schools on various occasions, which helped to put into perspective how "typical" Morena Primary school really was in comparison to others. From my own observations, and through confirmation from a number of different stakeholders at both the local and national level, Morena Primary seemed to be a rather typical government primary school.

Morena Primary School was originally built in 1954 by one of the three major churches in the Lesotho. The school began with two church-built classrooms and slowly grew to where it now has 25 classrooms. All of the subsequent classrooms were built by the government. The church officially operated the school and charged small school fees up until 2000, when it opted into participating in the FPE program during its first year of implementation. As a result, the school was suddenly required to accept all students from the area who wanted to attend school. The numbers of student enrollment increased tremendously. When I first conducted research for my practicum in 2005 the school enrollment was 1,052. This was because the number of students in Standard 6, the class which began with FPE, was nearly double the enrollments in any other grade. The principal said the increase in numbers caused problems for the first few years, but in subsequent years the government was able to provide additional teachers to balance it out. The enrollment numbers in 2007 at Morena Primary were 782 students throughout the school. The average number of student-to-teacher ratio was 31.28:1. In the Standard 4 and Standard 7 classes, where I conducted my research, the student-to-teacher ratio was 26.25:1 and 29:1 respectively. Out of the 782 students 235 (30%) were orphans, meaning that at least one of their parents was dead. 46 of these orphans had lost both of their parents. There were 39 orphans (37%) in Standard 4 and 37 orphans (43%) in Standard 7. Nearly all of the students came from the nearby area and walked to school. There are 26 teachers at Morena Primary. All of the teachers have some sort of teacher training and qualifications, two of which received professional training after being hired as teachers, while all of the others attended teacher training institutions to some degree.

The school had 25 classrooms, of which the government had built 23. The classrooms I worked in were in relatively good shape, with cement floors, functioning windows, and adequate desks for all students. The classrooms had minor damages, such as cracks in the floors and ceilings, but overall they were quite comfortable and functional. The classrooms were supplied with old, but useable chalkboards, closets to store books and other equipment, and a teacher's desk. The school reported that every student had a desk to sit at. As part of the FPE program students were provided with a free lunch every day. The students wore uniforms, but the school was quite relaxed in their requirements for tidiness and completeness of uniforms. Many students had tattered uniforms or uniforms which were either too small or too large. The only fee expected of all students was a M1.50 (about 20 cents) sports fee. In the last three grades there was an additional "joint scheming and testing fee" that the students had to pay, M10 (~$1.25) for Standards 5 and 6 and M20 (~$2.50) for Standard 7. From my understanding, the school could not require the students to pay these fees, but they could deny them the sports and testing privileges if they did not pay. Otherwise, the only real expenses that students were required to cover was paying for their uniforms which one parent said costs a total of just over M300 (~$45) if you buy the whole set of skirt, jersey (sweater), shirt, and tie, and any other accessories they preferred, such as school bags, extra pencils, pens, or other materials, etc. Through FPE the school was supposed to be given enough supplies, such as pencils, pens, and workbooks so that the students would not have to buy them themselves.

The principal and teachers complained about not receiving textbooks and other materials on time and claimed they always had shortages. In my observations at the

different schools, it seemed as though the government school was nearly as well supplied with textbooks as the private schools. The major difference was how they took care of the textbooks. At Morena Primary many of the books were tattered with torn out pages, and therefore were largely unusable. As a result two or three students often had to share textbooks. But each classroom had enough textbooks to distribute throughout the class. At the private schools I worked with, they usually owned less textbooks but were more prudent in the ways they used them. They would often own enough books for one full class and then coordinate between the different classes within the same grade to use them at different times. They also took much better care of the books. I think this is because the private schools had to pay for their own textbooks while the government schools were provided them for free, although often late. In addition, all of the private schools I worked with had photocopying machines in the main office, which they used frequently, especially in preparation for the PSLE for the Standard 7 classes. This allowed the teachers to supplement textbooks in many ways. At Morena Primary they had no such photocopying access. When I asked the principal, she said that was one of their greatest needs.

Dayspring English Medium Primary School

Dayspring English Medium was the private school located in the same area as Morena Primary. The schools were about 1 kilometer away from each other. The school was quite accessible as it was a few hundred meters away from the main road with a large dirt road that passed by. The school had gone through a rather tumultuous history in the beginning. It was originally part of one of the first English Medium primary schools established in the city, which was located down town in the beginning. This school began
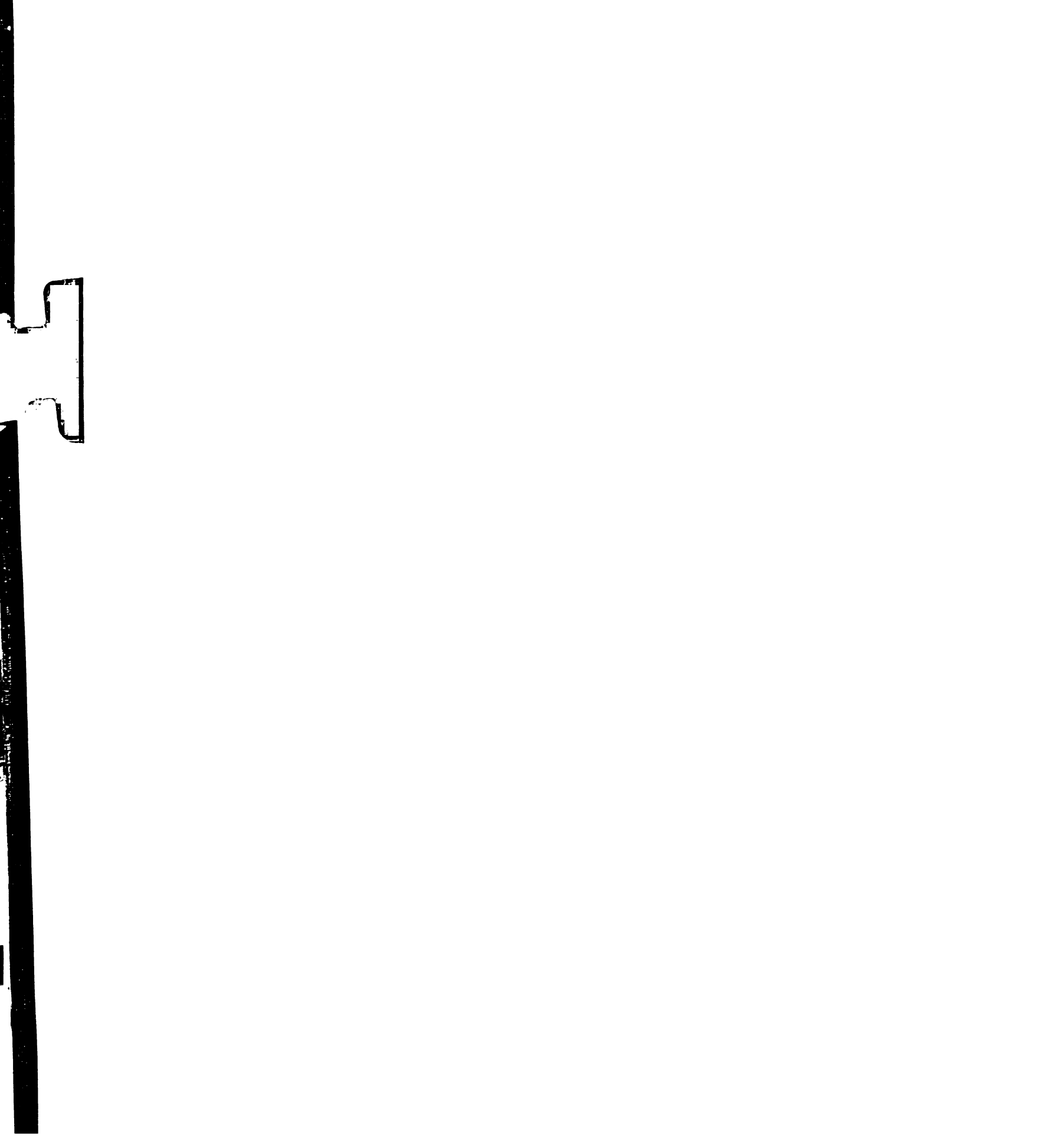
in 1984. According to the principal, during the early years the original private school went through a series of battles between the founding owner of the school and many of the parents. As a result, a group of parents split off from the original school and established their own private school, asking the current principal of Dayspring to be their principal. This offshoot school started small in 1994 and battled for years to find a sufficient location and buildings for the school. It also went through some internal turmoil and split up once again. There are now three English Medium primary schools successfully operating which came out of the original school. Dayspring is one of the most successful and prestigious of these. Eventually, after moving around to a number of locations in town, the school was able to secure a large plot of land on the outer edge of the larger Maseru urban area, where the school moved permanently in 1998. During heavy traffic hours it takes at least 30 minutes to drive there from downtown. There are many students who come from all over the city to attend Dayspring. Many of them come in crowded vans and minibuses that the parents have pooled together for their children's transportation. At the end of school each day there are usually up to 20 vehicles waiting to pick up various groups of children. The school is probably the most popular choice for families in the area who can afford to send their children to a private school. I would estimate that nearly half of the students at Dayspring come from the nearby area and live close enough to walk to school. The rest of the students have to take some form of transportation.

The student enrollment at Dayspring English Medium was 972 students in 2007. During that year the school was in the process of building a large building for new classrooms, so they only had 12 functioning classrooms, plus two classrooms held in a

tent rented from the government. The previous buildings they were using were temporary structures made out of prefabricated materials. These temporary buildings had become so old and worn down that it became necessary to replace them. As a result, during 2007 there was a great shortage of classrooms, so much that the Standard 4 classes, with three different classes and 137 total students, had to meet all together in the large assembly hall throughout the year. The new building was being built throughout the year and looked as though it would be ready for the following year, thus providing 12 more classrooms for the school. Consequently, in 2007 many teachers had to share classrooms and be creative in coordinating with their fellow teachers from the same grade. Officially the student-to-teacher ratio was 40.5:1 throughout the school. In Standard 4 the ratio was 45.67:1 and in Standard 7 it was 46.67:1. Therefore, the student-to-teacher ratio at Dayspring was close to ten more students per teacher. This is an interesting statistic because many parents and teachers claimed that one of the main reasons government schools performed so low in comparison to private schools was because they have a much higher student-to-teacher ratio. This was not true in my study, and according to the MOET, they have effectively reduced this ratio in most of the government schools, at least in the urban areas. At Dayspring there were reported 135 (14%) total orphans, 17 of which had lost both parents. In Standard 4 there were 17 (12%) orphans, and in Standard 7 there were 24 (17%). All of the 24 teachers had received teacher training and certificates, with over half having received at least a diploma.

The school was located on a very large plot of land, which was mainly an open field for the students to play on. There was a small garden behind one of the classroom buildings. As mentioned before, the school had previously used temporary structures for
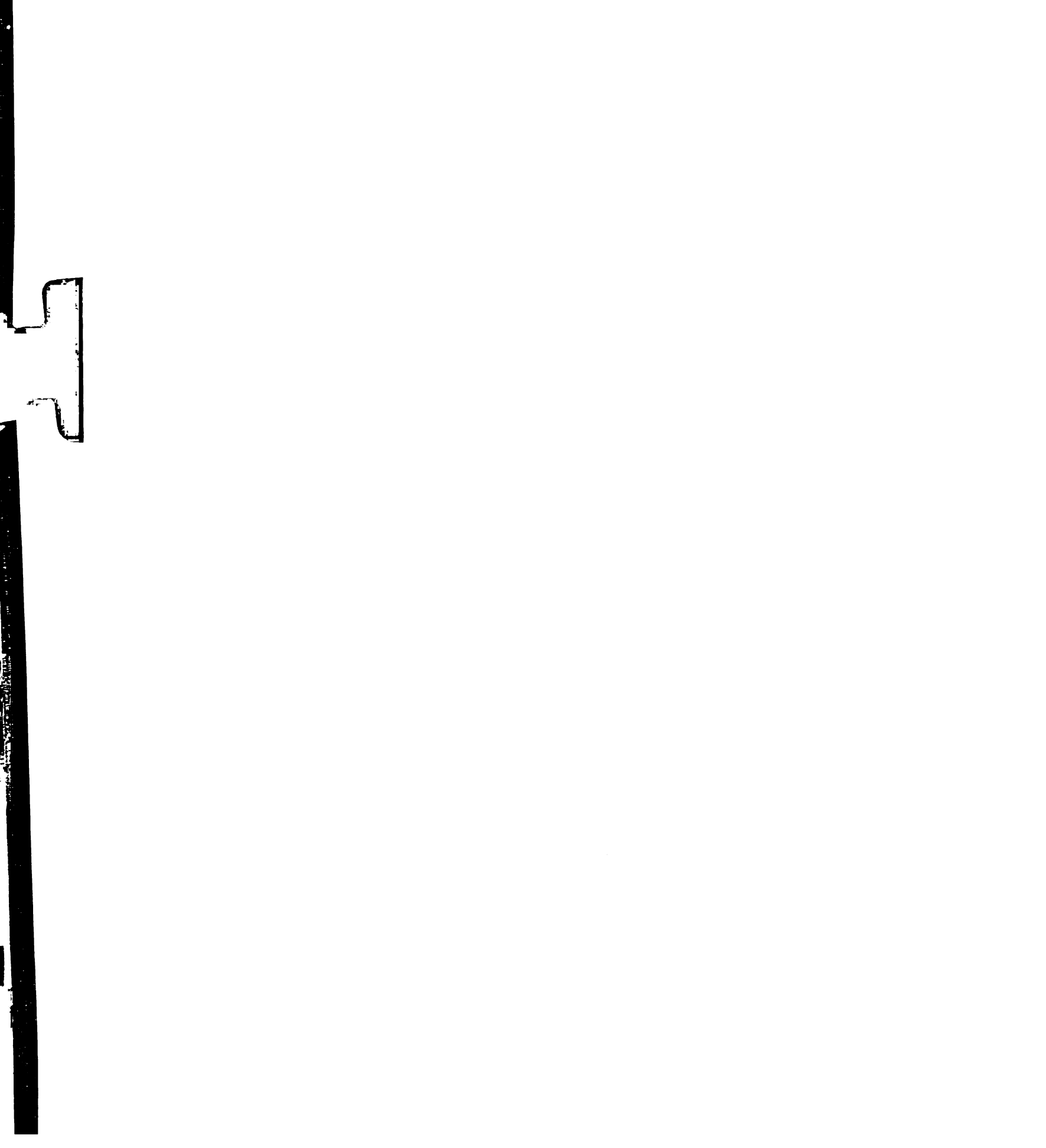
a number of their classrooms. These structures were still around but were no longer in use. The new structure being built will be two stories high and hold up to 12 new classrooms. During 2007, Standard 2 with 133 students, Standard 3 with 122 students, and Standard 4 with 147 students, each had one classroom for all of their students, therefore the three teachers in each grade would team teach as they tried to maintain order with so many children in one classroom together. The school reported that out of the 972 students, 90 students did not have a desk to sit at and 31 had only seats. The classrooms that were built were in rather good condition being somewhat new, but they were basic with cement floors, small windows, a closet for storing books and supplies, and a teacher's desk. The classrooms were about the same size as at Morena Primary, but they fit in at least 10 more students, so they were much more crowded. There was very little room to walk around in most of the classrooms. They literally used every inch of space they possibly could.

I was not able to get accurate totals for all of the school fees required of the students, but the parents reported that it cost M500 (~$75) per quarter. Plus the students were required to buy school uniforms, of which there were two different sets. The school was very strict about the students being in the proper uniform on the correct day and made sure that the students' uniforms were very tidy and in order. They also were strict with the students' grooming standards. I remember one day witnessing a set of teachers scolding a Standard 7 girl for not doing her hair properly. They threatened to send her home if she came to school like that again. On top of the school fees and uniforms, students were required to pay for their own supplies, such as pencils, pens, and workbooks. They brought their own lunches, because the school did not provide

anything. They were also charged a book fee of M100 (~$14) and registration fee of M70 (~$10). Therefore there was a lot of demand from the students' families.

Meridian English Medium Primary School

Meridian English Medium is a relatively new private school, which began in 2000, but it has been very successful and has a gained a good reputation for the results its students achieve on the PSLE. It is unique because it is the only boarding primary school in the city. The principal and proprietor of the school is also the founder of the school. She is a very dynamic and energetic woman with an entrepreneurial spirit. She is constantly thinking of how to expand and build upon the school. Currently the school runs from pre-school up to Standard 7, but the school has purchased more land to build new buildings for more boarding space and to expand into a high school. The principal decided to start the school because she saw the need for a boarding school in town for primary school students. She came up with this idea because she owned and operated a boarding house in South Africa for students who would come from all over the country. She thought the same would be useful in Lesotho. The school is largely run like a business, with efficiency and making the most out of every dollar a priority.

The school began with 5 classrooms and has expanded every year by adding a few new classrooms. It now has 21 classrooms. The student enrollment at Meridian English Medium is 896 with 143 students in Standard 4 and 75 students in Standard 7. The official student-to-teacher ratio is 42.67:1 with the ratio in Standard 4 being 47.67:1 and in Standard 7 being 37.5:1. The number of orphans at the school is reported to be 138 (15%) with 13 students without both parents. In Standard 4 there are 18 (13%) orphans, and in Standard 7 there are 13 (17%) orphans. There are 21 teachers at the school, two of
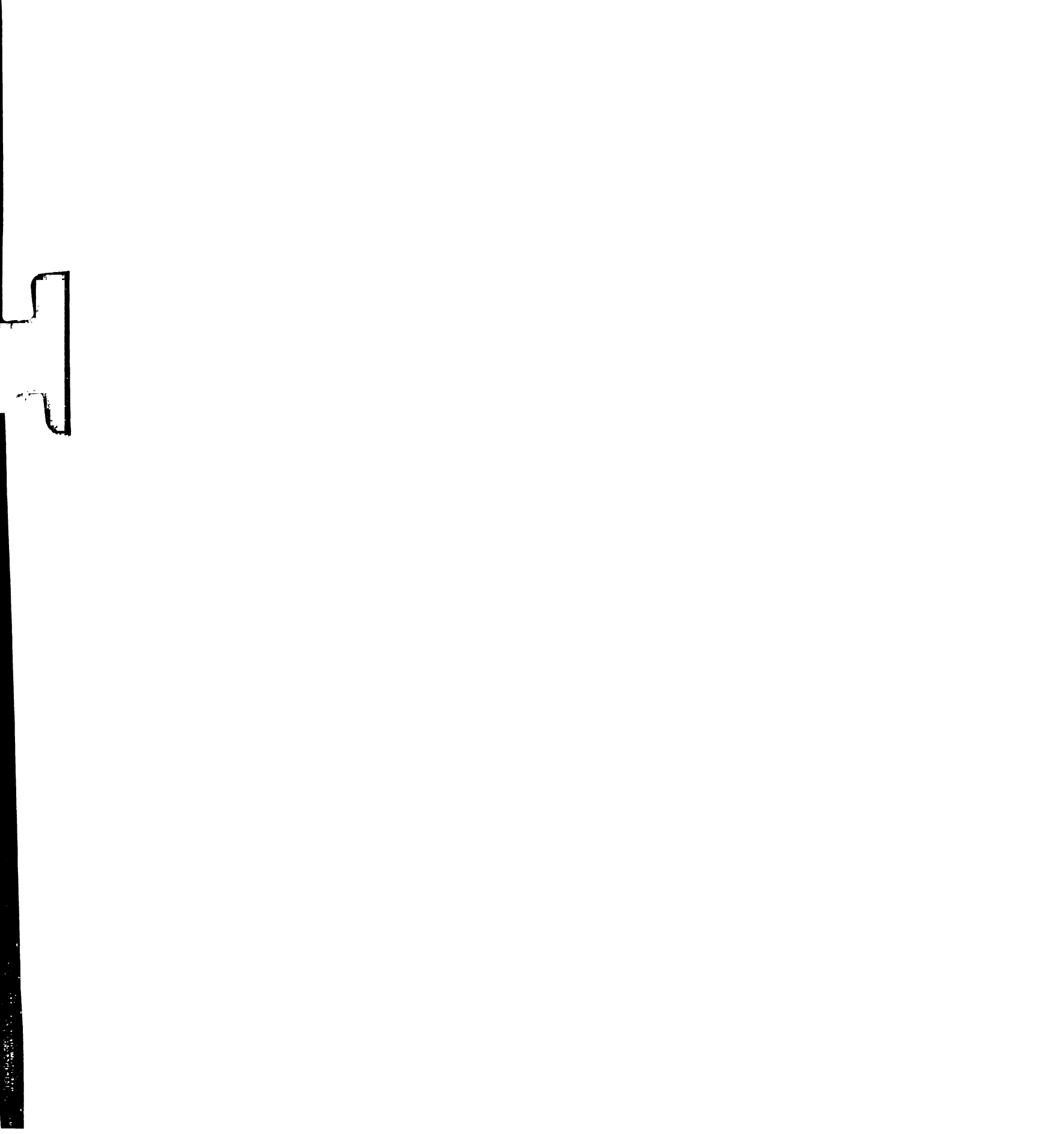
which have only received a high school degree. The others have completed teacher training and received different levels of certificates and degrees. Overall, the qualifications of the teachers at Meridian are a little lower than at Morena Primary, the government school.

The school is crowded into a somewhat small plot on the edge of downtown Maseru. It has very little room for the students to play, but they still manage to find enough space. The classrooms are very small in comparison to the two schools described above, so they are even more crowded than at Dayspring. As I mentioned before, the school seems to be run more like a business as they try to get use out of every last inch of space available. This may also be due to the fact that the school is located more tightly into a residential area and, thus, has less room to spread out. Nevertheless, the school reported that every student had a desk to sit at. In addition, the school has a computer room, where all of the classes take turns using for computer subject each week. The computers they have are all second-hand computers, and only five of the 15 or so computers worked while I was there. There are also two large boarding facilities on the school ground, where 259 of the students stay. The rest of the students are day school students, so they return home after school is over. The day school students pay M480 (~$70) per quarter while the boarders pay an additional M800 (~$110) on top of that.

I spent nearly 6 weeks conducting observations at Meridan English Medium. Most of the time was spent in the Standard 4 classrooms because the Standard 7 students were busy preparing for the PSLE which was coming up the following month. I did spend some time with the Standard 7 students and teachers, but most of their time was spent taking practice exams and cramming for the test. I was not able to work with any of the

students' families from Meridian because they were so dispersed all over the city and I did not have access to the boarding school students' parents. Therefore, most of the data I collected at this school was used to compare and confirm the observations at Dayspring English Medium.

Divine Private Primary School

Divine Primary School was the only private school in the area that was run by a church. During the build up to the implementation of FPE in 2000, church owned schools had to decide whether they would participate in the program, and thus receive funding from the government or opt out and try to go it on their own without any government assistance. Nearly all of the major churches in Lesotho decided to participate in FPE, but this particular church decided not to. The principal and teachers reported to me that they were very pleased with that decision because they have been able to maintain, if not increase, their quality of education. They prided themselves in receiving the top scores on the PSLE out of all of the competing private schools in the area. The school was directed by a very strict and religious principal, who demanded a lot from her teachers. There seemed to be an extremely close, collegial atmosphere amongst the teachers. The principal credited this to the fact that they all are committed to the same religious principals and met each morning to pray together before school started.

The total enrollments at Divine Primary are 698. There are 14 teachers at the school, so the student-to-teacher ratio is 49.85:1. In Standard 4 the ratio is 55:1 while in Standard 7 it is 45.5:1. Therefore, out of all of the schools I worked with, Divine Primary had the highest student-to-teacher ratio, but they also performed the best on the PSLE the

previous year. All but one of the 14 teachers had good qualifications, with the one only completing high school.

The school is located on a very large plot of land, isolated from other areas of town. There is a full soccer field, a very large garden, and plenty of other space for the children to play. The classrooms at the school are quite large and kept quite well. They are also basic like the other schools. The school reported that every student has a desk to sit in. The students are required to pay between M1,300 (~$185) to M1,500 (~$215) per year, which includes the school fees, lunch fees (which are required of all students), and book fees. Therefore, it is nearly the same price as the two private schools described above.

I spent about 4 weeks at this school, but was not able to spend as much time as I had wanted because it was at the end of the school year and I ran out of time. I was interested to see how differently a church-run private school operated in comparison to other private schools. In many ways they operated in the same manner, with regards to teaching practices and everyday procedures, but there was a different level of collegiality and school pride compared to the other schools which, from my observations, seemed to drive the teachers and students to work a little harder than the others.

Khotso Community Center

Khotso Community Center was a different type of private school. They insisted that they were not an English Medium school, even though most people in the community referred to it as such. They prided themselves in teaching English well, but not at the sacrifice of Sesotho language and Basotho culture. The school was based on a student-centered philosophy and therefore they limited their number of enrollments. They

also believed in inclusive education, so the school had a large number of students with disabilities compared to other schools who were integrated right along with the other students in each class. The school was founded and run by a very dynamic and philosophical principal who had studied in Canada and returned with a vision of a different type of primary school. She was very hands on with her students and teachers. The school also was different in that it only had classes from Standards 1-6. Instead of continuing on to Standard 7, the students at Khotso would take the PSLE a year earlier. Their students usually did quite well on the PSLE, but the school did not rank among the highest performing private schools. According to the principal, their students usually did very well in high school, even though they finished primary school one year earlier.

The total enrollments at the school were 202, with a student-to-teacher ratio of 14.43:1. There were 14 teachers who worked as a team to teach different subjects to each class. Therefore, it was difficult to determine the real student-to-teacher ratio in each grade. The school was built on a large plot of land with very nice and well-kept landscaping. The buildings were built to look like traditional huts with thatched roofing. The school had a very large library with state-of-the-art computers and other materials. Khotso was the only school which did not have school uniforms. The principal said this was because they wanted the children to express their individuality. The school ran on a different calendar than the rest of the country, based on the American school calendar. As can be seen, this school ran in a very different manner to the other schools I worked with in this study.

I spent nearly three weeks at the school. It was a fascinating place to conduct observations and learn about, but I decided not to include it in the analysis of this study because it is so different from the others.

Historical, Linguistic, and Social Background to Lesotho

In order to understand the linguistic and educational issues of this study it is important to have a basic understanding of the historical, linguistic, and social context within which the schools and students operated. Therefore, in this section I provide a brief overview of the history of Lesotho, including the formation of the nation, its years under colonial rule, and its transition after gaining independence in 1966. The most important information from this history is the history and development of formal education in Lesotho. Christian missions were the first institutions to establish formal education in Lesotho and have largely enjoyed ownership of educational institutions throughout most of the country's history. It was only until recent decades that the government began to play a larger role in education. This was, in part, because international donors, such as World Bank, IMF, USAID, etc., began to increase their funding for educational projects and thus have greater influence on educational policies in Lesotho. As the funding increased, the government began to gain more influence over education, and over time necessitated more control. This created great tension between the government and the churches which had been running the schools. This led to compromises and changes in the laws and structures controlling education.

Up until the mid-1990's, nearly all primary schools were still officially owned and run by the churches, which charged school fees to their students. But in 2000, under

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pressure from international donors, and in conformity with the ambitions of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals, the government implemented the Free Primary Education (FPE) program in Lesotho. Churches were officially allowed to choose whether or not to participate in this program, but nearly all of them did because of the funding which accompanied it. Ever since 2000, the government has made great efforts and strides to build schools throughout the country in order to provide access to education for all children of Lesotho. The country has been rather successful in providing access to everyone through FPE, but many teachers and parents are disappointed and upset with the program because they feel the quality of education at government primary schools has declined significantly since its implementation. As a result, a number of private "English Medium" primary schools have cropped up in the country and continue to grow in popularity and support. Many families who once sent their children to low fee paying church schools are now sending their children to private schools as an alternative to the free government primary schools.

A significant linguistic fact about Lesotho is that it is one of the few African countries which is basically monolingual. There are a few patches of other linguistic groups on the outskirts of Lesotho, but nearly all of them speak Sesotho as a second language. Thus, for all intents and purposes, Lesotho is a monolingual country, which helps to limit some of the complexities which face other African nations with regards to language policies.

Lesotho is also in an interesting position in terms of the current global economy and international relations. Throughout its history Lesotho has relied heavily upon its powerful neighbor South Africa, especially economically. In its height of economic

prosperity Lesotho's economy relied heavily upon trade with South Africa, especially through its thriving agricultural activities. But as Lesotho became more populated and the land began to deteriorate through ill-informed agricultural practices and overpopulation, more and more Basotho turned to South Africa's enormous mining industry for employment opportunities. At its height, over half of the men in Lesotho worked in the mines of South Africa as migrant laborers and sent home remittances. This, in many ways, broke up the traditional social, family, and community structures which had previously maintained communities and provided economic sustenance for their members. As a result, Lesotho's traditional institutions were under threat and the country had become dependent upon outside economies. This has worsened in recent years as South Africa's economy has declined and it has turned inward for employment. As a result, Lesotho has been left in a condition where it has few natural resources and a weak economy, but must try to compete in the increasingly important global economy. This will require great investment in developing social institutions which can provide for economic growth and national development. One of the crucial institutions in the endeavor is education. The government has made great strides to improve the nation's education and is continuing to make progressive changes. It will be important in the coming years for Lesotho to find ways to develop institutions that will help the country effectively enter the global economy in a way that is beneficial to its own country and people. Because language issues are an important part in these global developments, the way in which language is used for education and other purposes will have significant consequences.

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Chapter 4: Government School Families

Introduction

In this chapter I will take a policy as practice approach to the educational experiences of families who send their children to government schools. Instead of analyzing specifically how the language and education policies of their schools impact these families and their children's education, I will rather explore the structural factors which act to constrain and limit the opportunities of students and their families, while also investigating the diverse ways in which actors use their agency to respond to their particular circumstances. By looking into the stories and lived realities, as expressed to me through interviews and observations, of families who send their children to government schools we can come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between structure and agency, between the ways in which choices become limited for people due to their socioeconomic and cultural positions and how people act upon the choices presented to them, limited as they may be. In order to do so, I will draw upon the concept of various forms of capital, as described by Bourdieu, to show the varied ways in which families' and individuals' lives are situated within the larger structures of society.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, Bourdieu's theory of capital explores four main forms of capital which are possessed by groups and individuals in society. These forms of capital are: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. In this chapter I will discuss each form separately and provide examples from the lives of a number of students and their families which illustrate how these forms of capital apply to their particular situations and how they influence the educational choices available to them. Although every individual

possesses each of these different forms of capital to one extent or another, some types of capital are more highly valued by society than others, which provides some individuals with more choices to utilize their agency for their own family's good. Most of the families who send their children to government schools lack the types of capital which are valued by society and therefore find themselves in less powerful positions to benefit their own lives and change their social standing.

With this in mind we must remember that the underprivileged of society are not a monolithic group, with the same set of structures acting upon them in the exact same ways. Each group or individual has a different mix of structures operating on their lives. By looking deeper into the particular combinations of structural influences on individuals' and families' lives we can see how each situation is unique, presenting itself with distinct constraints and opportunities to operate within. One similarity in the students' and their families' lives is that they all have the same language and education policies placed upon them from the national and school levels. Therefore, it can be assumed that the differing ways they respond to these policies is due to their own particular combination of structural circumstances along with their individual acts of agency and decisions which they make. In the following sections I will focus particularly on the various forms of capital and how they influence the decisions of government school families and attempt to place the language and education policies within these contexts.

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The first of these forms of capital is economic capital. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of economic capital is quite straightforward. It basically refers to the material possessions that a group or individual possesses which has direct economic value in society. The most prevalent form of economic capital is money, especially in modern societies, but there are a number of other forms of economic capital which may lead to economic wealth or market value. These include land, livestock, investments, and skills which may be traded in the market or used for economic collateral.

In traditional Basotho society livestock, such as cattle, goats, and sheep, held a great amount of economic worth, and along with them, social status and power. Chiefs usually increased their power and influence by accumulating and distributing livestock through patronage and other forms of reciprocity. Important ceremonies, such as marriage, were, and continue to be, integrally tied to the exchange of cattle and other livestock. Not only did these material possessions hold economic value, but they also entailed great cultural and symbolic significance. For example, many of the proverbs in Sesotho refer to the significance of cattle in social exchanges. A traditional greeting among elderly men in Sesotho is "Likhomo!", directly translated as "cattle", but referring to asking about how the cattle at home are keeping, or in other words, "I hope life is being prosperous for you."

The reason I provide this discussion is that the modern concept of economic capital is not universal and may not be as readily accessible or understood of a concept to some populations as may be assumed. Many people who move into the towns and cities of the Lesotho lowlands from traditional rural areas, especially the mountains, are confronted with this reality. Although they already know the important value money

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holds in the modern economy before ever moving from their rural homes, they often do not understand the extent to which the economic value of money rules people's lives in the urban areas. Without access to money there is little that one can do to survive in today's modern economy. Some of these newcomers soon find that they need money for everything: food, shelter, transportation, and education. They can no longer live off of the land and must find ways to acquire needed money. Therefore obtaining a job becomes a necessity, but there are limited jobs in town, so people must gain skills and education to qualify for those jobs, but to get a good education you must have money, and so on and so on. This is the cycle that often occurs with the phenomenon of urbanization and modernization. Those with the least amount of economic capital, especially money, have the least opportunities to compete and survive in the larger economy.

Some will argue that what economically deprived people need most are educational opportunities which will provide them with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to get a job. A steady job will, in turn, provide them with the necessary economic capital to succeed and effectively contribute to society. This train of reasoning is basically the driving force behind the Free Primary Education program in Lesotho. Before FPE was implemented in 2000, students had to pay school fees to go to school. Although most of the church-run and government schools had very low school fees, there were still some families who could not afford to send their children to school. Therefore, the idea behind FPE was that if Lesotho could provide education for free it would allow more families to (1) send their children to school and thus, (2) benefit from education by becoming employable. The first part of this goal has largely come true. Since the implementation of FPE, many more families have been able to send their children to

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primary schools. The CEO of primary education claimed that student enrollment has increased by 60% since 2000 (interview, July 19, 2007). The MOET has successfully built a great number of schools throughout the country, especially in the remote rural areas, and has provided free access to schooling for the majority of the country. But many critics question whether or not the second aspect of this goal – that families will benefit from the education they receive under FPE – is happening.

In my interviews and interactions with parents and family members of the students at the government school, I received sentiments about both of these aspects of the FPE goal. The majority of families were happy to finally have the opportunity to send their children to school under FPE, because they did not think they would have been able to pay for school fees, even minimal ones, without it. But many of these same families complained that they felt the quality of education has decreased significantly at primary schools since the implementation of FPE. One parent even went to the extent to say she wished school fees were reintroduced at government schools.

In the following section I will describe the lived realities of a few of the students I worked with and their families to demonstrate how their economic situation has greatly constrained the choices available to them for the education of their children. I will frame this discussion within the context of FPE and discuss how family members talked about FPE in both a positive and negative light. For each student I will provide a brief description of their individual personality and performance at school (including their PSLE results if they were in Standard 7) in an attempt to make a connection between their educational experiences and their particular family's background, home environment, and economic situation. Then I will discuss their family's lived realities, as

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expressed by them, and how they relate to educational opportunities or constraints within the FPE program. Throughout these cases I will try to utilize direct quotes from the parents and other family members and specific observations from the field as often as possible to portray how they spoke about their experiences with sending their child to a government school under FPE.

Mookho

Out of all the students' families I visited, Mookho's family was probably in the direst economic situation of all. This is not to say their case represented the worst economic situation of all the students at Morena government school. The school principal and teachers often alluded that there were other students whose lives reflected theirs and some which may have been even worse. I had a difficult time gaining access to many students' homes, especially those who were the most impoverished and underprivileged, including orphans and others who did not have parents available or willing to visit with me. So I am not able to confirm whether this is true or not.

Mookho is in class 4. She seemed to me to be a somewhat introverted girl who is usually quiet in class. She sits in the back corner of the classroom and is often rather disengaged. She is 12 years old, so she is about three years older than most of her classmates. She is consistently near the bottom of the class in test scores. According to my observations, she seems to enjoy being with her classmates and playing in the schoolyard but has a hard time with class work.

Mookho lives with her two sisters in a small, one room (8 ft. x 12 ft.) apartment. The apartment has a cement floor with no furniture inside. There is a cloth sheet hanging in the middle of the room to create two separate rooms. The far side, acting as the

bedroom, has a mattress on the floor and clothing stuffed into suitcases or hanging on a line strung across the wall. The near side acts as the entrance, kitchen, and family room and has a few essential items for cooking and other basic household activities.

Mookho's family is originally from a small town up north in the mountains. Their mother still lives in their home village. Their father passed away in 1995. They have lived in their current apartment located on the outskirts of Maseru since Mookho first came to live with them three years ago. When she came she enrolled in class 2 at Morena government primary school. Mookho lives quite far from school, where it takes between 30-45 minutes to walk, each way. Her sister is 14 years old who goes to class 6 at a different government primary school, which is about a 30 minute walk in a different direction from Mookho's school.

I conducted an interview (September 22, 2007) with Mookho's oldest sister who is 32 years old and assumes the role of mother and caregiver in their home. She has very little formal education, having completed only Standard 4. She first moved to the city in 1998 to find work. For the past six years she has been working at the factories in town, where she makes less than M700 per month (less than $100). Her mother does not work, and therefore she is the only source of income for the entire family. She both supports her sisters and sends money home to her mother with the little money she makes at the factories. She claims they do not have any family or relatives upon whom they can turn to for support when needed or in an emergency.

Mookho's older sister said she does not know much about Mookho's school because she has never visited the school and does not know any of the teachers. She values her sisters getting an education and hopes they will do well because, "to get a job

you need to be educated." She said she tries to be involved in their education but doesn't feel like there is much she can do to help because she did not go far in school herself. She encourages Mookho to study, but she claims that's about as much as she can do. As she explains, "Sometimes we fight about her not reading and going to play but she does read and does her school work. She reads a lot when she is going to write exams." Mookho's sister stated that due to her lack of educational background and her long, tiring hours of working at the factories, it is difficult for her to be involved in her education and give her the support she needs.

When I asked how she felt about FPE she replied, "I like it because it helps me because most of us have little." She continued, "Without free primary education they would not be able to go to school because we get paid little at the factories." She expressed her gratitude for the FPE program because otherwise her sisters wouldn't be getting any education at all. When I asked her whether she thought her sisters would be able to go to high school, she replied, "I don't know. Maybe if I'll still be working, they may go." She expressed that she was just happy that they were able to go to school at the present time and hoped they would be able to address those concerns when they came across them in the future.

For Mookho's family, without FPE there was probably no other way the children could attend any school. They were just grateful for the chance to do so. It could be debated whether their education will do them any good if they will not be able to continue on to high school. As the older sister indicated, you need to have a good education to get a job in Lesotho. Otherwise the only options for employment are working low paying jobs like hers, which do not require any education, and pay very

little for long hours and hard work. On the other hand, Mookho's sister had little experience with schooling herself, so she could not say much about the quality of education the government school was providing Mookho. She just wished Mookho could work a little harder on her homework, although there was little she herself could do to help other than push her to do the work.

Although Mookho's family was very limited in the educational choices available to them because of their lack of economic capital, they were still able to use their agency to some extent. This is manifest through the fact that Mookho's 14-year-od sister decided to attend a different school from Mookho. Although they did not have the choice to go to private schools, they did have the choice between government schools within walking distance from their home. I did not explore the reasons why the two sisters went to different schools in much detail in the interview. Their older sister just said it was because that's what the two sisters decided on their own. In any case, even under such limiting constraints we can see how individuals are able to utilize their agency.

Papali

Papali is in class 7. She is a low performing student who seems to be less engaged in her classwork. She sits in the back and likes to play with the other girls. She often teases other students and seems to enjoy getting into mischief. She does not speak much English in public but seems to follow along quite well in class. She received a third class pass on the PSLE (Sesotho:1, English:2, Mathematics: Fail).

Papali lives with her aunt in a small, rectangular, two-room (8 ft. x 8 ft. rooms) home. They live close to the school on a narrow dirt road lined with identical government-built, cinder block homes. She lives with her aunt because her mother moved

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to Gauteng (Johannesburg, South Africa) seventh months ago to find employment as a domestic worker. Her mother has only been back to visit the family once since leaving for work Gauteng and has been supporting her children as well as her sister's family through the money she makes in South Africa. Papali's aunt moved into their home when their mother left for work. Eight people live in the small home, seven children and the aunt. Papali has four siblings. Her older brother is going to high school in Form B (9th grade), and the others are too young to go to school. Papali's father died long ago in 1993, so they rely solely on their mother's wages for income.

Papali's aunt has four children of her own, ages 13, 8, 4, and 1. Her two older children remained in their home village, about 30 minutes from town, living with their father, her husband. Neither she nor her husband work, so they also rely upon Papali's mother for their maintenance. I asked the aunt questions (interview, September 13, 2007) about both Papali's school and the village school where her children are attending. Both schools are government FPE schools.

When asked about Papali's school her aunt said she did not know much about it because she has never visited the school and does not know the teachers. In her own words she said, "I don't know much but from what I've seen, her school teaches and I am satisfied by her work." In comparing Papali's school to her children's school in the village she commented, "The education seems better than the one there. They are serious in teaching children. It would only depend on the children."

As for her own children, she knew much more about their school and seemed quite dissatisfied with the way it operated. She explained, "The education isn't that good but the school is nearby and I don't know where to take them, so they attend it. But the

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education is bad. The teachers are not satisfactory to me." She went on, "They don't teach well, maybe it's because we can see them all the time and know they're not teaching, no interest." When asked what she thought she could do about it she said she didn't know. She knows her children's teachers in the village well because they are her neighbors, but she doesn't feel she can do anything to influence the school to improve. "We go to school to talk to them but the teachers don't pay any attention even when our children fail, there's nothing we can do even when the children try. They sometimes fail three times in a row. They really don't care."

Since both schools are part of the FPE program I asked her how she felt about free primary education. Her response was, "If I could afford it I would have taken them elsewhere, but because I can't I let them stay there. If you don't see progress in children you can't see their future, they just do like children are being taught and they keep failing because they don't pay, they're not taught with effort." I asked her what she thought were the biggest problems at the village school and she responded, "There are few teachers and they teach big classes and several of them, late arrival of books, and teachers who are not serious. There are only three teachers from class one to seven and another one we have to pay R20 for her to be paid her monthly salary because the government didn't hire her." When asked what she thought could be done to improve the school she responded, "More teachers to relieve the pressure on the other teachers."

From the aunt's point of view, Papali's urban school was much better than her children's rural school because it seemed to have better teachers who put in the effort to teach. Although she had not been to the school herself, she made this assessment from the school work she has seen Papali bring home and from what she hears from neighbors.

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She said she is not satisfied with the way government schools are run, especially her children's school, but expressed that she has no other options. She expressed that if she had the means she would prefer to send her children to another school. But under her circumstances, she doesn't see that as a possibility.

As for Papali, she has very little assistance or support from home with her school work. The aunt said that her brother tries to help her with her studies at times, but he is only two grades above her. The aunt does not feel she can help at all because of her lack of education and knowledge of English, and her mother is not present to help. Her mother finished Grade 7 in primary school, but never went on to high school. She did go to a school for sewing, but that was as far as she was able to go. At least Papali's brother is able to currently pay for his high school fees through his mother's income, so there seems to be the potential that Papali might be able to continue on to high school after this year, but that will stretch her mother's budget even further. In addition, although Papali did pass her PSLE, she had a low scoring pass and failed the math portion, which will make it more difficult for her to gain acceptance into a high school. But at least Papali does have the prospect of furthering her education if she wants to and if her family can somehow afford it.

In Papali's family's case, they were constrained by their lack of economic capital, so her mother used her agency in deciding to go to South Africa to find work. She was able to do this because she was able to draw upon her social capital within her family by having her sister, Papali's aunt, take care of the children while she was away. Although this may not have been the ideal situation for their family, it made it possible for them to pay for Papali's older brother's high school fees and to maintain both her mother's and

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aunt's families. Therefore, although Papali's mother's choices were limited, in comparison to families with greater economic capital, she was able to use her agency to find a way to increase their economic capital, thus opening up further opportunities in her children's education.

Khotso

Khotso is in class 7. She is a low performing student who is very quiet and mostly attentive in the classroom. She struggles with mathematics and does not speak much English, although she seems to follow along in class just fine. She has troubles doing her own assignments in class and relies heavily upon her classmates to help with her work. She received a third class pass on the PSLE (Sesotho: 1, English: 2, and Mathematics: Failed).

Khotso lives in a one room (8 ft. x 8 ft.) apartment with her mother. It takes her about 10 minutes to walk to school from her home. The apartment is one in a line of four one-room apartments in an old building built out of stone and mud. There is a medium sized garden in the yard which appears to be shared among the residents. I interviewed Khotso's mother (September 22, 2007) with the assistance of a translator while she was washing clothing outside in the yard.

Khotso's mother grew up in the village where they presently live and close to where Morena government primary school is located. As Maseru expanded the village came to be recognized as part of the larger Maseru urban area. She completed Form C (10th grade) at a lower secondary school and now works at the factories in town. She sometimes works seven days a week and at other times five days. She said that she

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usually comes home tired and wants to go right to bed after eating dinner. She commented that we were fortunate to catch her for an interview.

Khotso's mother has three children. Her first child, a daughter, completed Form C at a local high school and is now married. The second child finished class 7 and did not continue with his education. Khotso is her last born. All of her children have attended the same primary school, Morena Primary, but when her firstborn went there the FPE program had not yet started, so she had to pay school fees throughout her first child's education.

When asked how she felt about Khotso's school her mother responded, "I don't really like it, but I can't afford other schools." When asked why she didn't like the school she replied, "They don't teach well...There's a teacher that usually insults kids and it seems the teachers spend more time insulting the children than teaching them." When asked if she had ever gone to the school to talk about these issues she said she hadn't recently, but she used to go and complain and felt like in the past they would respond to her concerns.

When asked about the FPE program Khotso's mother replied, "I think it is still fine but if I could afford I would take her somewhere else. I don't really like it much." She went on to comment that she felt things were better in the past at the school when her firstborn was attending and had to pay school fees. She explained, "There's not a big difference, but there is a difference. The one thing I hate most is teachers making some kids miserable and uncomfortable by belittling them in front of others and that causes problems in their studies." She expressed that she feels the teachers treat the students somehow worse now that they didn't have to pay school fees. I asked whether she would

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prefer it to go back to having school fees, and she replied, "I don't think so. I think it was different with my firstborn, but now I wouldn't. Now that I'm used to this system [of FPE] it would be hard for me to take them to the same school [and have to pay school fees]." She suggested that if she were to pay school fees now she would prefer to send her child to a private school instead, but she cannot afford to do so at the moment.

I also asked her how she felt Khotso would do on the PSLE. She felt quite confident that she would do well because she thought Khotso was working hard, but she was worried about her performance in math. She was hoping to get some tutors to help Khotso, but I don't know if she ever did. Her mother also expressed hopes that Khotso would be able to get into one of the top high schools in the area. I asked her how she would be able to afford that, and she commented that she would have to ask for help from her family, but she seemed confident that they would be able to help.

When asked what type of dreams she had for Khotso she replied, "I would like for her to get good education and not be like me. I would like for her to be an accomplished person in life...so that she will be able to take care of herself independently." She seemed to have a lot of hope for people who get an education in Lesotho which is indicated by the following statement about the Lesotho economy. "It's still fine. Those who get a good education don't go looking for greener pastures elsewhere, they stay here in the country, and they stay home with their qualifications." This is an interesting comment because it is in contrast to what most Basotho with higher education qualifications have expressed to me. They often complained that there are not near enough employment opportunities for those with a good education and lamented over the great number of highly educated people who leave to South Africa for better jobs. But from the perspective of Khotso's

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mother there were much greater opportunities for people with a good education – at least better than working at the factories.

For Khotso it seems as though, at the moment, the only option for her is to go to the government school because her mother cannot afford to pay the school fees at a private school. But when considering the possibility of her going to high school her mother said she will do all that she can, including turning to her family, in order to pay the high school fees. From my observation it seems that by having the option of sending her child to a free government primary school under FPE it has made it easier for her to do so without having to add to their current economic struggles. Indeed, when her firstborn had to pay school fees she was willing and found a way to do so. So, although she expressed that she is not satisfied with the direction of education and teaching at the school since the implementation of FPE, her actions seem to imply something else. Sending her child to a seemingly lower quality school for free outweighs the other option of having to struggle to find the money to pay for school fees at a better performing primary school. In addition, the fees which are charged at private schools are much higher than what she had to pay for her first child when the local primary school charged fees. This choice of paying school fees for her child now becomes even further complicated when the prospect of paying for high school fees is unavoidable in the future. From what Khotso's mother expressed in her interview, any money which can be saved now is better for her daughter's future, as long as she is confident that her daughter will still be able pass the PSLE by going to the government school, even if it means a potentially lower passing grade.

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Reabetsoe is in class 7. She has repeated the class this year because she did not pass the PSLE last year. She is one of the older girls in her class and acts very self-assured. She seems to enjoy being with her friends and sometimes can be a little rowdy in class. She sits in the back and easily gets distracted, but overall she pays attention and works pretty hard in class. She received a third class pass on the PSLE (Sesotho: 1, English: 1, Mathematics: Failed).

Reabetsoe is the lastborn of five children. All of the children still live with their parents in the same home. Their home was built by their parents nine years ago. It has a medium sized yard with a small garden. The home has two buildings, a larger building with three rooms and a second one, which appeared to have two small bedrooms. It is about a 5-10 minute walk from their home to Morena government primary school. All of the children in the family attended the same primary school.

I interviewed both of Reabetsoe's parents together with the assistance of a translator (September 22, 2007). Neither of her parents had gone very far in their education, her father completed Standard 6 and her mother completed Standard 4. They both grew up in villages in the mountains, where they met and were married. They moved down to Maseru in 1988 when the father began to work at the large slaughterhouse in the area. They alluded that he had worked there for a number of years, which is how they were able to build their home and enroll their children in high school. But none of their children were able to finish high school because their father lost his job and, thus, they were not able to continue paying their school fees. As a result of this, the oldest three children, the oldest being 27 years old, are no longer in school. The first two finished Form B (9th grade) while the third only made it to Form A (8th grade).

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The parents claimed their children's education has done nothing for them because they are now unqualified to get any jobs in town. The oldest child tried to go to vocational school for sewing, but was not able to pay her fees, so she had to stop before finishing the program. No one in the family is employed at the moment. The second-born son does training in taekwondo and goes to tournaments representing the military, but the parents claim he cannot enter the military because he does not have the educational qualifications by not finishing high school. The fourth child is currently attending the local high school in Form B. They are paying for her fees through the father working odd jobs whenever he can find them. They claim they don't have any relatives or others who can give them financial support, so if they don't find work there's nothing they can do.

When I asked about Reabetsoe's education the mother responded, "She is encouraging. Even though she's not brilliant, she works hard. When she reads you can hear that she is improving. She is not as good as the others, but she is very encouraging in her efforts. Those who weren't able to finish high school would have finished at the university if they had continued." They were hopeful that she would pass the PSLE this year because it is her second time around. They said if she did they would like her to continue on to high school, but they would have to figure out how to pay for her fees on top of her sister's. The mother said they have recently heard about a cheap high school, so they plan on looking into that.

When asked how they felt about Reabetsoe's school the mother replied, "I think they teach children well because my other children did pass, and I think those children who don't pass would be because of their abilities as individuals. It's also good for us who can't afford for the transportation to send our kids to other schools, so we are stuck

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with it, as it is close to home. Some of our children wanted to go to other schools though." She said that children who go to schools far from home brag about it and are able to get into better high schools.

When asked whether they felt the school has changed since the implementation of FPE they said, "In my mind I think there's a difference between then and now. I think they used to teach harder back then than now. Right now they're not as committed as before and I think it's because of the free education. It's up to a child on their own to work hard." They continued, "If we weren't poor we would take her to another school and pay for her, but that's impossible because we can't afford it. Even if you complained at the school where you pay fees, you find that you have a leg to stand on because you pay fees." The parents expressed disappointment about the way the government primary school has changed since the implementation of FPE, but they felt powerless to do anything about it because they were too poor to pay for school fees and therefore felt they had little right to complain to the school about it.

When asked about their feelings towards FPE, the father said he thinks "free education is important because it helps us – those who struggle for money – because the children go to school. That's what I think is good about it." But later in the interview, after discussing their struggles to pay for their children's high school fees, the mother explained, "In truth it's not helping. If high school was free instead of primary, it would help because primary is cheap, we would afford to pay for it. Right now, after Standard 7, children would love to continue but they stay home because parents can't afford the fees. Standard 7 is useless these days!" This was an interesting point which I had heard from a number of other parents who were in similar circumstances. They were grateful to have

free education but did not think it made much sense to have it only for primary education if families could not afford to pay for their children to continue on through high school. They did not see much value in a primary education alone. On this note the father commented, "The others did learn to read and write but that's not much help as things are. It would have been better for them to be shepherds back in Mokhotlong [his home village in the mountains] than having paid so much money for them, and now I can't even take them further to Form 5 (12th grade) because it's very expensive and they can't find jobs with what education they have."

These parents expressed great frustration because they had invested a great deal of resources into their children's education, but none of it seems to be paying any dividends. Although they acknowledged that their children effectively learned the basics, they didn't feel that a basic education amounted to much in the realities of their lives in today's modern economy. From their experience, without the qualifications of a high school degree you cannot find a steady job in the city.

For Reabetsoe's family they expressed that their children's education went well as long as their father had steady employment. All of the children passed the PSLE and moved on to high school. But the moment their father lost his job the children were not able to continue paying their high school fees and were not able to graduate. On the other hand, because of FPE, Reabetsoe was able to continue to get an education at the government primary school, even though her parents were no longer employed. The question now is whether her family will be able to find a way to pay for her to continue on to high school or whether she will follow in her older siblings' footsteps and fall short of graduating from high school.

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Discussion

These four examples of students' lives help to show the diverse ways that economic capital can limit families' opportunities as they try to provide a quality education for their children. They also show how the FPE program has had some positive and negative effects in these families' lives. While they all expressed gratitude in being able to now send their children to school for free, their gratitude was tempered by the perception that the quality of education has decreased at the school since the implementation of FPE. Some of the parents also felt they had lost their voice at the school and their ability to complain if they were not satisfied with things because they no longer paid school fees. An additional grievance was that a primary education alone did very little to improve people's lives these days, and therefore FPE was inadequate at best. If high schools are allowed to continue to charge high fees, then poor families will continue to fall short of gaining what they perceive to be a useful education. According to one of these families, primary education alone is seen to be insufficient, if not useless.

Some of these families, as well as others I interviewed, displayed the potential ability to pay for school fees when necessary, but decided to send their children to a free government school. Many teachers complained this was part of the problem with FPE. Since its implementation, schools have been forced to admit students from families who invest little time, effort, or interest into their children's education, which has made the burden of teaching even harder than before. Some teachers are resentful because they have not received any additional compensation, but they feel the workload and burden has increased tremendously. They expressed how they wished that families had to pay at

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least a small amount so they would have something invested in their children's education. But if that happened, many children would probably never go to school.

Therefore, using a policy as practice analysis we can see that the lack of economic capital can create enormous constraints on families' educational choices. Although the policy of FPE has made it possible for some children to attend school who would have otherwise been unable, and therefore increasing their opportunities, it has not adequately addressed some of the larger issues which prevent poor families from providing their children with the quality of education that will benefit them in the current economy. On the other hand, FPE has allowed some families to save the money which would have been used for school fees to pay for other necessities, such as high school fees for other children, and therefore has created new possibilities and opportunities for some. If we analyze the FPE policy in isolation from the economic realities in local stakeholders' lives and the diversity of ways economic capital impacts their lives, then we do not gain a full understanding of the actual impact the policy has in providing them with a better education. Using a policy as practice analysis helps to draw out some of these complexities and diversities to see that FPE impacts stakeholders, even at the same school, in very different ways.

Cultural Capital

As was discussed in Chapter 2, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital entails non-economic resources which gain significance and social currency through culturally mediated systems. Therefore cultural capital is acquired through enculturation within families and socialization amongst peers within a similar social class. Some forms

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cultural capital are more valued than others within society and therefore, some people

gain or maintain positions of power and influence through the cultural capital they

possess. Bourdieu argues that one of the main purposes of the institution of schooling is

to maintain and legitimate the inequalities produced by the uneven distribution of cultural

capital in society. This is contrary to the popular belief (at least in America) that the

purpose of schools is to teach and educate students with the knowledge necessary to

succeed in society, regardless of their social class. Schools are commonly seen to be a

place where students can work hard and pick themselves up from their proverbial

bootstraps by gaining the knowledge and skills needed to move up in social and

economic status. In Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, this illusion of the emancipating

power of schools is what makes schools such a powerful social institution in perpetuating

the status quo. When students from lower class backgrounds do not succeed in school,

instead of blaming the schooling system, or the structure of society, they blame

themselves for not being smart enough and not possessing what it takes to succeed.

Instead of seeing the inherent inequalities of society, they see themselves as lacking in

cultural capital, and thus help to perpetuate and legitimate the system.

A critique of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and the role of schooling in

perpetuating and legitimating inequality is that his theories and studies were developed in

the context of highly stratified western societies like his native country France. The

cultural capital that he refers to in such countries has been developed and reified over

numerous generations and thus embedded integrally into the social institutions which

developed along with them. The social context of post-colonial societies is very different,

and therefore, Bourdieu's theory may not operate with regards to cultural capital and schooling in quite the same way.

In other words, much of the cultural capital which ends up being valued in post-colonial countries, such as Lesotho, was initially introduced, especially through formal education, from the outside by a society (Britain) with cultural values very different from traditional Basotho culture. Therefore, most of the cultural capital valued at schools (such as English) was, at first, new and unusual to nearly everyone in the society. This means that initially a very small minority (the educated elite) were able to gain such valued cultural capital in Lesotho through formal social institutions such as schooling (which was introduced by the colonial powers) in a rather quick and explicit way. This process of obtaining cultural capital differs greatly from the way in which the same cultural capital may have been obtained and internalized by members of its originating society in Britain. In Britain, this cultural capital has been passed on through families over generations and is therefore more pervasive and more deeply embedded into the institutions of society. In a rather new, post-colonial, modern society like Lesotho, the cultural capital which has been introduced or borrowed from former colonial powers is often what becomes most valued in society. But this type of cultural capital acts in a different way because it is never as subtle and deeply embedded as it was in the original society where the cultural capital gained its value. For example, in British society there are different forms, or dialects, of spoken English. Some forms, like proper standard English, are highly valued and those who speak it naturally are at an advantage. Those who speak other forms, like the Cockney accent spoken in *My Fair Lady,* are less valued and looked down upon. The differences between these accents can be very subtle and difficult for an outsider, or non-

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native speaker to recognize, but their cultural significance are great. This is often not the case in places where English has been introduced, at least not to the same degree. In Lesotho, someone who can speak English is seen to be at an advantage to those who cannot, largely regardless of his or her accent. This is not to say that English speakers in Lesotho do not value some forms and accents of English over others, but these differences are not as imbedded and deep-rooted as they are in Britain. The main point from this discussion is that these types of cultural capital, which have been borrowed from colonial powers, can be more consciously pursued and acquired in societies where they have been borrowed than in the societies where they originally gained their cultural significance.

This is an important difference to distinguish because it infers that some forms of cultural capital may be acquired more consciously and through direct effort than other, more culturally embedded forms of cultural capital. Consequently, this type of imposed cultural capital may not necessarily be acquired only through long term socialization, such as enculturation within one's family or social class, as Bourdieu's theory suggests, but also through more conscious means of socialization such as schooling. If this is the case, then the role of schools as an institution takes on a different role in a place like Lesotho than Bourdieu has proposed. Not only do schools play the role of maintaining and legitimizing the inequalities of society through valuing certain cultural capital, but they also play the role of being a major vehicle, or mechanism, in which to consciously gain such valued cultural capital, such as knowledge of English, and provide individuals with the potential to move up more quickly in social power and status.

In Lesotho this can be seen in the difference between private and government schools. Those who attend private schools learn the type of knowledge, skills, and cultural capital which is valued in post-colonial Lesotho. Those who are privileged to attend such private schools are able to, in a way, consciously move themselves out of one social class into another, if they navigate their educational experience properly. On the other hand, government schools are meant to teach the same knowledge for their students, but they lack the capacity, oversight, funding, training, or whatever else it takes (see Chapter 7) to successfully pass on such valued cultural capital to their students. Some families in Lesotho possess greater cultural capital than others, and are thus able to pass it on to their children. This is especially true of families with parents or siblings who have obtained a good formal education. Others may not possess the cultural capital themselves but find a way to get their children into good private schools and other relevant institutions which teach and socialize them with valuable cultural capital. Or they rely on relatives or others from their social networks, who possess the necessary cultural capital, to pass it on to their children.

This is not to say that schools do not play a significant role in maintaining and legitimizing unequal social structures in Lesotho. Indeed, this is one of the major functions of schooling. In practical terms, there are only a limited number of high schools compared to primary schools in Lesotho, so under current structural realities there must be a weeding out system to legitimize who can move on to high school and who cannot. This is most effectively operated through the national examination system administering the PSLE at the end of Standard 7 (see Chapter 6). Those who attend private schools, by and large, are expected to pass the PSLE with high marks and move on to high school

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education. When they do they are legitimized by the credentials they receive, which qualifies them to move on to good high schools. At government schools the pass rates are much lower and many people come to accept this as an unfortunate fact of society. When students from government schools do not pass the PSLE or receive low marks on the exam, their families blame it on their own individual lack of academic ability or their inability to get their children into the best schools. Rather than questioning the whole system as unequal and unfair, they accept the results as legitimate and unfortunate. According to Bourdieu, their inferiority becomes internalized and they come to accept their position in society.

The same process is manifested at the university level, but more explicitly related to the English language itself. For the matriculation exam, the COSC, there are a number of different subjects examined. But when it comes to being accepted into different university programs, students' scores on the English portion of the exam are valued much more highly than the other subjects. For example, if a student passes every subject on the COSC with high marks but gets a low score on the English portion, then they will not be accepted into the most competitive programs, such as in the sciences and business fields. This is done even if the student receives a very high score in the science subjects (which are also written in English. On the other hand, if a student scores very high on the English portion of the exam and fails one, two, or sometimes more of the other subjects, he or she is often admitted into the competitive university programs. This shows an explicit favor of the English subject over other subjects, or in other words, a greater cultural capital value of knowledge of English over other forms of academic knowledge. This is a very

tangible example of how some cultural knowledge is valued over other knowledge, even within the education system itself.

With regards to constraints and opportunities derived from cultural capital, those families who possessed the cultural capital which is valued and rewarded in the education system were at an advantage. In this section, by utilizing a policy as practice approach, I will provide some examples from the lives of two students and their families to show how the type of cultural capital possessed at home has had an influence on the educational experience of these students. In these analyses I will also investigate to what extent the language and education policies of the education system have on the families' educational practices and experiences.

Katleho

Katleho is in class 7. She is a shy, but seemingly bright girl who is very attentive in class and works very hard on her school work. She sits up front and is known as a good student by her teacher and peers. She understands English quite well but speaks it haltingly. She struggles with mathematics. Katleho received a third class pass on the PSLE (Sesotho: 1, English: 1, Mathematics: Failed).

Katleho lives with her mother and younger brother in a partially built, one-room (10 ft. x 10 ft.) home. There is no furniture in the home, just a cement floor and a plastic tarp which acts as the temporary roof. The house is located in a large plot which includes Katleho's grandmother's home. They have a good sized garden, a dog, and a few chickens. The grandmother's home is completed, furnished, and appears to be a little larger. They said that they share nearly everything with the grandmother. The home is just down the road from the government primary school.

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Katleho's mother was born and raised in the same place where they now live. She has two children and is not married. Katleho is her firstborn and the second child is a 9-year-old boy who also attends Morena government primary school. Katleho's mother completed class 7 at the same primary school as her children and did not continue on with her education. She has worked at the factories in town since 2002. She currently works six or seven days a week, nine hours a day, and makes M650 (less than $100) a month. She expressed that life was very difficult for them because her income brings in just enough money for food and the essentials for her family. I interviewed Katleho's mother outside of their home with the help of a translator (interview, September 8, 2007).

When I asked her about Katleho's performance at school she was very pleased. She stated, "She does well in school. Sometimes she gets position two and other times position seven, but there is no stage I can say she is steady at. But generally she does well." She went on to explain that Katleho seems to love school "very much. She goes to school even when she is ill sometimes. She loves school so much that she will go to any cheaper high school even if she gets first class, because I won't be able to afford any high paying school. She is happy as long as it is school, she will work hard herself." She continued, "Sometimes her grandmother does all the chores so she gets a lot of time with her books, sometimes she plays with the other kids and reads in the evening. Since we use candles, I've advised to do her school work during the day to avoid damage to her eyes. She can play when she has time afterwards."

She said that she tries to help Katleho with her school work, but then added, "I do sometimes, but she is a stubborn person. She says our standards are the same [because she only completed Grade 7, the same class Katleho is currently attending] so there isn't

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much I can help her with. She prefers her grandmother to help her because she did a higher standard. There's a television in there so maybe she goes there to watch television and not read. Her cousins also help her out." Katleho's mother was concerned because she was not able to adequately help her child with her schoolwork. She had only gone as far in her education as her child's current grade, so she didn't think her help would make much of a difference. She said that even when she wanted to help, her child would often dismiss it claiming that they were at the same level of education.

When I asked how she felt about Katleho's primary school she responded, "Morena Primary is trying but things are difficult now, the teachers sometimes don't come to school once or twice a week. Sometimes teachers don't attend all the classes, so some of the students don't get to be taught. Other times they're short-tempered with students if they explain but they didn't understand. Katleho has been shouted at for telling the teacher she didn't understand and was accused of not listening. That's some of the problems we're facing." She also expressed that she is not pleased with Katleho's current teacher. She feels that Katleho was doing much better in her previous years, but this year's teacher does not have the time or patience to work with Katleho and answer her questions. In her own words she explains, "I was prepared to pay extra for afternoon classes, thinking that Katleho needed more help. But she explained that it wasn't that but the fact that her teacher doesn't like to explain things more than once and shouts at them if they don't understand things at first. So I realized it was the teacher's problem." When I asked her what she thought she could do about this situation she said she has talked to Katleho's previous teachers about it, but she is afraid to approach the current teacher. "I can go there, but I think maybe if I do that it could cause problems for the child with her

teacher. It's a good thing to do but it could also be bad by causing problems for the child." So she is currently afraid of approaching the teacher and doesn't know what to do. I then asked her whether she felt like she could address the problem by speaking to the principal. Her response was, "Maybe it can help because if these are taken to the teacher by someone it can be handled better than me going straight to the teacher." In addition, she claimed she never had time to go to the school because she always has to work. Her educational, economic, and social standing played a strong role in establishing how much she felt she could intervene in her child's education.

The biggest concern expressed by Katleho's mother was what they were going to do when she passes her PSLE and wants to move on to high school. She expressed great appreciation for FPE because it has provided an opportunity for all children to gain a foundational education, but she wished it would extend on through to high school. She felt it didn't make much sense to help students get through primary school if there was no program to help them move on to high school. She said she didn't know what they were going to do for Katleho's high school fees, but she was determined to make it happen. She explained that she has been looking around for more affordable high schools. She stated, "Yes, there are two I've found even though they're newly established and I don't know yet of their results, but Katleho said I should take her there and she'll use her head and work hard." These upstart high schools are becoming common in Lesotho because so many families cannot afford to pay for a regular high school. From a few informal conversations with former students of such high schools I have been told that these high schools have very poor quality and very few of their students do well on the COSC matriculation exam. There are also rumors that many of these schools are scams used to

get people's money. I do not know the truth of all of this, but it does show that the lack of high schools in Lesotho is an increasing problem.

For Katleho's mother, she expressed that education was the most important thing for her children. She viewed it as the way for them to get out of their current situation of poverty. She said she did not like the life she was living and wanted better for her children. She stated that she was willing to sacrifice everything that she had so her children could get a good education. She also expressed her ignorance of the situation because she hadn't been through high school herself, but she wasn't going to allow that to deter her efforts. "I haven't been to high school but I think as she goes further the fees become more. But I'm going to try and pay all the way because I want her to be educated. I don't want her to work where I do. That place is for slaves and no money."

Palesa

Palesa is in class 7. She is a friendly girl who seems to enjoy playing with the other girls in her class. She is quite bright and is very attentive in class. She works hard in school and seems to understand things well. She can speak English okay, but lacks vocabulary and confidence. She had a bad injury the year I was there when a neighborhood boy hit her in the eye with a small stone, shot from a sling shot. She had to go to the hospital to have surgery to put an artificial lens in her eye. Her mother claims this took her away from school for a few weeks and made it difficult for her to see well and concentrate in the classroom. She continues to get headaches very easily and cannot concentrate for long periods of time. After her injury I often saw her resting her head on her desk while the teacher was teaching. She ended up getting a second pass class on the PSLE (Sesotho: 1, English: 2, Mathematics: 2).

Palesa lives with her mother and three siblings. Her father died in 2005 in a serious car accident. They live in a four-room home with nice furniture inside. They have a very small yard with a small garden. Their home is about a five minute walk from the school. Palesa's brother, the oldest, completed his COSC (the 12th grade matriculation exam) and graduated from high school. He is now at the technical college doing an automotive degree. The second oldest is in her final year of high school and is preparing for the COSC. The third child is in Form B (9th grade). Palesa is the youngest. Their mother is a high school graduate. She is currently a clerical assistant at the government agricultural headquarters. She makes M1,300 (just under $200) a month at her job. Her husband was a truck driver for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Her sister passed away in 2001 so she now has the responsibility of taking care of her sister's four children as well. Her sister's children stay with their grandmother, but she supports them financially. Therefore her budget is stretched very thin. She said that this year she has had to pay high school fees for her two daughters, examination fees for COSC, her son's college fees until the government compensates them, as well as for uniforms and books for all of the children. I interviewed Palesa's mother in their home with the assistance of a translator. She understood all of my questions in English and was able to answer in English, but she said she preferred to use Sesotho so that her thoughts could flow more clearly.

All of the children in the family went to the same government primary school and the mother seems quite pleased with the school. She describes the school as follows, "It's a good primary school. I can say I like it because I've seen the kids being able to cope, not unless it's my kids that do so because I have an interest in their education. But there

are so many kids there, maybe most parents like it like me. And secondly, besides liking the school, it also had low school fees before free primary education. That's why I think most parents were able to afford taking their kids there. And also I saw that it produced good results. Unless maybe my children have done well because I took interests in helping my kids, and they came with good results."

Overall she said she has been very satisfied with the school because her children have always done well there. From her perspective she does not think there has been much of a difference at the school since the implementation of FPE. When asked about the school after FPE, she replied, "It's still the same. I say so because when you talk about free education, in other schools the teachers don't do their work because they have taken political sides and don't teach anymore. And also there are a lot of kids in the classrooms. I don't see any difference at Morena Primary, before and after free primary education. Even the results are still good so it's different from other schools." She said she has heard about the negative changes that FPE has made at other government schools, but from her experience she has not seen these negative changes at her children's school.

When I asked her about private English Medium primary schools and why she didn't send her children there, she gave a passionate response. "No, I never did like English Mediums because there were things I learned from observing my neighbors' kids, and I found no difference between them and my kids from a lower standard. Since from the pre-school, if you compare them there was no difference. That's why I left mine at Morena Primary. And of course it was also financial, but I found no difference. [Her older daughter] was at Morena Primary and all of them. When they reached high school

they even topped some of those from English Mediums. I told myself not to take my kids there, whether I was influenced by financial reasons or not."

From this mother's experience she did not see it necessary to pay extra to have her children go to an English Medium school. According to her, they always seemed to do well and get good results on the PSLE, so it didn't make sense for her to send them to an expensive primary school. Once again, she acknowledged that it may have been because of the great interest she took in her children's schooling, but in any case, they always seemed to do well enough at the government school.

Palesa's mother said she is very engaged with her children's education and often talks to their teachers. She is not afraid to speak to the teachers about problems that arise or to tell them what she wants for her children. In the following passage she describes how she approaches teachers and deals with her children:

"Maybe there is a time when I help Palesa and she says that her teacher didn't teach them that way. So, I go to the teacher and talk to her and show her how I've helped her and ask for her input, even though the answer may be right by different methods. I think it's because our kids never think that we know anything about the things they do at school. I also talk to the teachers just to hear progress about Palesa. Palesa never reads her notes, she is a care-free child, but I think she listens better than reading. When she has listened in class that's enough and she goes to play, but I tell her she will have a difficult time in high school if she doesn't get into the habit of reading. Even when I tell her I'm afraid for her in the coming exams, she assures me not to worry."

Palesa's mother said she is involved in her children's education on nearly every level. This type of help has given her children the opportunity to succeed at the

government primary school and move on to succeed in high school. Contrary to the thinking of many parents, her children did not need to go to an English Medium private school to be successful.

Considering her family's situation Palesa's mother found it was more important to use her limited income for more important and unavoidable educational needs, such as high school and college tuition, books, and uniforms, rather than send her children to a private primary school. Unlike most other parents, she did not see much of a difference at their school since the implementation of FPE. From my interpretation of Palesa's family situation, it seems as though the children's success at the government school had a lot to do with their mother's active involvement in their education as a parent on top of whatever the government school did. I cannot prove this connection between their mother's involvement and their success at school, but from the data I was able to collect for this study, their family possessed a much greater amount of cultural capital which is valued at school than most government school families. Nevertheless, this example shows that with sufficient support and cultural capital from home, students can succeed by attending government schools. Students' success or failure is not determined solely by the school they attend. There are a number of different factors which play into educational success. The availability of valuable cultural capital at the home is indeed one of these factors.

Discussion

These two examples help to illustrate the different ways the cultural capital families possess or do not possess can impact the education of their children, regardless of the education policies placed upon them. In the first example, Katleho's mother did not

possess the necessary cultural capital to help her child to do well at school. Her child even acknowledged this by pointing out to her mother that she had only reached the same level of education as herself. Even though she wanted her child to do well at school she felt there was little she could do about it because of her own lack of cultural capital. Katleho's grandmother had a little more educational background, so she was able to help at times, but not to the extent that was needed. In the end, Katleho did not do as well on her PSLE exam as her mother had expected. I cannot say whether this was a direct result from their family's lack of cultural capital, but it seems to have had an impact. Indeed, there could have been a number of other factors which contributed to this fact. In any case, her poor results will reduce the options she will have to go to high school. Without the necessary cultural capital available at home it becomes much more difficult for individuals to succeed in their education. Ultimately, even if she had done better on the PSLE exam it may not have made a difference for Katleho in the end because her family will still have troubles being able to afford to pay for high school fees due to their lack of economic capital. Therefore, these different sources of capital can build upon each other and make people's situations even more constricted with fewer and fewer opportunities.

Palesa's story, on the other hand, shows an example where a family's abundance of cultural capital can compensate for a seeming lack of economic capital. As a combined result of their father's death, having to pay for a number of children's school fees, and other family burdens, Palesa's family's budget was stretched thin, making it difficult for them to send Palesa to a private school which required school fees. But in her mother's mind it was not important to send her to a private school because in her experience with the government school her children had always performed highly, where many other

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students struggled to do well. This helps to illustrate the ways in which having access to important cultural capital can open up opportunities and choices for families and individuals even if they do not have sufficient economic capital.

Using the concept of cultural capital within a policy as practice analysis helps to show the extent to which language and education policies play in the educational experiences of students and their families. In the two examples discussed above, it probably would have made little difference what the policy was at the school because it would have done little, if anything, to change the amount of cultural capital these families possess. On the other hand, the types of policies which are implemented and emphasized do make a difference on what types of cultural capital is deemed to be valuable at schools. If English is the official policy at schools, then families who can speak English and use it often at home are at an advantage over those who do not. Therefore, policies can have a great impact on how, and if, families can draw upon the cultural capital they possess. But in the end, these policies are usually largely determined by the prevailing attitudes and values of society rather than the policies themselves reshaping these attitudes and values. In the end, the actual practices of students and families at schools are influenced more by their social standing than by the policies implemented at their schools.

Social Capital

The third form of capital which is influential in the educational experience of students is in the social capital that is available to them. As discussed in Chapter 2, social capital refers to the access to knowledge and opportunities that people gain through their

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social networks and social relations. Laureau (2000, p.80) describes it as the "transformation of social position into social advantage." Therefore, people use their social capital, whether it is through a social position of influence or through social networks, to create opportunities for themselves and their families, for their own advantage.

At the government school I worked with, this often played out in the degree to which parents and family members felt they had a say in their children's education or whether they felt their voices would be heard and responded to by the school administration and teachers. It was also manifest in the amount of information that was available to families to make informed decisions about their children's education. The examples that follow illustrate how different families felt about this question of the responsiveness of schools and how much of a voice they possessed in their own children's education. The experiences of families differed greatly even though their children attended the same school with the same teachers. Using a policy as practice approach, I will explore these differences in the types of social capital available to each family and how it impacts their educational experiences. I will do this within the context of the policies placed at schools and try to determine the extent to which policies play a role in their experiences.

Neo

Neo is in class 4. She is a small, somewhat quiet girl, but is very playful and has a lot of friends. She is near the bottom of her class in test scores and seems to struggle to follow along in class and understand the concepts. She keeps quiet and well behaved in

class, but often seems disengaged. When it comes time to do assignments in class she often does very little work and gets distracted by others in the classroom.

Neo lives with her grandmother and two uncles, one 23 years old, the other 20 years old. They live in a small two bedroom (8 ft. x 8 ft. rooms) home about 5-10 minutes walk from school. They have been living in their current home since 2004, so they are quite new to the area. Neo has lived with her grandmother since she was 14 months old. Neo's mother works in the factories in a city about an hour north and has lived there for the past five years. The older uncle is currently attending the agricultural college in the city while the younger one works odd jobs and is trying to find employment in the South African mines, where he is having no luck. Neo's mother sends money home, so they seem to manage okay. I interviewed Neo's grandmother in their home with the assistance of a translator (September 19, 2007).

Neo's grandmother received a Form B (9th grade) education while her two sons made it up to Form C (10th grade). When I asked how she felt Neo was doing at school she said, "She tries very hard but she is lazy to read, but when she has homework she does it. She is a bright girl because she retains things she learned in her mind because she repeats them to me." She continued, "Instead of reading when she has time, she goes to play and then in the evening she reads when she is tired and sleepy. So I've realized laziness is there, but with homework she does finish in time." She said that she and her sons try to help Neo with her school work and they speak to her often in English to help her practice.

Her grandmother was not very pleased with Neo's school. She complained excessively about how she felt the teachers did not teach well nor care about their

students. She complained, "It is not a satisfactory school, but because we can't afford to send her to a private school she has to go there. I don't think it's suitable for the development of children. The teachers there don't have an interest in teaching children that much. They don't take care of the children…. I've seen that happen because I would go and see how they handle things and find them lacking, unlike back in my day when teachers took good care of children and parents didn't worry….They don't teach well. I look at the results of Standard 7 examinations every year and they're always bad."

She stated that she's been involved in Neo's education from the beginning. "I've always talked to her teachers from Standard 1 and talked about how things are going with them and her." But she expressed that does not feel like they listen to her concerns, or any parent for that matter. "Since I've been here I've never heard the school call a parents meeting for us to air our concerns. I've tried to ask for that and no one has responded. In the rural areas every month-end or year-end they call parents' meeting and beginning of the year also, to be brought up to speed on the curriculum and other things like school rules and regulations. Here I've asked but haven't gotten anything in that respect."

She expressed that she wished they would have sent Neo to a different school, but when they moved into the area they were new and did not know the place or people around. Therefore they decided to send her to the closest primary school "because I felt she was still small to be sent to a far school and since we're relatively new here we didn't know anyone to accompany her to any other school. It's only this year I've realized a few that had sent their kids to [a nearby government] primary school, so next year she will go there too."

Commenting on Neo's current school she said, "I've wondered why their standard 7 [PSLE] results are bad when they have seven years to teach them. [The nearby government] primary school has better results than Morena Primary every year. That's how I've realized that these teachers have no interest in the students. They don't even care when children arrive late for school, they don't enforce any kind of discipline so that the kids will come early to school. At [the nearby school] they have that. Sometimes I just walk by Morena Primary to find teachers standing outside talking instead of being in class teaching the children."

When I asked her about private schools she commented, "I like them, but it's difficult for our children to attend them because they need to have gone through their pre-schools first to get admission. When we first got here I wanted to take her to Dayspring English Medium, but they give children who have attended their pre-school first priority. I wasn't aware of others as we were new here, and also fees are very expensive."

Therefore, although they wanted to send Neo to a better school, her family, being new to the area, lacked the social networks and knowledge of how to go about getting into certain private schools. Instead, in the grandmother's words, they were "stuck" with having to send Neo to the local government primary school, even though she didn't like the way the school performed. She tried to do what she could to talk with and complain to the school, but they did not seem to care much about her concerns, nor feel the need to address them. Eventually, after living in the area for a few years, the grandmother was able to discover other options available for Neo's education, so she is planning to send Neo to a different government school that is a little farther away. As the family was able

to develop more social networks and learn more about the schools in the area they have decided to change schools for Neo in the upcoming year.

Throughout this process Neo's mother was using her agency to try to get involved in her education. When she saw problems in Neo's education she would go to the school to see what was happening and tried to complain to the school. But she felt they did not take any of her concerns into account. She also showed her use of agency by doing what she could to obtain information about other schools in the area. She expressed that she had decided to send Neo to a different government school next year. Although her options were limited, especially when they first arrived in the area, Neo's grandmother used her agency to find out what she was able to and make the most informed decision she thought she could make.

Lebo

Lebo is in class 4. She is an average student who ranks right in the middle of her class's scores. She is playful and curious and seems to enjoy being with her friends. She is a small girl who sits in the front of the class near the teacher's desk. She is quite attentive in class and participates in all of the class work. She seems interested and involved in her education but does not stand out in comparison to her classmates.

Lebo lives with her mother and younger brother, who is also attending Morena government primary school. They live in a two bedroom apartment (10 ft. x 12 ft. rooms) in an apartment lot with eight similar apartments. Lebo's father works in Rustenburg, South Africa in the mines and comes home on the last weekend of every month, which is common for mineworkers from Lesotho. Their apartment is quite far from the school. It probably takes the children around 20-30 minutes to walk to school each day. There are

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other government schools closer by, but the mother has decided to send them to this particular one. I interviewed Lebo's mother in their home with the assistance of a translator. Although she could understand my English and answer a few questions in English, she often needed the assistance of a translator.

Lebo's mother had completed Form C (10th grade) in secondary school but was not able to finish high school because her family did not have the money to continue. Her husband did not go beyond Standard 6 and began working in the mines before they got married. She had previously lived with her husband in South Africa until they had their second child. Then she decided to move back to Lesotho for their children's education.

She explained the reason why she sent her children to a farther away school was because when Lebo began primary school they lived in a different home, closer to Morena Primary. When they moved a few miles away she decided to continue to send her to Morena Primary because she was satisfied with her education and progress. With her second child, she decided to send him to the closer government school at the beginning of the year, but she was not satisfied with his progress. She explained, "I like to see progress in my children's education…from January to April there was no difference. I couldn't see progress in his writing. I like to take action with my children and sit with them with their books. He didn't do well at school, he didn't get marked. So I went and confronted the teacher but nothing was done. So I thought it better to remove him before things were made difficult for him by his teachers." After taking him out of the school she registered him at the same school as Lebo.

When asked how she felt about Lebo's education she replied, "I'm satisfied with Lebo's progress, even though she doesn't improve here and there, her problem is spelling

because she doesn't read. But she is bright...She loves to play too much. She is still a child, but she will get there and slowly walk in my footsteps." Lebo's mother said that she herself loves to read story books, history, and many other things in both English and Sesotho. She tries to get Lebo to read, but says she likes to play too much. When I asked why she pushes Lebo to get a good education she said, "Because I want her to be educated and do things herself. My reason I'm not educated and also life is not our own so I 'm hoping she will help her siblings when I 'm gone."

Lebo's mother's decisions show that she felt like she had different options available for her children's education, even within the FPE government schools. She used her agency when she saw that she could send her children to another school if she was not satisfied with their current school and still not have to pay school fees. Lebo's mother was very engaged in her children's education and felt confident in being able to help them with their schoolwork. Although she did not complete high school she was able to get an education beyond the primary level and she said that she felt that as an asset for her children. In addition, she developed a cultural environment in the home which stressed reading and other things that promoted the development of valuable cultural capital in their home. Therefore, Lebo's mother seemed quite optimistic about her children's educational opportunities and felt like she had options to provide them with a good education without having to send them to a private school.

Pulani and Malepa

Pulani is in class 7. She is a somewhat shy, but friendly and playful girl. She is one of the better students in her class and is attentive and well behaved. She works hard and seems to understand things quite well. She was able to communicate most of her

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thoughts in English, although sometimes in broken sentences with a limited vocabulary. Pulani said she wants to be a teacher when she grows up. She received a second class pass on the PSLE (Sesotho: 1, English: 1, Mathematics: 2)

Her brother, Malepa, is three years older than her, but he is also in class 7 in a different teacher's class. He is quite a wild boy who gets into a lot mischief with the other boys and doesn't seem to take school very seriously. Malepa wants to be a soldier when he grows up. He received a third class pass on the PSLE (Sesotho: 1, English: 2, Mathematics: Failed).

Pulani and her brother live with their mother on a dirt road lined with government-built, two room (8 ft. x 8 ft.) cinder block homes. They live about a five-minute walk from school. They have a small yard with a small garden. The home has very basic furniture with the kitchen also acting as a second bedroom. They live just two houses down from their uncle, who has built a much larger home and seems to be doing rather well financially. Their uncle spoke to us for a few minutes before interviewing their mother. He seemed quite educated and spoke very good English. It sounded like he had lived in South Africa for quite some time. I interviewed the mother in their home with the assistance of a translator (September 18, 2007).

Pulani and Malepa's mother had completed Form B (9th grade) in her education. She moved into the area in 1995, but her husband died in 1998. She has another child who is 19 years old and is attending a high school in South Africa. She said her extended family (I assume the uncle) is helping to pay for his high school fees. The mother works at a local restaurant where she makes M722 (approximately $100) a month, but she will soon be out of work because the restaurant will be closing due to the building being

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scheduled to be demolished in January. She works many hours and arrives home very tired. She said she tries to help her children with their schoolwork but often can't because she is too tired. She said that their uncle helps them often with their schoolwork.

When I asked how she felt about her children's progress at school, she said she was pleased with Pulani but did not know what to do about her son. She explained that he doesn't do as well "because he is very playful. It was his fault because even when you try to help him he just says he understands things so that you can let go and he rushes off to play. With Pulani she is serious about school work and does it well." She said she has talked to their teachers often about her children's progress, especially her son. She feels that his current teacher "is a nice person and he tries." She does not blame the school for his lack of progress, she just says, "Malepa is clever, it's just that he is not serious about anything." She hoped for both of them to continue on to high school, but especially for Pulani because she is more serious about school. She said it is a concern for her to be able to pay for their high school fees because she will no longer have a job next year. But she said that she will find a way to get the money to pay from month to month, if need be, probably from her extended family.

She claimed to not have any major problems with the government school, but when I asked her about FPE she responded, "I don't really like it. I think the teachers don't care for the children unlike before when we used to pay fees, that's what I don't like." She continued, "We used to have parent meetings, but not any more. So we can't give them our concerns." She said she felt like the school used to listen to their problems, but not any more. When I asked whether she would prefer to pay school fees again she replied, "Yes, because if they don't teach I have a right to go, I can complain about my

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money but in this one they can argue that we pay nothing." Therefore, although they did not have much money to pay school fees, she said she would have preferred it that way so she could have more say in her children's education and be heard by the school. She said she didn't send her children to a private school because she cannot afford to pay such high fees. But before FPE, the government schools fees were very low, and many families like theirs could afford to pay. By eliminating the school fees she felt as though they also took away her voice as a parent at the school.

This mother claimed that she was not able to take care of her children's educational needs herself, but she was able to use her agency by drawing upon the social networks available to her. Due to their proximity to Pulani and Malepa's uncle, who possessed both economic and cultural capital, they were able to draw upon him as a resource, both for helping to pay for her oldest son's high school education, and also to help her children, especially Pulani with her schoolwork. On the other hand, she felt like she was limited in her ability to use her agency to approach the school if she had problems because she felt that now that they do not pay school fees they no longer have the right to complain. This perspective differs from other parents whom I interviewed, who felt they had the right to approach their children's school and felt like their complaints were heard. I don't know what causes these parents to view their relationship with the school in different ways, but their perceptions effect how they use their agency in deciding to approach the school with problems or not.

Discussion

The examples from these three families' lives help to show different ways social capital can influence the options available to them. Neo's grandmother lacked social

networks when she moved into the area and thus was not able to make informed decisions for her granddaughter. Over time she gained some social capital and was able to change her situation. On the other hand, she tried to be as involved as possible in Neo's education, but she felt the school did not listen to any of her concerns. Her social position did not allow her to have the type of influence she hoped to have. Now that she has found a different school for Neo she said she is hoping things will change.

Lebo's situation was similar to Neo's, but her mother was able to take quicker action and control over her children's education. This is partially due to her familiarity with the area and an understanding of how to negotiate things with different schools, but it also has to do with how she used her agency in a different way. She did not hesitate to criticize her son's school and pull him out of the school halfway through the school year. She was not willing to see the school determine the type of education her son received. She was able to utilize her agency for the benefit of her children.

The final example of Pulani and Malepa's family shows the importance of having a social network to turn to for assistance, especially in times of need. In many people's cases in Lesotho this largely entails a network of relatives who have economic capital or other sources of power and access to opportunities in society. Although Pulani and Malepa's mother was not able to afford to pay the school fees by herself for their older brother and for their potential enrollment in high school, she was assured that she could turn to her social network for the needed support to make these things happen. In addition, these relatives, especially the uncle, were able to help out with providing cultural capital in the form of help with school work while the mother was unable.

These are just a few examples of how social capital helps to produce different choices and opportunities for those who have a social network to turn to and for those who are in a position to make their influence felt in their own children's education. Looking at these families' different situations through a policy as practice approach we can see that there are many factors outside of policies themselves which influence how families and individuals choose to respond to their educational experiences and opportunities. These include the sources of social capital available to local stakeholders and how they draw upon their social resources. We will see other examples of social capital in practice when we discuss how private school families utilize their social capital for their advantage in the next chapter.

Symbolic/Linguistic Capital

In this section, rather than illustrating the types of symbolic and linguistic capital available to government school students through the stories of particular families, I will take a more comprehensive look at the general trends that I found among the different government school families I worked with in this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, symbolic capital is a little more difficult to define and specify than the other forms of capital. This is because it can be found in many different manifestations. Among the various types of symbolic capital in Bourdieu's theories include art, religion, science, and language. In this section I will focus mainly on linguistic capital, which is one form of symbolic capital. One reason symbolic capital is difficult to define is because it is so closely interrelated with cultural capital. In order for someone to effectively understand and know how to utilize symbolic capital which is deemed valuable in society, they must

first possess the necessary cultural capital in order to sufficiently appreciate and operationalize their symbolic capital.

Therefore, when I refer to linguistic capital in this study, I do so at two different levels. I will mainly discuss linguistic capital in reference to knowledge of English in the context of Lesotho. The first level is more closely related to cultural capital, meaning, in this context, the basic knowledge of English. For example, those individuals and families who can understand, speak, read, and write in English are at an advantage at school compared to those who do not have a good knowledge of the language. The greater grasp a student has in these four skills of English usage, the more successful they will be at school due to the great emphasis of English in the language in education policy. In the same light, those who come from families where people at home possess these language skills, they can more easily draw from their family's knowledge to benefit their own education.

The second level of linguistic capital is more on the level of symbolic capital. That is, those who have a mastery of the language are then able to utilize the language to exploit social situations to their own advantage. Examples of this would be someone who knows how to effectively use the proper register in English under appropriate circumstances, or someone who effectively uses their English language skills to write a persuasive article or give an influential speech. These acts move language beyond just having knowledge of the language, but into the realm of knowing how to use the language for one's own benefit.

With regards to the government school families I interviewed, there were very few who possessed much linguistic capital. Out of the 19 interviews I conducted with

government school families, only three were conducted in English. There were three others which were capable of being interviewed in English but preferred to use Sesotho because they were not comfortable with their English. That means that 6 out of the 19 families had enough knowledge of English to answer questions about themselves and their family's social and educational background. Granted, many of the questions and topics covered in the interviews were difficult to answer and fully express, even in their own language, but in contrast, out of the 10 interviews I conducted with private school families, only one was conducted in Sesotho, and the person in that interview understood all of my questions in English and was capable of answering many of my questions in English, but she preferred to use a translator. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the linguistic knowledge that was available in private school families' homes compared to those of government school families.

In addition to this, the material culture at the homes of the government school families was much less conducive to learning English. Out of the 19 homes, only 9 of the homes had televisions, while all 10 of the private school homes had televisions. Although most of the government school families had books in their homes, most did not have many books in comparison to private school families, and only four families expressed that they read for pleasure at home. Out of the 19 families I interviewed, only four of the parents or guardians had employment which required them to use English on a regular basis. Thus, most of the government school students did not have much access to using or learning English outside of school. In Chapter 7, I will illustrate the great differences there were in the use of English at government schools in comparison to private schools, but for purposes of this discussion, government school students are also exposed to much

less English at school than private school students. So, not only do they get less exposure to English at home, but also at school.

Using a policy as practice analysis we can see that all of these conditions combine with the lack of other sources of capital to make it difficult for government school students to learn and become proficient in English, which is so vital to gaining a good quality education in Lesotho under their current language policy. Therefore, although the policy of using English as the language of instruction at schools does little, if anything, to improve the linguistic capital available to students in their families and homes, it plays a significant role in determining which languages are valued over others in school, and hence, which families have a greater potential to succeed and benefit from their schooling experience. Thus, language policy in education has a close connection to what is deemed valuable symbolic and linguistic capital, it does little to help students obtain the valued linguistic capital through schooling. In fact, it may do the opposite by putting students with a lack of access to the English language in their everyday lives at a disadvantage compared to those who are regularly exposed to the English language.

Conclusion

Through the examples provided in this chapter we are able to see how the different forms of capital discussed by Bourdieu play out in the lived realities of students and their families at one particular government school. The different combination of economic, cultural, and social capital that families possess has an enormous influence on the types of choices and opportunities available to them to influence their children's education. Those families who possess little of these forms of capital find their lives

constrained by difficult choices with little opportunity to move out of their situation. Families can use their agency to decide between the choices available to them, but these choices are sometimes very constrained, which may limit the extent that individual agency can be used to make changes in their lives.

On the other hand, families which possess one form of capital more than others may be able to compensate for their lack of the other forms of capital by utilizing their agency and making decisions that will benefit their family. For example, if a family lacks the economic capital to pay for the quality of education they desire, they can try to make up for it if they possess enough cultural capital to provide the quality of education through assistance with schoolwork at home. If a family lacks cultural capital to assist their children with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed at school, they can try to compensate for this through their social capital by drawing upon those within their social network who can provide such cultural capital. On the other hand, if they have enough economic capital they can either pay for tutors or decide to send their children to a private school that will provide a higher quality education.

Therefore, the mix of different types of capital that families possess has a strong influence on the choices and opportunities available to them. This helps to show that the structures of society do indeed act to strongly influence the different possibilities available to families for their children's education. However, social structures do not determine *how* these families and individuals will act because each has their own unique combination of different forms of capital which leads to different options available to each family. In addition, these families must still utilize their agency to act upon these different options and decide what they feel are the most beneficial choices to them and

their families. These decisions may not always be the best informed or end up being most beneficial to their families, but in the end, individuals must make choices based upon the options available to them within the social structures of their lives. This is one place where the structure/agency dynamics meet, in the decisions that families make for the education of their children.

So what does this mean with regards to language policy in education in Lesotho? Building upon the discussion in Chapter 2, my criticism of much of the LPP research, especially regarding LiEP in Africa, is that it puts too much emphasis on the policy itself and the actual language of instruction that is used at schools and claims that by changing the official language of instruction to using local languages it will help to solve many of the problems facing education in Africa. By illustrating the many different pushes and pulls on the lives of government school families, we can see that through their different sources of capital, or lack thereof, there are many different structural constraints which limit the opportunities of students to succeed at school. Language, or linguistic capital, is only one of those structural constraints. Although changing the language of instruction to use local languages may help students to understand what they are being taught better, it will not replace the lack of economic, cultural, or social capital that underprivileged families possess. I would argue that these other structural issues have a much larger impact on the educational experience that students have than the language of instruction that is used at schools.

Using a policy as practice approach in analyzing the circumstances within which local stakeholders, such as students and their families, operate helps to place the actual language and education policies in perspective within all of the realities involved in

educational practices. Policy decisions indeed have an impact on the opportunities and practices of local stakeholders, but they only do within the context of their particular lives. Thus, a policy that may benefit one set of stakeholders may disadvantage other stakeholders within the same school or context. This type of analysis helps to show the complexity of determining the actual impact of policy decisions because on they deal with very different circumstances on the ground.

In the following chapter, I will explore the sources of capital that families who send their children to private English Medium schools possess and discuss the ways in which their greater access to valuable capital often provides them with more choices and opportunities to assure that their children receive a better quality education. In that chapter we will be able to see how many different influences outside of schools have a great impact on the education that students receive.

Chapter 5: Private School Families

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the influence that different forms of capital have on the lives of students who go to government schools and their families, especially with regards to the educational decisions they are able, or not able, to make. In this chapter I will do the same by focusing on the opportunities and constraints which are presented to the families of students who send their children to private schools. In doing so, I will follow a similar approach as I did in Chapter 4 by portraying the manifestations and influences of different sources of capital through the stories of a few selected families by drawing upon their own explanations and depictions of their lived realities in their own words, which I collected through interviews and observations with the students and their families. In this chapter, I contrast some of the differences between the structural constraints and opportunities facing government school families compared to those presented to private school families, while also showing the diversity in attitudes and acts of agency between families in each category. Therefore, although families from each category tend to have similar influences placed upon them, they differ in their particular manifestations and the ways in which they combine from family to family. In addition, each family and individual utilizes their agency in unique ways, which results in various outcomes.

As in Chapter 4, I will continue to use a policy as practice approach to the analysis in this chapter, where I first focus on what is happening in practice on the ground at private schools and in the students' families' lives. I will largely rely upon Bourdieu's

sources of capital to analyze and discuss the different lived realities in their lives. I will

then relate the experiences, attitudes, and practices of the families to the language and

education policies at their schools. The ultimate goal of beginning with the experiences

and practices of the private school families is to place the language and education policies

within perspective of the larger context of all that is involved in the education of students.

Policies are only one of many factors that influence the education of students. Therefore,

by starting with the actual attitudes, experiences, and practices of students and their

families, as was portrayed to me through interviews and observations, we can gain a

better appreciation of the role that language and education policies play in their

educational experiences.

Before I delve into the stories and interviews of the private school families, I

would like to point out a few differences in the sources of data for this chapter. As I

mentioned before, in Chapter 3, I conducted previous research in 2005 at the government

school I worked with, so I was already familiar with many of the students and their

families. In addition, I lived in the immediate community of the government school, so I

had a greater understanding of the particular context of the school as well as greater

access to the teachers, students, and families at the government school, who all lived

relatively close by. With regards to the private school students and their families, they

were from diverse communities and populated all over the city. Therefore, it was more

difficult to gain access to the particular contexts within which they lived and caused

greater complications in arranging for and following through with interviews with many

of the students' families. As a result, I worked with about half as many private school

families (10) as I did with government school families (19). Also, for some reason, I was

more successful in gaining access to families of students from Standard 4 at the private schools (7) than those from Standard 7 (3). This is the nearly opposite of the proportion of families I managed to work with at the government school, with six students from Standard 4 and thirteen from Standard 7. Therefore, the data in these two chapters is not necessarily comparable along parallel lines, but the stories which they depict serve to illustrate the differing lived realities that the private school families have compared to the government school families in this study.

Economic Capital

As was discussed in Chapter 4, one of the greatest constraints making it difficult, if not impossible, for most of the government school families to send their children to what they perceived as better private schools was their lack of economic capital. Due to the fact that ever since the implementation of FPE government schools no longer charged school fees, many families were now able to send their children to school when they otherwise might not have been able to afford it. When it came to sending their children to private schools, or other government schools which they perceived of as better, it was often not possible for them to do so. This was because they could not afford to pay for the school fees at private schools, could not pay for the transportation to get to far away schools, or a combination of both. In a few cases, some families had the potential economic capital to pay for their children to go to another school, but there were other demands the family had to meet, such as paying for the older children's unavoidable secondary school fees, which made it more difficult to justify spending money on their primary school aged children's education. As a result, many families tried to compensate

for their lack of economic capital by drawing upon other sources of capital, such as social or cultural capital, to ensure that their children received as good of an education as they could, despite not being able to go to a better school.

In this section I will contrast the examples mentioned above with the experiences of some of the private school families I worked with. Although economic capital was a concern to nearly all of the families, both at government and private schools, it did not pose nearly as much of a constraint to most of the private school families than it did to the government school families. In some cases, the parents of private school students saw their access to economic capital as a resource from which they could draw in order to ensure that their children received the best education possible. In these cases, rather than acting as a constraint, economic capital acted as a resource for greater opportunities and possibilities. In a few cases, the families were able to make up for a lack of other forms of capital by the economic capital to which they had access. I will illustrate some of these issues through the stories of two private school students and their families.

Poloko

Poloko is in Grade 4. He seems to like having fun with his friends because he is always playing around. He usually follows along in class, but he easily gets distracted and sometimes has a hard time keeping on task. He was part of the Standard 4 class at Dayspring English Medium where three different classes met together in the school's assembly hall (which I describe in more detail in Chapter 7), therefore it was easy for most of the students in the class to get distracted and not always pay attention to the lesson. But overall Poloko seemed to be a good student, but not exceptional. His teachers

said he was one of the lower performing students in the class, but they also said they had seen some great improvements in him lately.

Poloko lives in a rather large house with a large yard surrounded by a stone fence. I only entered the living room and dining room, but it looked like the house had at least three bedrooms along with a good sized kitchen. The living room and dining room were completely furnished with what seemed to be new furniture, including a large entertainment center, a formal dining table, and other luxuries. His house was about a ten minute walk from Dayspring English Medium, so he did not have to use any transportation to get to school, but rather walked.

I conducted the interview (September 22, 2007) with Poloko's mother with the help of a translator. She could understand my English and was able to respond to basic questions in English, but she did not feel comfortable answering questions about her son's education in English, so she opted to answer questions in Sesotho throughout most of the interview. Poloko is the last out of four children. His oldest brother, who is 28 years old, finished high school and went to a technical university in nearby South Africa to study auto mechanics. The second born child is 25 years old and is finishing his final year of high school. The third born is 16 and is in Form C (10th grade) at Lesotho High School, one of the best high schools in town. Poloko's mother made it up through Form C in her own education. She says she speaks limited English and doesn't always feel comfortable with her English abilities. She owns her own business as a tailor. Poloko's father received a primary education and did not go any further in his schooling. The mother said that the father does not speak any English. He now works in the mines in South Africa and comes home every month or so to visit.

Poloko's two oldest siblings went to primary school at the local government school Morena Primary when it was run by the church, which was before FPE was implemented. When I asked how she felt about that school she responded, "Morena Primary was fine during those days when the older ones went there. I was satisfied with it. The second born has always been brilliant, he would do well anywhere." She said they had to pay school fees back then, but the fees were minimal compared to private schools. She added that she would have preferred to have sent her first two children to a private primary school, but they could not afford it at the time. In any case, she said she was satisfied because they ended up doing well in primary school. When I asked her how she felt about Morena Primary now that it has become a government school under FPE she responded, "It's been over a decade now since my second born went there and that was the last time I had dealings with [the school], so I don't know how it is now....I can't say I've heard anything, but when my children went there it was regarded as one of the schools with a low standard in education, but kids still did well and I was happy."

When I asked her how she felt about FPE in general she replied, "It is good for those parents who couldn't afford any fees so that their children can get basic knowledge, but it's also bad if the parents don't play a bigger role and take interest in their children, because teachers don't do much towards their education now that it's free." She went on to express how she feels that the FPE program has impacted government schools in a negative way. "Most schools belonged to churches before and the leaders used to push teachers to do best to keep high reputations, but since free primary education no one is behind anyone to do a good job anymore because there's no money coming in from the parents." Thus, much like the parents quoted in Chapter 4, Poloko's mother felt that FPE

was a good thing because it allowed many children to go to school who previously could not afford it, but she also felt that the quality of education has gone down significantly since its implementation. She accounted this to less leadership at the schools and less accountability to parents since the government has taken over and the schools no longer charge school fees.

When the younger two children were old enough to go to primary school, which was nearly nine years later, the mother said their family was in a much better situation financially, so they were able to send them to private schools. The third born did all of his primary schooling at Lerato English Medium, which was nearby. Poloko also began primary school at Lerato, but the mother was not very satisfied with his progress. Therefore, after he completed Standard 2 they transferred him to Dayspring English Medium, which had a better reputation and was also in the area. She explained Poloko's situation in the following passage, "Dayspring is of a higher standard than those. At Lerato English Medium, the one doing Form C did well, but with Poloko, his work wasn't satisfactory so maybe it was the teacher that taught them." She went on to say that she has been very pleased with Poloko's performance at his new school, Dayspring. "He is doing much better than when he was at Lerato. At Dayspring he struggled for a while when he was adapting to their standard, but lately he has been catching up with everyone since he has been full of enthusiasm and interest in his studies." When I asked her what she thought was the difference between the two schools she suggested it was due to, "Committed teachers who real care. When you talk to a teacher and hear the care in them, you know your child is going to be fine. Since I can't teach him I'm happy they persist teaching him until he understands. They even have late afternoon classes where they

learn more, ask questions, and later leave with a better understanding." I had witnessed Poloko stay after school a number of times during these sessions, which the teachers called "revisions" for the day's lessons.

I then asked Poloko's mother how she felt about education in general in Lesotho. She answered, "The general education is fine. The problem is English, because when our children are faced with exams they don't understand the English, and therefore fail to know what to write. I think that if English is taught more and the standard is upped in all schools, things will be fine for every child. They will go through life better. Actually I feel that if everyone in Lesotho could speak English, life will be better." Poloko's mother referred to the teaching of English as an important role for primary schools, throughout the interview, with comments such as, "I like [English medium of instruction] very much because you can't survive this life now without English language. When kids get to high school the kids don't struggle to understand teachers that teach in English," and, "I think if English could be taught early in [government] schools, the children will grow up knowing English and there won't be difficulties when they start to be taught strictly in English." She even used it as one criteria for determining which school was better, "I think Dayspring's standard is better than Lerato. Here at Dayspring kids speak English even if they're playing but at Lerato they speak Sesotho outside of class playing."

Although Poloko's mother was not comfortable with her own English knowledge, and the father could not speak any English, she was happy to see her children being able to learn and speak English well. She stated, "I think it was the standard of that time because even in my day no primary child spoke English. We've only heard English speaking children since English Medium schools were established." Therefore, it seems

that she is quite pleased with the education that her children are now able to receive at English Medium private schools. As she had mentioned before, they are now able to afford to send their children to these types of schools, which she feels has made a big difference for her children, especially Poloko, who was struggling before. According to Poloko's mother, this is not only because they speak English at these schools, but also because the teachers seem to spend the time and dedication making sure their students learn well.

In Poloko's family's situation they did not have the economic capital to send their first two children to a private school. But the mother was pleased with the education they received. She claimed it was because the government school was much better when it was run by the church and charged school fees. She feels that the quality has decreased tremendously at the government school since then, but she does not have direct experience with that. At the time the family's options were limited because they had limited economic capital. But now that the father has good, steady employment in South Africa and she runs her own business, they are able to afford sending their two youngest children to better quality private schools. Their opportunities have opened up due to their increased economic capital, which has allowed them to utilize their agency more freely. This is especially evident from the experience when they took Poloko out of Lerato English Medium, where they had had good experiences in the past, but things were no longer working out well for Poloko. So, they used their agency and economic capital to transfer him to a different private school which seemed to be serving his needs much better. This most likely would have not been possible if they did not have the necessary economic capital.

Nthabiseng

Nthabiseng is in Standard 7 at Dayspring English Medium. She is an active girl who does not seem to be too engaged in her schooling. She seems to enjoy being with her friends and spends a lot of time hanging out with the other girls in her class. Whenever I approached her with questions or tried to follow up on interviews with her family, she seemed reluctant and short with her responses. Her English was fine and she could communicate well, but she acted like she was more interested in being with her friends than talking to someone in an authority position. Her teachers said that she was one of the lower performing students in her class and expressed their concern about her dedication. She received a third class pass on the PSLE (English:1, Sesotho:1, Math: Fail) which was very low for her school.

Nthabiseng's mother passed away years ago, so she now lives with her grandmother somewhere close to where the school is located. I never was able to visit their home, but I spoke to her grandmother for a short time over the phone. Her grandmother did not speak any English, so we had a broken-up conversation in Sesotho. I did not get much out of my interview with her, other than she lives with two of her grandchildren, who are both going to Dayspring, and takes care of them because their mother is dead and the father does not help them. When I asked Nthabiseng whom I could interview as her guardian, she referred me to her uncle. So, I conducted an interview with her uncle on July 12, 2007 in his business office in town. He did not want me to tape record the interview, so I do not have many direct quotes. The interview was completely done in English without any translator or research assistant present.

Nthabiseng's uncle, Mr. Kabelo, is a successful businessman who is quite well known in the business community. He is highly involved in a number of activities. He is on the board of commerce and said he is constantly in consultation with the government on how to improve business opportunities for people in the country and how to work better with local businesses to improve Lesotho's economy. When I talked to a number of businessmen in town, most of them knew Mr. Kabelo and had great respect for him. In my interview with him, we talked about his own educational and occupational background as well as how he is involved in Nthabiseng's education as well as many others like her.

With regards to his involvement in Nthabiseng's education, he said he has been paying for her and her sibling's education, who are both going to Dayspring, ever since their mother, his sister, passed away. He is also paying for the education of his late brother's three children, one also at Dayspring, one in high school, and one at the university. The children who are going to Dayspring all live with their grandmother, Mr. Kabelo's mother, while they go to school. He says that he tries to keep up with their education and periodically checks to see how they are doing, but he does not have the time to be involved on a daily basis. He says that his mother tries to do so, but she did not receive much of an education and cannot speak English, so she is limited in how much she can help with their schoolwork. When I asked him why he sent them to Dayspring, he said it was because it was close to where their grandmother lives, which has allowed them to stay with her while attending school, and because the school has a good reputation. He seemed to be quite pleased with the way the school was performing but said he did not visit the school much at all and did not know the children's current

teachers. He knew the principal quite well, but that was about it. He said their grandmother was the one who dealt with any day-to-day issues relating to the school.

Mr. Kabelo explained that the reason why he could not be so engaged in the children's education at such an intimate level was because he was helping a number of other students to further their education at the same time. He said that ever since he has become a successful businessman he has tried to utilize his finances and social influence to help as many young people that he can in whom he sees great potential. He explained to me that a number of his employees first approached him for help in paying for their schooling. He said he believed in these individuals, so he helped them get an education and then employed them himself. He was excited that one of his employees was moving on to another job, because he said that was his main purpose of employing them, to train them for a better future. Mr. Kabelo also said that he has established a scholarship program and award ceremony for a particular high school in a town a few hours north of Maseru. Through this he has managed to work with the government, the local media, and other business sponsors to provide M20,000 ($3,000) of scholarships every year for the high school students. He said that through this and his own personal interventions and assistance to many students he can no longer count how many people he has helped further their educational opportunities.

When I asked him why he does all of this to help so many individuals, Mr. Kabelo said that he began from very humble circumstances himself and had to struggle on his own to survive. He originally was able to get a good education only because people from his community and extended family stepped in to help him when he could not pay for school fees and other necessities. Therefore he feels that he owes it to others to help them

progress, and he feels that education is the best way to do that. When I asked him about the education system in Lesotho, Mr. Kabelo said that he feels one of the biggest problems is that they need to teach students with more business thinking skills. He claims there is a lack of entrepreneurial spirit in Lesotho, and he thinks this stems partly from the education system. He wishes the ministry would be able to incorporate a curriculum that would empower students to develop the creative and critical thinking skills necessary to start and run successful businesses. He feels this is greatly missing in Lesotho.

Overall, Mr. Kabelo expressed his belief in formal education as a way for people to move out of their impoverished situations, so he felt it was necessary to use the capital and influence he has gained through his own education and hard work to give other people the same chances in life. He stated to me, "I believe in God and that things happen in ways that I don't understand. If I can help then I do. I don't just help with money....I never believe that I'm the best. So I make sure to train people so they are competent and can do without me." He expressed the importance of having access to economic capital in order to gain a good education and opportunities to succeed in life. He said that is why he did so much to help others to obtain a good education.

It is interesting to see that through Mr. Kabelo's access to economic capital and social influence he has been able to provide his niece and many other young people with educational opportunities, but he has not been able to provide them with direct assistance with their school work and day-to-day educational needs. As such, he had limited influence over the actual performance of Nthabiseng at school. Although he was able to provide financial assistance to assure that Nthabiseng and her siblings went to a good private school, he himself did not have the time nor did their grandmother, whom they

lived with, possess the necessary cultural and symbolic capital to assist them in their daily needs to succeed at school. Although I cannot speak to the specific circumstances in which they lived with their grandmother, I can confirm, through my interview with Mr. Kabelo along with conversations with Nthabiseng's teachers, that the children's living circumstances were of a lower standard to most private school families. Therefore, although access to economic capital can help provide students with opportunities they otherwise would not have had, it cannot overcome all social constraints, such as a lack of cultural, symbolic, or social capital.

Discussion

In these two examples we can see that having access to sufficient economic capital opens up educational opportunities that otherwise would not be available to some students and their families. In the first example of Poloko's family, his two oldest siblings were not able to afford to go to private schools due to the family's economic situation at the time, even though their parents wished they could. Nearly a decade later, when the younger two children were old enough to go to primary school, the family was in a much better financial situation and was able to pay for their children to go to a private school. In fact, they were in such a position that they could afford to transfer Poloko to an even more prestigious private school because he was not performing well at his initial private school. Without the economic capital they would not have been able to do so. Poloko's mother felt that their first two children were able to do well at the church school because the school had better leadership and the teachers did a better job of teaching at the time. She expressed that she did not think the same school would have been able to produce similar results for her younger two children, especially for Poloko because of his troubles

with learning at school, because she felt the quality of the school had decreased ever since becoming an FPE school. By the time Poloko was old enough to go to school, their family did not have to worry about the possibility of sending Poloko and his brother to the government school because they had the financial resources to make other choices and open up different educational opportunities.

In a similar way, the example of Nthabiseng shows that even though she and her siblings did not have the necessary economic capital themselves, they did have access to such capital through their extended family, in this case their uncle. Therefore, through their social networks (or social capital) they were able to be provided with the necessary economic capital to open up opportunities they otherwise wouldn't have had. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the different forms of capital introduced by Bourdieu often work in combination with each other to either cause further constraints, or in this case, open up opportunities for individuals. Although their social ties led to opening up opportunities in one aspect (financially) they did not necessarily compensate for other forms of capital which the children lacked, namely cultural and symbolic capital, because although they lived with their grandmother, she did not possess the educational nor linguistic background to sufficiently compensate for what they lacked and needed help with at school. Due to his busy lifestyle, Mr. Kabelo, their uncle, was not able to provide enough time and attention to sufficiently provide these other sources of capital which they were in need of. Although I cannot make a direct connection, this probably made it more difficult for Nthabiseng and her siblings to perform well at school compared to their peers at the private school who had both enough economic capital and lived with family

members who possessed necessary the cultural and linguistic capital to be able to effectively help them with their schoolwork and learning.

Using a policy as practice approach to analyze these families' experiences compared to those at the government school, we can see that language and education policies can do little, if anything, to change the economic situations of these families. Without the necessary economic capital it becomes difficult for families to provide the best education for their children, especially when there is a large discrepancy between the quality of education provided at free government schools compared to fee charging private schools. The FPE policy has tried to mitigate some of these economic discrepancies by making schooling more available to the poor, but, as has been discussed before, most families feel the FPE policy has increased the gap in quality between government and private schools. Therefore, policy efforts often attempt to intervene with social and economic barriers for certain students and families, but they cannot always overcome these barriers. At times they may even exacerbate the barriers in unintended ways.

Cultural and Symbolic Capital

The next forms of capital I will discuss in this chapter are cultural and symbolic capital. As was seen in Chapter 4, the government school families varied greatly in the amount of cultural and symbolic capital available in their homes to help their students with schoolwork and learning. One student's family was able to make up for a lack of economic capital by drawing upon the educational experience and knowledge of her mother and older siblings to help her succeed at school, while the parent of another

student felt as if she could contribute little, if anything, to her child's learning because she had only reached the same level of education that her child was currently completing.

This diversity in the amount of cultural and symbolic capital available to students was also displayed in the lives of the private school families I worked with. As was illustrated above, although the two families had sufficient economic capital to send their children to higher quality private schools, they were lacking to some degree in their ability to provide the cultural and linguistic support their children needed for help on their schoolwork. In this section I will highlight the experiences and lived realities of a few families which possessed the necessary cultural and linguistic capital to help their children do well at school.

In this chapter I have combined the forms of cultural and symbolic capital together because they largely go hand in hand at schools, especially with regard to being able to follow the language policy of using English at school. One distinguishing difference between government and private schools is that private schools begin instruction in English from day one in grade one and adhere to this policy quite strictly throughout the children's education. One of the things that make this possible is the amount of cultural and linguistic capital students bring with them and can draw upon to succeed at school. In the following examples I will illustrate how students are able to draw upon their families' cultural and linguistic capital to succeed at school. Once again, using a policy as practice approach in this analysis helps to put the language in education policy in perspective within all of the other social, cultural, and linguistic factors which contribute to students' educational experiences.

Thato

Thato is in Standard 4 at Dayspring English Medium. She is a very bright girl who almost seems to be more mature than the rest of her classmates. All of her teachers said that she was the top student in all three classes. She seemed to enjoy school very much and was always involved in the classroom lessons. She was often the first to raise her hand to answer questions or go to the board to solve problems. The teachers also tended to call on her more often than others for answers to question. On one occasion the Standard 4 teachers had Thato teach a lesson to the whole class on the chemical components of air. She did an excellent job and seemed to be quite confident in her scholastic abilities.

Thato lives in a medium sized, four-room home with two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room. The house was furnished with furniture which was typical for a middle income family, but not too extravagant. In the living room there was a medium sized entertainment center and the walls were lined with cabinets and book shelves. The family owned a lot of books on all sorts of topics, but especially science related books. The house was set in a very large yard with a large garden, a few old cars, and other materials lying around. It took at least a half hour to walk to school from their home, but Thato usually went to school in a minibus which was hired by a group of families in the neighborhood with children who attended Dayspring. I conducted an interview with Thato's mother (September 5, 2007) almost completely in English, without the assistance of a research assistant or translator.

Thato's family is composed of her parents, one brother, and herself. Her brother is in Form A (8th grade) in high school. Her father was a high school science teacher in South Africa for a number of years and also taught at a teacher's college, but he decided

to come back to Lesotho to be with the family more permanently and is now looking for a job. Thato's mother works in a science laboratory for the Department of Mines and Geology, which is located in town. She received her bachelor's degree in chemistry from the National University of Lesotho. When I asked her what her dreams were for her children, she said, referring to her son, "I just hope that he will choose a career that will work for him. I want him to go to the university….I want him to go to South Africa because the choice is much broader. They have many universities. They have many subjects and offerings in different careers. In our system it isn't that way. There aren't many subjects." Thato's parents had high hopes for both of them and did not want them to be limited in their opportunities, even within the borders of Lesotho.

Thato's mother claimed that they enjoy reading in their home. "We do a lot of reading, especially for pleasure, but also for updating in my field." She said that she prefers to read novels and story books, but she also reads chemistry and biology books to keep updated on things. Her husband especially likes to read newspapers often at home. When I asked her if their children read at home she said, "Yes, especially Thato. She likes to read the story books or anything she can get her hands on." She commented that they try to buy her books whenever they can to help her keep learning. I then asked her whether they prefer to buy English or Sesotho books she replied, "They are all in English. It is not really hard to find books in Sesotho. I think that sometimes we prefer her to read in English because it is a foreign language. In Sesotho it's not that difficult to pick up." Therefore, in Thato's home there is a strong environment for school learning and support for academic advancement. According to her mother, Thato thrives under such an environment.

I then asked Thato's mother whether they spoke English much at home. She responded, "Sometimes, when we help the children with their homework." Otherwise she said they hardly ever speak English at home because, "It's not natural. And Thato says, we are taught to speak English at home. And then we try, but then we forget." So, they do not speak English much at home, but there are many books in English around the house, and the children can always turn to their parents for support in their homework whenever they need it. This type of home environment, with such a rich supply of cultural and symbolic capital can only help in Thato's educational experience.

When I asked Thato's mother how she felt about English being used as the medium of instruction at school she replied, "I think it's fine because it's universal. You have to know English to get anywhere in the world. So I think it's okay that it's used." I then asked her what she felt the role of Sesotho was at schools. "I think it's mainly to educate them about their culture mainly. To know their culture and to stick to their culture.... To know where you come from and such things. And relate to the...to learn to combine your culture and the western whatever." In this statement, she expressed her support for the teaching of Sesotho as a subject at schools because she felt it was important to teach students their cultural roots and understand their background better. But she did not feel that Sesotho should be used as a medium of instruction for all subjects, "because we have limited words. Like in science it would be very difficult to translate some concepts or anything into Sesotho. It can't work. It would have a limited number of words to use, so it would be confusing." From her experience she sees it as problematic to use Sesotho for teaching all subjects, because, as a scientist, she has found

that Sesotho does not have a sufficient vocabulary for certain topics, especially in *sci*ence.

Even though her children attend a private school, Thato's mother said that she *tho*ught the FPE program in Lesotho was "very good because there are kids who cannot *affo*rd to go to school, but they still must learn basic things. It is very good. But it has to *be run* so that it actually benefits children, because sometimes it doesn't. It has to be *good*, because they need the full attention of the teacher, like any other kid. But when it is *over*crowded it is difficult for a teacher to give full attention to their students. That's *when* it would be nice, if they had more teachers to teach the children." Thato's mother's *perc*eption of government schools since the implementation of FPE was similar to most *of the* parents I interviewed. Many parents, like Thato's mother, thought one of the main *reas*ons government schools had such low quality of teaching was because the classrooms *were* overcrowded. The CEO of primary education at the MOET claimed this used a *prob*lem during the first two or three years of FPE's implementation but is not longer true *beca*use they have largely taken care of overcrowding by putting more teachers in *scho*ols. In my own observations, all but one of the private schools had larger student to *tea*cher ratios than at the government schools.

Overall, Thato's mother was pleased with her children's educational experience. *She* felt they were getting a good education at Dayspring English Medium and felt it was *im*portant for them to learn English well. She and her husband are both very well *edu*cated and have a continued interest, not only in their children's education, but in *fur*thering their own knowledge. As a result, they do a lot of reading at home and own a *grea*t number of books. Living in this type of environment has provided Thato and her

brother with a great amount of cultural and symbolic capital that is beneficial to their education.

Mohapi

Mohapi is in Standard 4 at Dayspring English Medium. He seems to be a typical 9—year-old boy who was usually seen playing with his friends and laughing a lot. He is a small boy, a little shy, and well behaved in the classroom. His teachers said that he is an above average student and he does quite well at school.

Mohapi lives just down the street from the school in a new, large home with at least three bedrooms. The home is located on a rather large yard which is completely enclosed by a large wall and a gated driveway. The grounds are very well kept with grass, flowers, small trees, and bushes, which is quite rare in the area. There is a large driveway which leads to an enclosed garage. Inside the home there is new, somewhat expensive furniture with a large entertainment center and cabinet holding books, pictures, and other decorations. I conducted an interview with Mohapi's mother (September 7, 2007) in their living room. The entire interview was conducted in English, even though I had a research assistant there available to translate if needed.

Mohapi has one sibling, a younger sister who is 17 months old. So, he is the only one in the family attending school at the moment. Mohapi's mother is a high school math teacher in town. When I asked her about her job she said, "I have been teaching for 5 years now. I really like it. I'm teaching what I like. I like math very much, that's why I like it." She received a degree in math and geography at the National University of Lesotho. Before that she received a diploma in architecture at the technical college in town and worked for a couple of years in the highlands. She said never did like

architecture, but she studied it because she initially did not have good enough results in English on her COSC exam. She eventually took the English exam again and was able to go to the university in preparation for high school teaching. Her husband is a technician who works in South Africa. She said that he comes home every fortnight.

I asked Mohapi's mother why they decided to send their son to Dayspring English Medium. She responded, "One of the reasons is because it is the closest school. I didn't want to have problems with transporting these kids. That was the main thing that caused me to send him there. Apart from that I heard that it was a very good school. I did not know much about it, but I knew that it was a good school, looking at the results, and so forth. But the main reason was that it was the closest." There were also some government schools close by, so I asked why she did not send her child to one of them. She replied, "I don't like government schools. They don't do well, the government schools, most of them they don't do well." I then asked her why she thought so, she commented, "I think it's because of management. One of the reasons is because of management. It is the teachers. I don't know if it is because they don't have anyone who is pushing them around, or what, but they don't do well. The schools, not the kids as such, but the schools. The kids don't do well maybe because of the system, the schools." She had a very negative perception of government schools although she did not have any direct experience with them herself as a mother.

I then asked her how she felt about the education Mohapi was receiving at Dayspring. She replied, "Maybe because Mohapi is somehow a brilliant kid, he is doing very well, he is doing very well. But the only problem I have seen is that he has somehow a problem in English. Somehow he has a problem of spelling. His English is not so good.

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He is doing good in all these subjects, but his English is not so good…. Maybe it is because he is not reading too much, I don't know why is that, but his English is not that good." She said she tries to help him improve his English by pushing him to read. "I tell him to do that. He doesn't do it on his own. He will do it only when I tell him, 'Go and get that book to read.' He likes drawing too much. He likes drawing too much. So I always get rid of him to draw by telling him to get a book and read." In addition to this, Mohapi's mother said she continuously monitors his progress at school. She commented, "I make sure every time, every day that he has done his homework or if he has been given homework. I always ask, 'Have you done your homework, were you given the homework?'"

Both of Mohapi's parents speak English well and use it every day in their work. His mother claimed that they do not speak English much at home. The only time they really speak English at home is when they are helping Mohapi with his homework. But she did say that she reads quite a bit at home, especially religious and motivational books, always in English. She said her husband reads newspapers all of the time. He prefers to read the English newspapers. They also have a television where they mainly watch English speaking shows. So, Mohapi is quite exposed to English, even though his mother claims they do not speak it often in their home. In addition, his mother said that she always gets him books in English from the library for him to read. She said she always has at least one book checked out for him.

When it came to questions about the language of instruction at schools, she had her own opinions based upon her experiences as a high school teacher. She commented about Sesotho, "It is a nice language, but the problem with Sesotho is that it doesn't have

a lot of words. Sometimes you are not able to express yourself clearly in Sesotho because of a lack of words. That is where you have to use English." She has found the language issue difficult in her own teaching because, "you will find that [students] want you to teach in Sesotho, they want me to teach math in Sesotho. And you find it impossible to do it because they have a lot of terms that you cannot express in Sesotho." As a math teacher she does not see it as a realistic possibility to use Sesotho as the language of instruction at schools.

She sees the language of instruction issue as a major barrier for some of her students. When asked if she thought this caused problems, she emphatically replied, "Of course it does. For some of them it does. You will find students very brilliant in science subjects and maths, but they have a problem in English. That is where you will find someone getting a "1" in maths but getting "8" in English. In so many cases that happens." She expressed that she feels one reason many students struggle with English is because schools do not use English enough. She commented, "It's not because they are not taught English. They are taught English. But it's only because they don't speak English in their schools. They are taught English, but they don't speak English in their schools. That is why they still cope with doing other subjects." Therefore, she said she is in favor of English Medium schools, like the one her son is attending, because it provides students with enough opportunities to not just learn English, but to also practice and use it on a daily basis.

Overall, Mohapi's mother felt quite positive about the education system in Lesotho and the educational opportunities for her children, but she said she does worry about their future. Her main concern was with the economy of Lesotho in general. She

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claimed, "We have a lot of people who are struggling because they don't have jobs. Some people are even from university but they don't have jobs. They spend a lot of time doing nothing because they don't have jobs. And we lose very important people, people who can change the country because there is no…there isn't enough to earn in Lesotho, so they decide to go where they will get a lot." She went on to comment about how this has affected her own educational goals, "Like myself, I have only done the first degree, I want to go further, but I know I will go to school and I will come back and teach and earn the same. So I don't find it necessary to go to school and continue with my studies, unless I do something else."

Mohapi's mother identified education as the key to opening up opportunities for her children's future. She stated, "If they are not educated then they cannot do anything, they can't get a job. And if they can't get a job then it means that, somehow, not always, but somehow their life is hopeless. They will struggle in life." She and her husband therefore decided to send their child to a private school in order to provide him with the best education possible. Not only did they invest the necessary economic capital to make this happen, but they also possessed a great amount of cultural and symbolic capital which they could use to ensure their children succeed at school. As a high school teacher herself, she knew what students needed to do well and made sure that her child kept up on his homework and took his studies seriously. She even pushed him to read books when he did not want to, because she recognized that he had a weakness in English spelling. With this type of cultural capital at home, Mohapi is more likely to benefit from his educational experience.

Manti

Manti is in Standard 4 at Dayspring English Medium. She sits near the back of the classroom in a row full of boys. She sits at the end of the row and prefers to stand half of the time. She pays attention quite well, but likes to play and gets distracted at times in the large classroom. Her teachers said she is an average student in her class performance. When I talked to Manti she said her favorite subject is math.

Manti lives in town, close to where I stayed while living in Lesotho. She would often stop by our house with her neighborhood friends to play with our one-year-old daughter. Some of her friends were not Basotho, so they often spoke in English when they played with each other. Others of her friends did not speak English very well, so they usually had an interesting mix of Sesotho and English when they played and talked with each other.

She lives in a large, three-bedroom home with a very large fenced-in yard. The family owns a couple of cars with a garage in the back yard. They have rather old but comfortable furniture with an entertainment center in the living room and a large table in the dining room. Manti does not have any siblings, but there are seven people living in the house. Many of them are Manti's aunt's and uncle's who are not yet married and still attending high school and college. Manti's mother is a student at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa and is completing her fourth year with honors in Industrial Psychology. Manti's father completed his bachelor's degree at the National University of Lesotho. He now works for the government in the Department of Corruption and Economic Offenses. They live far away from the school Manti attends, which takes at least 30 minutes to drive in the car. Manti's father drives her to school every day. Her mother said this gives him the opportunity to keep updated on her schooling experience

on a regular basis. I conducted an interview (July 2, 2007) with Manti's mother in their home without the assistance of a translator. The entire interview was conducted in English. She did not want me to tape record the interview, so I do not have many direct quotes.

I was curious as to why they decided to send Manti to a school so far away, when there are plenty of private schools in town. Her mother explained that they first sent her to a local private English Medium school from pre-school to Standard 2, but they were disappointed with the performance of the school. The main reason was because the school was not consistent or timely in paying their teachers, so there was a high turn over rate for teachers. They wanted something more consistent and steady for Manti, so they sent her to Dayspring, which had a very good reputation. They have been pleased with the school and Manti's performance there. She also said it is an advantage that her father can drive her to school every day, because he is able to keep in close touch with the school and her teachers. She said the school goes out of their way to keep parents informed about things.

When I asked her why they decided to send Manti to an English Medium school rather than a government school, she said that she likes how they start with English from day one. She stated that "These days English is most important. With English you can go everywhere as a second language." She said that she and her husband are pleased they have the means to send Manti to an English Medium school because they did not have the opportunity to do so when they were in primary school. As a result, she said she struggled very much at first in high school because she was forced to speak English, even though

she did not know it very well. Therefore she does not want her own child to have the same struggles. She wants her to be fluent in English as soon as possible.

When I asked her how she felt about Sesotho being taught at schools, she said she loves the language and is proud of it. She felt that it should be taught as a subject because it is important for students to understand their own culture and history so they are grounded in their roots. But she did not think it was a good idea to use Sesotho as the language of instruction for other subjects. She preferred that they use English because it is an "international" language and opens up opportunities that Sesotho cannot. She provided her own personal example for this, that she would not have had the opportunity to study in South Africa if she did not know English.

When I asked her how she felt about government schools, Manti's mother said she did not think they were bad because she knows a lot of students who go to government primary schools and end up doing well on the PSLE and move on to high school. But she preferred to send her child to a private school because she feels that the teachers work harder and are more dedicated at private schools. She claimed one of the main reasons this is the case is because at the government schools the teachers know their jobs are secure. Therefore, they know that they do not have to work hard or teach well to maintain their job. She feels this leads to laziness and lack of dedication. She then explained that, on the other hand, private school teachers' jobs are never fully secure. Therefore, she claimed they have to work hard all of the time to make sure to maintain their job. She felt that every parent in Lesotho would send their children to private schools if they could afford it, but most cannot, and that is why she thinks there are so many who attend government schools.

Manti's mother is only able to come home during long breaks at the university, therefore, she is not able to help Manti much with her schoolwork. As noted before, her father is able to keep up daily with her progress because he drives her to school each day. In addition to this, the young aunts and uncles who stay with Manti in their home are also attending school in higher grades, so they are able to help her with her schoolwork. Her mother said that a few of her aunts help her quite regularly. In this way she still has great support with the cultural and linguistic capital necessary to succeed at school. Manti's mother claimed they did not read much in the home, and I did not see many books, but she said her husband is constantly reading newspapers. They also watch English speaking programs on television quite often. On top of these sources of cultural capital at home, Manti has the added advantage of playing with a group of friends in the neighborhood, of which some individuals do not speak Sesotho, and therefore, she is placed in a very natural situation to practice speaking English outside of school on a daily basis. All of these aspects add to the amount of cultural, symbolic, and linguistic capital from which Manti can turn to for her educational success.

Discussion

In the three examples illustrated above, the students have a wealth of cultural, symbolic, and linguistic capital upon which they can turn to as a resource for learning in school. In each of the families the parents have strong educational backgrounds and experience working in occupations where they are constantly required to use both English and the content knowledge they gained from schooling. In two of the households, but especially in Thato's home, there is a strong emphasis on reading and support for their children to read for pleasure and not only for schoolwork. Every home has a television set

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and watches English speaking programs regularly. Although none of the parents said they speak English much in their homes, they are always available to help with English homework or other subjects which are taught in English. One student, Manti, had the opportunity to speak English with her friends on a daily basis outside of school. From what I saw in observations and learned from interviews with government school families, these experiences are not common for the average student at a government school. This makes it even more difficult for government school students to practice using English and to get support with any of the school work they may struggle with. This places the private school students in an advantageous position when it comes to academic performance, which then gets rewarded through credentials and high marks on the national exams.

In a way, this confirms much of what Bourdieu proposes in his theory as the overriding purpose of education, namely, to maintain social class distinctions. But there is more going on than just that. These parents use their agency by consciously being involved in their children's educational experiences. Mohapi's mother does this by constantly monitoring what her son is doing at school. Manti's family does so through the daily drive to school with her father and the assistance of her aunts and uncles who live with her and also attending school. These types of decisions and acts of agency are not isolated to the parents of private school students only. As was illustrated in Chapter 4, most of the government school families also did what they could to help their children succeed at school. Some were not able to this very successfully because they do not have enough cultural and linguistic capital to draw upon, but others, such as Palesa's familiy, who's mother was able to draw upon her own educational background, as well as Palesa's older siblings' education, to help her with her schoolwork, even though they

could not afford to send her to a private school. In a similar way, also in Chapter 4, Pulani was able to turn to her neighboring uncle, who had obtained a good education, for support in her schoolwork, even though her mother did not possess the necessary cultural capital to sufficiently assist her.

Therefore, it is the combination of available capital and how individuals and families use their agency to access and take advantage of their available capital which shapes the educational experiences of these students. Indeed, some families possess a much greater combination of these sources of capital, which provides them with greater opportunities and more choices to act upon, but their sources of capital do not determine their situation. It is how these families decide to use their agency to access their sources of capital which establishes whether they benefit from their capital or not. Language and education policies can do very little to change the amount and types of cultural and linguistic capital available to students and their families, but it does play a strong role in determining which forms of capital are more valued at schools. By declaring English as the language of instruction at schools it automatically puts families who can speak English at an advantage. Likewise, the selection of what content is included in the national and school curriculums has a great influence on what type of knowledge is deemed valuable at schools. This has a direct link to the types of cultural capital that students obtain in their homes. Thus, taking a policy as practice approach to education policy helps to indicate how and why certain policy decisions play a key role in advantaging some stakeholders while placing others at a greater disadvantage.

Social Capital

The final source of capital I will discuss in this chapter is social capital. As we have seen in the previous two sections, the amount of economic and cultural capital a family possesses has a great influence on their children's educational opportunities. In a similar way, the amount of social capital families can draw upon through their social networks and social influence has a strong impact on shaping the possibilities available to their children. In Chapter 4, I discussed how for some families their limited social networks and access to knowledge of the area created constraints to the choices available to them, while for others their social networks opened up opportunities they otherwise would not have had. In this section I will focus more on the opportunities and choices which are opened up to students and their families because of the types of social capital they possess.

By using a policy as practice approach, which begins with the educational experiences and practices of key stakeholders on the ground and then analyzes the role that policy plays in those experiences, we will be able to see how much influence factors outside of policy play in the education of the students in this study. As will be seen, the students I worked with from private schools had much greater social networks to draw from than those at government schools which had a direct impact on their education. There is little that the language and education policies themselves can do to change these circumstances, but they do create an environment which allows for certain forms of social capital to be more advantageous than others. One such factor is the relationship that private school parents have with their schools compared to those at government schools. The ways the different types of schools are structured, funded, and administrated makes a great difference in how the parents interact with their schools.

Tsepo

Tsepo is in Standard 4 at Dayspring English Medium. I would often see him playing with the other boys, laughing and having a good time. He usually sits near the front of the classroom on a very crowded desk full of rowdy boys. Tsepo seems to struggle in school more than most of the other students. I would often see him stay after school working with the teachers and other struggling students doing revisions on their lessons for the day. The teachers said he was previously one of the lowest performing students in the class, but he has made great improvements lately.

I interviewed with Tsepo's mother (June 28, 2007) at her office at the agricultural college campus on the outskirts of town. The interview was conducted solely in English without the assistance of a translator. I was not able to see where the family lives and did not learn much about their current living conditions. The mother is a lecturer at the agricultural college. She teaches forestry and has been at the college for two years. Previously she had worked with a number of organizations, including the government, mainly working with rural communities on environmental issues. After working for about eight years she went back to school at the National University of Lesotho and received a Bachelors of Science, in general agricultural studies. She is hoping to eventually continue on to get a Masters degree. Tsepo's father works for the Lesotho Defense Force.

Tsepo has an older sister who is now in Form D (11th grade) in high school. She also went to an English Medium private school, but a different one from Dayspring. When I asked her why she put Tsepo into a different school she said it was because Dayspring was not in their area at the time their daughter started primary school. By the time Tsepo was old enough for primary school, their daughter's primary school was

having "some quarrels there, so I decided to take him to the other place." They chose Dayspring because the school had since moved into their area from town and she had heard good things about the school.

As I spoke a little more about Dayspring with Tsepo's mother she expressed her great satisfaction with his school. "They care. They have time. The number of students which are admitted are limited. So they care. They are able to touch each and every student." In contrast, when I asked her about government schools she emphatically responded, "Ay, ka nnete, I cannot take my children to the government school. I am working. Achhh, I want them to be offered a better education. During our time there were no alternatives. Each and every one does what he or she thinks can benefit." I then asked her why some families decide to send their children to government school. She said that most cannot afford to do otherwise, but then she added, "Tjee, others they don't care about their child's education. I care because even at Dayspring I visit at any time and talk with teachers. The way we take things, it is different."

She went on to discuss how she feels about English being used as the medium of instruction at school. "Ah, I like it because my child won't struggle. I'm not struggling [with English], ne? Hey, I have problems there and there, but I like when it's used." She further emphasized this by claiming that English is, "an international language. Even you, you are an American, you cannot speak American, you are speaking English. That is how people begin to meet each other." Therefore, she felt it was important for students to know English well, so they can communicate with the outside world. But she also expressed support for Sesotho to continue to be taught at schools. "Even Sesotho, they should know it. It should be used. How can you be a Mosotho? You have to be proud

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about your language. It has to be used if you are a Basotho, so that, our kids do not know where they will work. For instance, me, I was working in the rural areas where I had to speak Sesotho and forget about English when I would visit the villages. So how are you going to address such people?" Thus, she still felt it was important to keep teaching Sesotho as a subject, but she followed up by saying, "During Sesotho they should tackle Sesotho, but these other subjects should be done in English. Just as I have said, English is an international language. They must do everything in English." So, in the end she felt that using English as the medium of instruction was important because it prepared students to work in an international world.

When I asked Tsepo's mother about her son's experience at Dayspring, she said, "I am okay about the school. Except that my kid has a special problem. When he started there he got A's, but as time went by he got Bs, C's, D's, up to F. So, I was wondering what was happening with the boy. But due to the thing that I am carrying, I went even to the school, when I saw his grades falling like this. So, some teachers – we are able to talk to teachers – so some advised me to try to assist him while I was at home so that they meet their time even when they are at school. So we tried to balance his grades, but what I noticed is that he was forgetful. I did not know what was happening. So we tried to deal with this matter together with his teachers until one of his teachers advised me to take him to the psychiatrist and the psychologist this year. Achh, ka nnete, he is improving. So we are attending such and so on. And the psychiatrist has advised me to buy some pills, which I think are playing a big part in this…. So such pills they say work with the development of the brain. But what I was impressed with is that he was getting low fold in each and everything and was forgetful, but after attending the psychiatrist and

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psychologist he has passed about seven subjects, and even his teachers are so happy. They have seen a big improvement."

Thus, as Tsepo's mother began to see her son's performance at school gradually get worse and worse, she took action to talk to his teachers and try to figure out why this was happening. As she described it in her own words, "due to the thing that I am carrying," she felt that she had the right and need to approach Tsepo's teachers about his problem. As a result of this, one of Tsepo's teachers eventually recommended that his mother try seeking some medical advice because they thought it might be a learning disorder which was causing his problems. Without this advice, Tsepo's mother would have most likely continued to be frustrated and confused about her son's lowering performance and not known what to do. Fortunately for her and her son, through the social capital they possessed she was able to draw upon the networks available to her – in this case, Tsepo's teachers – and find a solution that currently seems to be helping Tsepo improve at school.

In order to draw upon this social capital, a few things needed to be in place. First of all, the relationship between Tsepo's mother and the school needed to be at a level where she could feel comfortable to approach them about concerns and questions that she had related to her son's performance at school. Secondly, his mother also needed to be in such a social position that she felt she had the right, or was entitled, to approach her son's teachers. As was discussed in Chapter 4, many of the government school families did not feel they were either in a position nor had the right to approach the school about their children's problems. For some of the government school parents, even when they did approach their child's school, they felt like their concerns were never taken seriously or

even taken into account. Thus, they lacked the necessary social capital that could be utilized for their children's benefit. The situation in Tsepo's case was very different. His mother did possess the necessary social capital and, thus, was able to use her agency to draw upon it for her child's own good.

Another crucial aspect to this is that Tsepo's family not only possessed the necessary social capital to obtain the information which eventually helped his situation, but they also possessed sufficient economic capital to follow through with the advice they received from his teacher. Many families, even if they were able to get the type of advice that Tsepo's mother received, would not have been able to afford to take their child to a psychologist and psychiatrist, let alone pay for the pills which were diagnosed for him. This helps to show, once again, that many different forms of capital often operate at the same time to either create constraints in people's lives or open up opportunities.

Refiloe

Refiloe is in Standard 4 at Dayspring English Medium. She is a very energetic little girl who seems to always be smiling and having fun with her friends. She sits near the front of class and participates quite regularly in class discussions. She seems to have a hard time sitting still and is always fidgeting and looking around the classroom. She is very outgoing and was never shy to approach me or the teachers about anything. She does quite well in class. Her teachers say she is an average student in her academic performance.

Refiloe lives in a medium-sized home with two bedrooms, a small living room, and a large kitchen. Their home is in a medium-sized yard with a rather large garden. They also have a small two-room building on the lot, which could either be used for

storage or to rent out to tenants. Inside the home was very basic furniture, which looked rather inexpensive, but functional. Their home is about a twenty minute walk from her school. I conducted an interview with Refiloe's father in their kitchen with the assistance of a translator, but most of the interview was conducted in English. Refiloe and her mother were also present at the interview, but they did not say much.

Refiloe has one younger sister who is in Standard 2 at her same school. Her father works in the mining industry in Carletonville, South Africa. He comes home one weekend every month to be with his family. He has worked in South Africa since 1999. He finished high school in Lesotho and then continued his studies through correspondence with Technikon SA in South Africa, where he received a certificate in labor studies. He is still furthering his studies while he works in Carletonville. He is working on a national diploma in human resource management through correspondence with UNISA. Refiloe's mother went to school up through Standard 7 but did not continue any further. She spoke very little English.

Refiloe did not begin her schooling at Dayspring English Medium. She first went to a nearby government school for her first two years. Her father explains this experience in the following passage. "You know, what I have learned? My child, while she was still at kinder (a private pre-school), I could see that she was clever, that she could progress. But the first year she was at [a government primary school], she worked well for two quarters, but the rest, she couldn't perform quite well. And as I tried to get what was the main reason for that I could identify that perhaps it was a problem with the teachers because they had no patience towards the way that my child was behaving, because she's that kind of person who, I cannot say, actually I cannot know how to explain her to be.

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But she's that kind of person who likes a person who can look after her a lot, because if you cannot check, you cannot guide her quite well. So, since I've taken her out from [the government school] to Dayspring, I could see there has been a lot of progress."

In this example, Refiloe's parents first decided to send her to the local government school because it was nearby and free. But through their attention to her progress at school, along with their prior experience of sending her to a private pre-school, they suspected that the school was not doing its job properly. Consequently, Refiloe's family used their agency and decided to take action by finding other options for their child. Because of the father's steady employment in South Africa, their family possessed enough economic capital to open up their options for an alternative school for Refiloe to more than just government schools. Many other families would not have been able to look into private schools as possible alternatives. An example of this is Lebo's family in Chapter 4, where her mother was not satisfied with the education that Lebo's younger brother was receiving at the nearby government school, so she transferred him to Lebo's school, which was farther away. Although Lebo's family did not have the means to send their children to a private school, they did have the agency to choose a different government school from the one their son started at.

When I asked Refiloe's father why they decided to send their children to Dayspring specifically, he responded, "I basically checked many results amongst the schools, especially where I am living here, and I found Dayspring to be the most interesting and their results are very outstanding. And so I liked that place because I wanted to give my children a proper foundation of education. So that they won't struggle while they intend to study further." So, they decided to transfer Refiloe to an English

Medium school. When she transferred, Dayspring required her to repeat Standard 2 so that she could be at the same level of learning as her classmates. This did not seem to bother her father because he was pleased with the education she is now receiving. I asked if paying school fees was ever a problem for them. He replied, "Not at all. I have never had a problem of paying school fees....I don't mind paying, as long as my children get a proper education." When Refiloe's father wanted to change schools for his daughter he was able to access information about other schools in the area, and through his own social networks and his social position he was able to effectively make the change happen, for the benefit of his children.

In speaking of government schools, he compared the education that his children are currently receiving at Dayspring to his own when he was a child. "My education was good, although I cannot, actually, it's not the same as the one that is being given at English Mediums because I just attended these ordinary primary schools, the church's primary school. And I didn't have any problem with that. But I still think there is a lot that must be improved like the way that Dayspring is doing. Because at the age of Refiloe, I couldn't even speak English, like the way that Refiloe is speaking. And I couldn't even read alone, except the teacher would be here and guide me. So that's why I feel there is a lot that must be done, there is still a lack of guidance that must be considered." He said he felt that it was good that Lesotho now has FPE, because now every family can send their child to school, but he feels that there needs to be a lot of improvement at government schools, especially in the methods they use to teach.

When I asked him about the language of instruction at schools, he told me that he likes how it is at Dayspring. He feels that English should continue to be used as the

language of instruction for most subjects because it is most important for the students to learn English. He stated, "Now that English seems to be dominating many countries, I think it must be taught because it is being studied as an international language. If you don't know English that simply means you will not be able to communicate with other nations." Having said this, he also stressed that he felt Sesotho should continue to be taught as a subject declaring, "It's good that Sesotho must be used at primary schools… because if you don't know Sesotho that simply means you will not know where you are from and where you are going. As you are learning other nation's language you must also know your own language as well. They must go together." Therefore, although he felt it was most important for students to use English at school, he did not want Sesotho to be neglected. He thought that it is important for students to be grounded in their own language and culture while they are learning new languages and knowledge.

Discussion

In the two examples above, we can see that the social networks which families possess, along with their social status in the community, can provide them with valuable information. This information can in turn be utilized to open up new opportunities or choices for the families to make for the benefit of their children's education. Therefore, the social capital which individuals and families possess plays a large role in the educational experiences of students. Nevertheless, social capital does not operate in isolation from other sources of capital. If either of the families illustrated above did not possess the necessary economic capital, then their social capital would have done them little good. Tsepo's mother would not have been able to afford to consult with medical experts, nor afford to pay for Tsepo's medicine. Refiloe's father would have still been

able to choose a different school for his daughter, and thus use his agency, but his choices would have been limited if they were not able to afford to pay for the school fees at a private school. Consequently, it is the combination of different forms of capital that are available in people's lives, along with their own acts of agency, which shapes the types of decisions that families make for their children's education.

Conclusion

In the sections above, I have provided a number of different examples of the ways private school families utilize their different sources of capital, namely, economic, cultural (including symbolic and linguistic capital), and social capital to make decisions about their children's educational experiences. Although families and individuals cannot do much to change their own particular circumstances at any given time, they can utilize their agency to make choices within the constraints and opportunities presented to them. In order to understand how these dynamics operate, we need to see them as interrelated concepts which all work together. Different forms of capital operate to either limit or expand opportunities for groups and individuals while the acts of agency these groups and individuals choose to use shape how their particular sources of capital become utilized and put into action. These actions, in turn, influence the types of capital which are subsequently available to them in the future. As a result, it is the interplay between structure, through the forms of capital available to particular actors, and agency, through their own actions, that decisions are made and where the possibility for change can occur.

If we can come to better understand these complex dynamics, then we can better appreciate the particular role which structural influences have on the educational

decisions of local stakeholders while also recognizing the vital role that agency plays in the actualization of educational policies and practices on the ground. One key factor in all of these dynamics is the influence of language and education policies at schools. The examples illustrated above help to show that many factors outside of policy decisions contribute to the educational experiences of students and families. It is difficult to determine to what degree each factor plays in isolation from the others because they all act together in a complex whole. Therefore, certain policy decisions create an educational environment which naturally puts some students and families at an advantage because they possess the necessary economic, cultural, symbolic, and social capital to succeed within those policy constraints. But language and education policy decisions are not made in isolation from larger society. They usually reflect social norms and values rather than working against them. Thus, policies usually help to perpetuate the inequalities of society, even when the policy, such as with FPE, is couched in the discourse of providing greater access to education for the poor. As has been stated before, policies are only one of many factors contributing the education of students. They can only do so much in changing the lived realities of educational stakeholders on the ground.

In this and the previous chapter, I have focused on the lived experiences of the students' families and how they relate, or do not relate, to language and education policies. I have mainly drawn upon Bourdieu's theory of capital to illustrate the many different factors within stakeholders lived realities which contribute to their educational experiences. In the following chapters I will focus more specifically on the policies themselves and how they play out in practice at the schools.

Chapter 6: Ideological Influences on Language Policy in Lesotho

Introduction

The nature of schooling is complex and often contradictory. In Chapter 2, I discussed how many different competing goals and ideologies intersect at the site of schools. In this chapter I endeavor to explore this contradictory nature of schooling at the primary schools where I conducted my field research in Lesotho. More particularly, I will investigate the ideologies which influence these goals. This is because underlying every goal, or perceived purpose of education, is a set of ideologies. As a theoretical framework for analysis, I will expand upon the concept of language ideologies (as was discussed in Chapter 2) to investigate not only the language ideologies influencing the practices of local stakeholders but also the social, cultural, political, and educational ideologies which influence the policies and practices which operate at schools. Taking a policy as practice approach I will investigate how these ideologies manifest themselves in practice at the both the national and school levels then analyze how they are related to the national and school-level policies. In the next two chapters I will analyze how various ideologies (global, national, and local) operate in competition, conflict, cooperation, and/or combination with each other as they play out in the school policies, practices, and language attitudes of local educational stakeholders.

Competing Ideologies in School Practices

In my theoretical framework (Chapter 2) I discussed the concept of language ideologies and how it may be applied to various educational settings, such as schools. In

this discussion, using Kroskrity's (2004) five converging dimensions of language ideologies, I propose that by looking at the ideologies which shape language attitudes and school practices we can come to a better appreciation of the contradictory nature of schooling and understand how unexpected consequences often occur when policies are implemented by local actors. Policies are not simply planned, developed, and mandated from the top-down, but they are also interpreted, received, rejected, or changed, and eventually implemented in complex ways by stakeholders on the ground level. In order to better understand how and why policies end up being implemented the way they do in actual practice, it is important to understand the multiplicity of ideologies which influence these policies at all different levels, from inception to realization.

In this chapter I will utilize this conception of ideologies to explore the various competing ideologies, from all different levels and sources, which contribute to the diverse language and education policies, practices, and attitudes revealed at the primary schools I worked with. Given the complexity of school practices, I will need to expand upon the anthropological linguistic concept of language ideologies to entail ideologies impacting various aspects of society, not just language. This is because educational practices at schools, including language policies and practices, are affected by a multiplicity of ideological influences, not just language ideologies themselves. Given that the focus of my research is on local attitudes and responses towards language and education policies at schools, it will be important to analyze the diversity of ideologies that have an impact on what happens at schools, whether these practices are directly related to language issues or not, because they are all ultimately interconnected.

It is also important to be clear about the definition of ideology I am using for this study. In Chapter 2, I discussed the four strands of ideology described by Woolard (1998). The definition of ideology being used for this study is a combination of her second and third strands. These come from the "neutral", descriptive definition of ideology as being "derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular position" (Woolard, 1998, p. 6) and the more critical conceptualization of ideology as "ideas, discourses, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power" (p. 7). Therefore, for this study, I define ideology as being developed through the particular experiences and interests of individuals which ultimately serve in an overriding struggle to acquire or maintain power in society. Both of these strands are helpful in combination with each other because they illustrate the positional and contextual nature of ideology while also emphasizing the importance of power relations involved in competing ideologies.

Before investigating the practices at the various primary schools in this study, it is important to look into the policies under which these schools operate. In Lesotho, both private and government primary schools have language policies which ultimately favor English as the official language of instruction, meaning that all subjects (except Sesotho reading and writing subjects) are to be taught in English. Nevertheless, private and government schools approach this policy in different ways. Private schools begin using English as the medium of instruction from day one (reference to "English Medium" schools has become synonymous with private schools for most people in Lesotho), while government schools use Sesotho for instruction through Standard 3 and then switch to using English as the medium of instruction from Standard 4 onwards. These language

policies have been influenced by many different ideologies which combine and compete with each other at schools. The ways these ideologies combine play a strong role in establishing which specific policies are adopted, how they are interpreted and received – through the language attitudes of key stakeholders – and ultimately, how they are put into practice.

There have been two major global ideologies which have had an especially strong influence on the formation and continued prevalence of English medium LiEPs in Lesotho. These are *the colonial legacy of English* and *the global hegemony of English*. These two ideological influences have had a similar impact on the LiEPs in many African nations, especially amongst those which are former British colonies. In the next two sections I will discuss these two major global ideologies which have influenced the formation and maintenance of English medium language policies.

Colonial Legacy of English

Perhaps the most direct ideological link to the current English medium LiEP comes from the colonial legacy of English in Lesotho. As a former British protectorate, Lesotho's education system has been highly influenced by British colonial and educational practices, and thus, Lesotho has inherited a language policy which favors the use of English as the language of instruction at schools over the national language of Sesotho, especially after the early primary years. Historically, the common practice of British colonial education systems throughout Africa was to use "mother tongue" instruction during the first few years of schooling and then switch to using English as the language of instruction onwards. In Lesotho this meant teaching in Sesotho through the

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first three grades of primary school and then switching to use English at Standard 4. This practice has commonly been attributed by language policy scholars to a 1957 UNESCO declaration which declared that it is the right of every child to be educated in their mother tongue. Most of the British colonies interpreted that declaration to mean that children should be taught in their mother tongue during the early years of primary education and then switch to using English as the medium of instruction in the later years of schooling.

According to the CEO of primary education in the MOET (interview, July 19, 2007), this has been the practice ever since education started in Lesotho and became a formalized policy under the 1982 National Manifesto on Education, when many of the common educational practices were formally consolidated as official policies. The first officially documented statement about this LiEP policy I could find from the MOET was in 1995:

> Sesotho is the medium of instruction from Standard 1 to 3. English is the medium of instruction from Standard 4 upwards; English and Sesotho are taught as school subjects both at primary and secondary levels, English is a failing subject. (Ministry of Education, Maseru 1995, p.21)

This language policy, like many others, has continued to be practiced at government schools since colonial days in basically the same way without a great deal of scrutiny or criticism. A striking example of this continued legacy of colonial education policies is in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) which is still used as the national matriculation exam at the completion of Form E (12th grade) in high school. In contrast, other African nations which inherited a similar exam, such as Botswana, abandoned these exams years ago and have replaced them with locally constructed,

locally administered and assessed matriculation exams. The CEO of curriculum and assessment at the Lesotho MOET insists they are currently in the process of replacing the COSC exam but have not done so yet because it cannot be done overnight and must be accompanied by a sector-wide reform of the curriculum and assessment structures of the education system. He acknowledged that this is a complicated matter and they want to make sure they do it correctly, rather than hastily. When I asked him about the COSC he replied,

> I think it is irrelevant. It does a lot of harm to the economy of this country. We're not able to produce students according to the needs of this country.... It's not our curriculum. We can't maneuver through it. We have to take it as it is. We can't dismiss it until we have something in place. So that's what we are actively working on. We are working on that. (interview, July 23, 2007)

Thus, more than forty years after gaining independence from Britain, Lesotho still sends the most important exam for high school students (the COSC) – which determines whether or not students can proceed to tertiary education and largely decides which degree programs they may be eligible to enroll in – back to the U.K. to be marked by British assessors and then returned back to Lesotho with the official results.

Although the MOET claims it is being more proactive these days by starting to address some of these issues and develop an education system that is more applicable to modern Lesotho needs, rather than just continuing the inherited British education system, it has been a long time waiting. This has made it more difficult for the MOET to make the needed changes in a comprehensive, thoughtful way, which has resulted in delays and setbacks of what I feel are much needed reforms. When I asked the CEO of curriculum

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and assessment about the process of replacing the COSC with a more locally constructed exam, he responded,

> We don't localize the examination [first]. You localize the curriculum and then the assessment will automatically follow. That's the thinking. And it was not easy. It's not an easy task, but I think we are getting there. We are getting there. I think I'm excited we are getting there. We are coming to grips with it. (interview, July 23, 2007)

In a similar tone, the MOET is beginning to question the utility of the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) which is a high-stakes exam administered at the end of Standard 7 (the terminal year of primary school), largely used to determine who will qualify to continue on to secondary education. The CEO of curriculum and assessment had much to say about this exam:

> At primary also, as another measure of trying to reform primary education and to try to give it a clearer focus, we have started to question the whole idea of the PSLE, primary school leaving certificate, at the end of the seventh year. I think our understanding is that that comes too early and we don't see what purpose it really serves. In the age where we are saying we are expanding access it doesn't make good sense for us to be using primary school leaving examination as a barrier to entry into secondary education. (interview, July 23, 2007)

Thus, it seems as though the MOET is aware of the negative impacts of the colonial legacy, but they have not yet been able to replace the old curriculum and assessment practices. In order to do so, the MOET claims to be making great efforts to first change the curriculum at schools to be more relevant to the needs of the nation and

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its students and then change the examination and assessment structure. It seems to me that until they are able to accomplish this, the continued legacy of colonization will persist in having a direct impact on the educational experiences of schools and students through various policies, such as, assessment, curriculum, and language of instruction.

With regards to the influence of the colonial legacy of English on language policy in Lesotho, the CEO of primary education claims it continues to have a major influence on the education system and its practices. He stated that some educators and administrators are beginning to question the relevance and effectiveness of continuing to use English as the medium of instruction at schools, but he also claimed,

> there has not been sufficient political motivation to make this a big deal... the role that the medium of instruction plays in the level of attainment of learning outcomes by children. We have also always thought that it is one of those things that happen. But the most worrisome factor is many people, including educators and our political leadership occasionally, do not make a distinction between language learning and the medium of instruction. You talk about English medium or Sesotho medium, to them... they don't understand you to mean what language are the children taught in or learning in, they are understanding the learning of that language. (interview, July 19, 2007)

Therefore, although a few people are beginning to question the effectiveness of using English as a medium of instruction at schools, the majority of stakeholders unquestioningly view it as the way things have always been done and take it as "one of those things that happen". In a way, the ideology of the colonial legacy of English – at least in the education system – has been internalized and implicitly accepted by most

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Basotho as a normal, expected practice of education and has been allowed to be continued, as well as enforced, at schools without much scrutiny or resistance, at least at the policy level. As will be discussed later in the following chapter, there are many ways in which teachers and students do not follow, and in effect resist, these policies in practice, but at the policy level there has been little effort to make significant changes to using English as the official language of instruction at schools.

The CEO of primary education proposes that this is slowly changing and seems to have hope that with the current efforts to reform the curriculum there are potential opportunities to re-visit the medium of instruction issue. As he states,

> We haven't changed in principle, but there seems to be a greater resolve now than before to acknowledge the use of familiar language...by children to have a strong impact on learning itself and the valuing of schooling. But what we still have to unfold as we develop our curriculum further is how is that going to manifest itself in the manner in which our curriculum itself is written. (interview, July 19, 2007)

Hence, according to this ministry official, there is a potential for the English medium of instruction policy to come under greater scrutiny and revision in the current environment of educational reform in Lesotho, but this comes up against a general attitude that he referred to in the country that the language policy is not a major issue that must be dealt with at the moment. In my own interviews this general attitude was widely confirmed, as was illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5. This is combined with a general misunderstanding of the public about what a change in medium of instruction policy would mean in practice for the education of students. In the interviews I conducted, and through general conversations, there was a common fear that changing the language of

instruction at schools to favor more use of Sesotho will result in students learning less English, which is unacceptable to nearly all of the people I worked with.

Scholars and activists who are proponents of mother-tongue instruction policies throughout Africa insist that the use of a local language as the medium of instruction at schools would not lead to learning less English. Some of these scholars have tried to show, through quasi-experimental and other empirical data that students who learn in a local language actually do better in English also, as long as English is taught well as a separate subject (see Fafunwa, Macauley, & Sokoya, 1989; Brock-Utne, Desai, & Qorro, 2003). The problem is, these scholars have done a poor job in convincing policymakers or the general population of educational stakeholders of these conclusions. Thus, they must make a more strategic and concerted effort to educate those most directly involved in policy formation as well as the general public about their findings before they can expect local educational stakeholders to embrace mother-tongue instruction. I feel this is largely because it is counterintuitive to most people when they hear that students will learn English better if it is not used as much at schools, which is basically what mother-tongue proponents are saying by proposing to use local languages to teach all subjects other than English. Even if these scholars' conclusions are correct, they have done little to convince teachers, students, and their families that they will not lose proficiency in English by adopting local languages for the medium of instruction at schools. Until they are able to get people to believe and accept their ideas, I doubt local stakeholders will be willing to change language policies that officially call for less English instruction at schools. As was expressed constantly through interviews (see Chapters 4 and 5) with parents, one of the main purposes of education (if not the major purpose) for them was

for their children to learn English. If any policy is perceived to threaten the learning of English at schools, it will ultimately be rejected in practice.

Therefore, there are a number of different ideologies competing with each other when it comes to people's views on the continued practice of using English as the medium of instruction at schools. If the MOET is able to follow through on the educational reforms and changes they propose to be in the process of doing, then there may be a potential for the dominant ideology of the colonial legacy of English to become further questioned and scrutinized, and maybe have less of an enduring impact on educational policies in Lesotho as it so far has. But up until now there has been little resistance to the current language policy at the national level.

Hegemony of Global English

A second ideological influence that may be even more influential today in maintaining the current formal language policy is the global dominance of English, as exemplified in the literature focusing on linguistic imperialism, which was discussed in Chapter 2. In nearly all of the interviews I conducted, from teachers, administrators, parents, and students (see Chapters 4 and 5), there was a common theme that nearly all felt it was important to have English as the language of instruction at schools because it is perceived as an "international" language. There is also a common belief that knowledge of English is the most crucial criteria for obtaining a good job and moving on to higher levels of education in Lesotho. The CEO of primary education emphasized this point when he told me,

You know we say this all the time that in this country education is almost

considered to be synonymous with learning English. You are as educated as you

can speak English. And sometimes anything else you know doesn't quite matter

or that you don't know for that matter. It's not correct in my view. You should

still be able to do your math and understand your history and not necessarily to be

able to express it in English. (interview, July 19, 2007)

This is an important point because it illustrates how integral knowledge of English

is to what is perceived as being educated in Lesotho. It shows the enormous influence of

the hegemony of English in the country. It is also important to note that this ministry

official does not necessarily agree with this ideology, but he acknowledged that it persists

in the minds of most Basotho and therefore is extremely powerful.

Another important point about this ideology, which Kroskrity (2004) emphasizes,

is the level of awareness of speakers, which helps to reveal how comprehensively

ideologies are accepted and internalized. As discussed in Chapter 2, Gramsci's (1971)

concept of hegemony proposes that the ultimate power of hegemony lies in the ways that

certain ideologies become internalized and naturalized by their recipients. Therefore, if a

certain ideology is perceived as "common sense" and taken-for-granted, then it can be

considered hegemonic. The perceptions of Basotho regarding the role of English in their

society and the great importance which is attributed to knowledge of English help to

reveal the hegemony of English in Lesotho.

Nearly all of the people I interviewed and worked with said something along

these lines about their preference for and the perceived importance of using English as

the language of instruction at schools. Many spoke of its importance as the

"international" language despite the fact that many of them had very little interaction with non-Sesotho speakers in their daily lives. They claimed that to get any good job in Lesotho required knowledge of English without questioning the relevance of such a requirement for certain jobs. Few participants questioned, or even considered, the educational or pedagogical implications of using a foreign language as the medium of instruction at schools (which is one of the main concerns of mother-tongue instruction proponents). These policies and practices were largely accepted uncritically by most people in this study – at least in their conversations with me – as given realities in their society. The majority mainly expressed their concerns about what they needed to do to have their children achieve enough proficiency in English to gain access to key social institutions and opportunities, and thus become a successful citizen.

Out of all the students' parents and family members that I interviewed, only one individual, whom I will call Mr. Mokoti, explicitly questioned the role of English in Lesotho society and the legitimacy of using it as the language of instruction at schools. Mr. Mokoti was the older brother of a Standard 7 government school student, whose parents had recently died, and therefore was living with him under his care. He was in his late-20s or early 30s, worked at a local hardware store, and was married with a young one-year-old child. His comments are very interesting because it was the only instance I found of someone seriously questioning the status of English in Lesotho. I will provide a lengthy portion of his interview here because it reveals a voice counter to the hegemony of English:

We have realized it to be a serious problem that we are using English in our country especially when we are looking for jobs. Sometimes one would find that

we are deprived access to things that can help us develop this country. For example, without the knowledge of English one cannot be allowed to attend any course [at the university level] even if it is in Agriculture. . . . While we are best in agriculture as a practice, we are not allowed to impart this knowledge anywhere simply because we do not know English. (interview, July 12, 2007)

Later in the interview Mr. Mokoti spoke about his concern of using English as a major criterion for being accepted into technical college programs:

This is serious because one cannot find a job even if it is technical. Once you get to Lerotholi Politechnique [the major technical college in Lesotho], as an example, they require knowledge of English, and you wonder about the connection between brick laying and English knowledge. . . . In technical schools the criteria for selection should not be based on the knowledge of English. Basotho are strong and they are good in understanding but they are deprived privilege. . . . Basotho people are very skilled and if technical schools that do not consider knowledge of English could be established, Basotho could grow economically. (interview, July 12, 2007)

This is an important example because it shows that not everyone accepts the hegemony of English uncritically. This individual is aware of the unequal treatment of Sesotho compared to English and the faultiness of privileging the use of English in education and other important social institutions. If more people felt the same way as he did about the role of English in society, then the hegemony of English would probably hold less power and be more amenable to criticism and potential change. But such does not seem to be the case currently in Lesotho, at least from the sample of participants in

this study, so its hegemony reigns supreme. More research should probably be done to investigate the extent of such attitudes throughout the country.

This is also revealing because it shows that even hegemonic ideologies are not all-encompassing and wholly deterministic. They have the potential of being questioned and changed, and are therefore malleable rather than static. But changes on the macro, or national, level can only happen if a greater number of people also come to the point where they believe that such hegemonic ideologies are unfair and need to be changed to their benefit. Perhaps there are many others who feel the same way as this individual but did not express their views to me due to reasons of my positionality as a white, foreign researcher, or as someone not perceived to represent them. My own research methods or approach could have possibly influenced some to not discuss the issue in these terms. But regardless of the reasons why others may not have expressed similar positions to me, the fact remains that there has been little pushback from the public at the national level for changes in the current language in education policy.

Although Mr. Mokoti had developed a critical view of the role of English in Lesotho schools, he was not set free by such a point of view and could not freely use his agency to do anything he wanted without consequences. He was still subject to the structural realities which had been influenced by the hegemony of English and could not change their consequences. This can be seen in his response to a question regarding how he felt about this issue for his own family, especially now that he has a child of his own:

> To be fair it used to trouble me but not much now. I am concerned about my growing child now and I am getting inclined to English Medium schools and this will make him end up not fluent in Sesotho. (interview, July 12, 2007)

Therefore, although he had acknowledged the inequality inherent in privileging English over Sesotho and complained that he wished it would change, he still indicated that he would most likely choose to send his child to an English Medium school despite the potential of him losing fluency in Sesotho. When the issue was seen to directly impact his own child's life he was faced with a dilemma. Although he did not support the current language policy, there was little that he could do as an individual to change it. He understood that if he sent his son to an English Medium school, rather than a government school that uses more Sesotho, his son will have less of a chance of succeeding in Lesotho today. He also knew that by sending his child to a government school it did not necessarily mean that his son would learn Sesotho any better than at a private school, and would most likely result in a lower quality education. The structural realities imposed upon him by society were perceived to be largely out of his own control, and therefore he was planning to make the most informed decision he could under current social conditions in Lesotho for his child. In the end, he expressed his plans towards using his agency and resources for his child's best interests by accommodating to an ideology which, in principle, he disagreed with but could do little about.

Therefore, we can see that the level of awareness which people have of the influences that particular ideologies play in their own lives has a great impact on how deeply the ideology influences their practices. Kroskrity (2000) claims that the degree of awareness that people have of particular ideologies is directly related to the potential for people to resist and change such ideologies. Hence, if people are not aware of the ideologies that influence their practices, they are not likely to resist the ideologies imposed upon them. But if people are explicitly aware of certain ideologies, especially if

those ideologies act to create inequalities in their lives, then individuals are much more likely to resist and attempt to reshape ideologies to their own benefit. The level of awareness about the hegemony of English as a global language in Lesotho is not likely to be resisted or changed anytime in the near future because the majority of people seem to accept the ideology as a given fact of life in society – at least at the national policy level – and very few groups or individuals openly question or object to it. If more people felt like Mr. Mokoti and explicitly expressed concerns or displeasure for using English as the official language at schools, there could be greater potential for the policy to change.

In summary, the ideologies derived from the colonial legacy of English and the global hegemony of English have had, and continue to have, a dominant influence on the language policies of Lesotho schools and the language attitudes of educational stakeholders. This can be seen in how the language policy of the colonial period has persisted up to this day with little scrutiny or resistance. It can also be seen through the overriding attitudes of people in Lesotho that perceive knowledge of English to be one of the most important things needed in order to succeed in society today.

To some readers, my analysis of these findings, as discussed above, may seem to be confirming the deterministic theories which I criticized in Chapter 2. Indeed, at the national level it seems that the findings from this study act in many ways to corroborate the claims of what Canagarajah (1999) refers to as "reproduction theories" of LPP. To some extent, this probably is the case because these colonial and hegemonic forces are most prevalent at macro levels where it is difficult for individuals or small groups to resist or reverse powerful and persistent influences to the extent that they can make large-scale societal changes. The example of Mr. Mokoti, mentioned above, helps to illustrate

this point. He, as an individual, did not agree with the current language policies, but, as a member of society who needed to look out for the best interests of his family, he was forced, in a way, to conform to structural realities.

Therefore, as I discussed in Chapter 2, I find these structuralist theories useful in explaining macro level dynamics. They are helpful in understanding why the colonial legacy of English continues to be prominent today in Lesotho, more than 40 years after independence, and in explaining the reasons why there is little organized resistance against current language policies at the national level. Some structural forces, which are most prevalent at the macro, or national, level require great effort and organization for people to come together under a common interest, in order to create systemic changes in policies and other issues impacting the society as a whole. I have argued that the weakness, or shortcomings, of these reproduction theories is not so much in their descriptive power of understanding macro-level dynamics, but more in their lack of ability to explain the local dynamics of structural forces as they influence the particular attitudes and practices of actors on the ground level. These theories are largely inadequate in explaining the great diversity of responses and reactions that local stakeholders have towards policy prescriptions. They do not sufficiently incorporate the role of agency for groups and individuals in interpreting and implementing policies in a multitude of ways.

This chapter has largely been an analysis of the macro-level language policies in Lesotho and the ideologies behind them. In this chapter I have taken less of a policy as practice approach because I have dealt with national level issues influencing language policy. In order to understand how and why local actors react towards the policies placed upon them at the local, ground level, it is important to also understand the ideological

influences at the larger societal level which influence people's attitudes and practices at the local level. In the following chapter I will explore the practices of local stakeholders at the school level and analyze the ideological influences behind them.

Chapter 7: Ideological Influences on School Practices in Lesotho

Introduction

Having discussed in the previous chapter the major ideological influences at the macro-level on the language policies at primary schools and language attitudes of educational stakeholders in Lesotho, I would now like to turn the focus to the ideological influences which impact the actual practices at the schools on the ground level. Policies are not always implemented in practice the way they were initially intended. Therefore, it is important to use a policy as practice analysis by investigating how policies are actually put into practice and examine possible reasons for why they are not always implemented in their intended ways. In this chapter I will provide a few examples of how language and educational policies are implemented in practice in differing ways at the primary schools where I conducted research and explore some of the ideologies influencing these practices. In addition to the strong influence of the two macro-level ideologies discussed in Chapter 6 (the colonial legacy and global hegemony of English), I will also discuss the influences of ideologies which derive from more locally mediated views and beliefs about education and language. These include (1) the conflicting applications of learning English versus learning content knowledge, (2) conflicting purposes of schooling, and (3) the differences in organizational and operational structures between public and private schools.

Language Use in the Classroom

Before delving into an analysis of the ideologies which influence the school practices of local educational stakeholders, I would like to provide a few examples of the different types of school practices I observed at the schools where I conducted my research. These examples are not meant to be representative or all-encompassing examples of what happened at the schools. Schools are too complex and have too many things going on at once to ever provide such examples. The examples I have chosen to report, though, I feel are illustrative of the different types of ideological influences which will be discussed in this chapter, and therefore they have been purposefully selected.

The first type of school practice I will focus on is the actual language use of teachers and students in the classroom. Although the official policy for Standards 4 and 7 at both private and government schools states that all subjects (except for Sesotho language and reading classes) are to be taught in English, this did not always happen in actual practice. At times the schools differed greatly in how much English they used for classroom instruction and how much Sesotho was allowed to be used in their classrooms. In nearly every case the English Medium private schools stuck almost exclusively to using English as the language of instruction by the teachers and the language used for responses and questions by students. At the government primary school the teachers attempted to do the same but were often frustrated in their efforts and therefore shifted to using Sesotho, despite the official language policy.

In the following two sections I will provide contrasting examples of these efforts to use English in classroom lessons at a private school and a government school. Both of these examples are from science lessons taught in Standard 7 classrooms where the content of the lessons was quite similar. As I describe how the lessons developed please

note how the teachers and students respond to the lessons as they proceed, especially with regard to the use of English and Sesotho.

Science lesson in an English Medium private school

The first example comes from a private school Standard 7 science class where the lesson topic is discussing different types of plants (field notes, April 17, 2007). The teacher of the class is a very confident, outgoing woman who really seems to enjoy her work and relates well to her students. I will call her Mrs. Monesa. Mrs. Monesa makes great efforts in her teaching to engage her students in her lessons and usually tries to connect the lesson content to their lives. At this particular private school, the three Standard 7 teachers split the course load among themselves by having each teacher assigned to teach specific subjects to each of the three Standard 7 classes at the school. In this way they rotate through each classroom teaching the same lesson three times. This helps the teachers focus on specific subject content without being too overloaded with other subjects to teach. It also allows for them to spend more time preparing for each lesson and forces them to stay within their allotted time whilst teaching because they know another teacher will be coming into the classroom for the next subject, according to the pre-determined timetable. This allows for focus and efficiency in their lessons, but it also discourages straying too far off topic or delving into specific questions or problems that a particular class or student may have with the lesson. Mrs. Monesa was assigned to teach the science and Sesotho subjects. The students seemed to enjoy her and were usually actively involved in her lessons.

The previous lesson had just ended so the teachers switched classrooms to teach their lesson once again to a new set of students. Mrs. Monesa enters into the classroom

holding a stack of papers and writes "Plants" on the board. She greets the students and then introduces the topic in English, saying that they will be discussing different types of plants today, beginning with flowering plants, as she writes "Flowering Plants" on the board. For the next few minutes she lectures the students on flowering plants, talking about their different parts, how they grow and reproduce, and so on. She then moves on to speak about non-flowering plants, as she writes on the board "Non-flowering Plants". The students are following along, but they seem to be getting a little bored. The entire lecture is taught in English without any code-switching or mixing of Sesotho at all.

When Mrs. Monesa finishes her lecture she asks the students, "Are we together?" The class answers "Yes" in unison, which makes the teacher laugh. As she laughs she asks, "Do you ever say 'No'?" The students say "No" in unison and they all have a good laugh. Mrs. Monesa then proceeds to ask the students a few follow up questions in English. As she does so she notices one student nodding off to sleep. She quickly yells at the student, first in Sesotho, "U ultoa?" (Are you listening?) then follows without hesitation in English, "Don't sleep! Are we together Mpho? Can I ask you a few questions?" She then asks the student a few questions to see if she was listening.

After the lecture Mrs. Monesa hands out the papers she brought into the classroom which have pictures of different types of non-flowering plants. She has the students look at the pictures and begins discussing the first type of non-flowering plant – moss – by reminding the students of a recent field trip they took into the mountains and saw a number of different types of plants. She asks the students if they remember seeing some moss and they say "Yes". Up until this point, everything has been conducted in English between the teacher and students. As Mrs. Monesa reminds the students of seeing

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some moss on their field trip she switches to using Sesotho for a couple of sentences to explain a little more about what a moss is. She then abruptly returns back to using English and continues on to the talk about the next type of non-flowering plant – mold. Many of the students do not understand what a mold is, so the teacher refers them to the Sesotho word for mold (hlobo) which is written in parentheses next to the picture on the handout along with the English word. The students still don't understand what mold is, so the teacher explains it to them in English by giving them an example of the mold that grows on old, moist bread. After being provided with this example the students seem to understand mold quite well.

After discussing a few of the different non-flowering plants shown on the handout, Mrs. Monesa has students turn over their papers and notes while she asks them review questions of what they have learned so far. The students answer her questions in full English sentences. If they answer with incomplete sentences the teacher makes them repeat their answer with a complete English sentence. The students do not have much trouble doing so.

Mrs. Monesa then proceeds to discuss the last type of non-flowering plant on the paper – algae. A number of the students don't understand what this is so the teacher tells them the Sesotho word (bolele). Most of the students understand after being referred to the Sesotho word, but a few still don't know what it is. So, the teacher goes on to explain in English what it is. At the end Mrs. Monesa asks, "Is this clear? Now we have time for your questions." A number of students ask questions, some of them quite complex, such as "Does a mold breathe like other plants?" and "Does spinach have flowers?" At one point Mrs. Monesa provides an answer with which one student disagrees, and he

challenges her on it. Another student speaks up in defense of the teacher's answer. The teacher encourages this engagement but eventually confirms her own answer (which was ultimately wrong), but the students seem satisfied. The lesson ends after the review session. It is the last lesson of the day, so the students pack up their book bags and are dismissed.

I would like to discuss just a few key points about this example. Mrs. Monesa used English almost throughout the entire lesson. The only exception is when she explained about moss for a few sentences in Sesotho and then returned back to using English. This may have had something to do with her reference to their recent field trip into the mountains, which caused her to use the more familiar language of Sesotho with her students, but I did not follow up with the teacher on this, so I cannot be sure. The only other two times she used Sesotho was when she yelled at a student for sleeping (which she quickly follows with an English reprimand) and when the students did not understand the English word "algae", where she provides them with the Sesotho word. The topic of the lesson was quite complex for their age level and understanding. This became evident when the students didn't even know the Sesotho words for some of the plant types, which indicates it is not a familiar concept to them. When the students were confused or had further questions, the teacher always used English to explain and provided real life examples for them to understand. The students asked and answered questions in full English sentences, and when they used one word or incomplete sentence responses, the teacher made them repeat again with a full sentence. The students were able to ask rather complex and thoughtful questions while one student even took the teacher to task, all in English.

Science lesson in a government school

I will now contrast this example above with a similar science lesson given in a government school Standard 7 class (field notes, March 19, 2007). The teacher of the lesson has been teaching for over 15 years and has been at this particular government school for 10 years. I will call her Mrs. Selepe. Mrs. Selepe is a strong willed woman who cares dearly about her students, but is often short tempered and gets frustrated easily with her students in class. When I would discuss with Mrs. Selepe about specific students she knew great details about their lives. She knew which students came from difficult living conditions and which ones were orphans. She knew the temperament of her students and often the reasons behind why different students acted out the way that they did. Mrs. Selepe said she spent a lot of time worrying about her students' lives outside of the classroom and made great efforts to support them in the ways that she could. On a few occasions I saw her providing basic clothing for some of the poorest of her students whose uniforms were getting old and tattered. She collected other such items from fellow teachers, parents, and community members in order to help her students the best she could. The year I was there Mrs. Selepe was in the middle of a 2-year university program studying for her honors in a Bachelors of Education. She attended classes every weekend in a nearby South African city and had a rather big load of coursework for these classes on top of her teaching duties. Her own child attended Standard 4 in the same primary school where she taught.

The lesson which I observed on this day was a continuation of the same topic which had been taught in previous days, as the students had been learning about plants and seed germination. They had conducted a lab activity earlier in the week where each

student planted a seed in a jar full of grass and had been watering them ever since. The jars were lined up on the window sill so that they to get some sunlight.

Mrs. Selepe begins the lesson by instructing the students in English to get their jars from the window. The students excitedly get their jars and go back to their desks. When they look at their seeds nothing has happened. The experiment did not work because they had put too much water in their jars. Mrs. Selepe seems frustrated and tells the students they will try again, but this time they will use soil instead of grass. As she discusses this she uses a mix of English and Sesotho throughout their interactions.

Mrs. Selepe then begins teaching by writing on the board "From Seed to Plant-Germination". She introduces the topic in English and has the students open up their textbooks. Some of the textbooks are missing the specific page they are looking at, so the teacher sorts it out for everyone to have a book with the correct page in it. This is conducted nearly all in English. Mrs. Selepe then asks the students in English, "What do seeds need to germinate?" The students answer in unison in English. Mrs. Selepe then goes on to lecture about seed germination, what is needed for a seed to germinate, and how it happens. This is all taught in English with the only exceptions being when she uses the Sesotho phrase "Le ultoana?" which means, "Do you understand?" periodically to make sure the students are following along. At times during the lecture she has students read out loud certain passages from the book in English, which correspond with what she is teaching.

After finishing the lecture many of the students look confused, so Mrs. Selepe asks again if they understand, this time in English. Most of the students say they don't understand. One student claims she understands, but she cannot explain it in English, so

she answers in Sesotho. When Mrs. Selepe sees that most of her students do not understand she switches to Sesotho and basically teaches everything that she had just taught in English all over again, this time in much more detail and with practical examples that the students can relate to. For example, as she teaches in Sesotho she provides the example of how people in the mountains prepare a certain type of crop (mabele) to be grown. Nearly all of the students seem understand this example as they express agreement out loud, nod their heads, and follow along. This second round of instruction with culturally relevant examples helps them to understand the concept of germination better. After receiving the instruction in Sesotho, the students seem to understand. They do not have nearly as confused looks on their face and are able to engage with the teacher as she proceeds with the lesson.

Mrs. Selepe then switches back to English and continues on to the next topic of the lesson which is a review of identifying the different parts of a plant. The students have already learned this topic recently, so she reviews and quizzes them by referring to a picture she has drawn on the board, asking questions such as "What is the name of this part?" and "What does this part of the plant do?" The students struggle to answer the questions in English and have to refer to the book to find their answers. When they provide answers they usually do so by reading verbatim from the textbook in English. As I observe the students do this it is difficult to know how much the students really understand or whether they are merely finding the right place in the textbook. This is because the teacher does not follow up with any questions to search their understanding, nor does she make them answer in their own words. Answers read directly from the book

seem to satisfy for Mrs. Selepe, as she moves on to subsequent questions. The lesson proceeds like this until they have answered all of the questions in the textbook.

After the lesson I asked Mrs. Selepe how she felt about it. She said she was quite frustrated because the experiment did not work as planned and it threw her and the students off a little. I then asked her why she used so much Sesotho for the lesson and she said it was probably because their experiment hadn't worked, so they were frustrated and couldn't concentrate as well. Mrs. Selepe insisted that most of the time when she teaches science she does so in English and the students understand quite well. This seemed to be generally true during most of my observations in Mrs. Selepe's class, but there had been a few other occasions where I had seen lessons turn out like this one where the students did not understand well in English and she ended up having to repeat the lessons in Sesotho. But this was more the exception than the rule. I then asked her if it would be better if she could just begin by using Sesotho while teaching these lessons, so she could avoid the frustrations that misunderstanding from using English brings to her and the students, as well as the extra time it takes to repeat the lesson a second time in Sesotho. Mrs. Selepe said she felt like the students would indeed understand better if the lessons were taught in Sesotho, but she did not like that idea because she felt it was more important for the students to understand these things in English, not Sesotho, because in the end they would have to write their science exams in English, especially on the PSLE.

In reviewing this example I would like to point out a few observations about this lesson in comparison to the lesson on a similar topic at the private school. Mrs. Selepe began the lesson in English and gave a whole lecture on the topic in English, asking the students throughout if they understood. When asked if they understood the students said

"Yes", but at the end of the lesson it became obvious that they did not understand much at all. As a result, Mrs. Selepe felt like she needed to repeat the lesson in Sesotho (even though it goes against the official language policy) in order for them to understand the topic. After the students understood the first part of the lesson Mrs. Selepe returned to using English to review what they had already learned in previous class sessions. The students understood the review but were unable to provide their own answers in English and had to read directly from the book. This was a typical practice in many of the government school classes in which I observed, where the students could identify the correct answers and read them directly from the book, but were not able to answer the questions in their own words, or explain in words beyond what was written in the textbook. It was rarely clear whether the students truly understood the answers they provided or if they were just regurgitating the correct phrases found in the textbook because the teachers would hardly ever follow up, either in English or Sesotho.

To be fair to Mrs. Selepe, this lesson is not representative of all science lessons in her class. Most of the time she managed to stick to using English while teaching her lessons. A lesson like the one illustrated above happened maybe 10-20% of the time during my observations, and it usually only happened when the topic was brand new to the students, especially if it was a complex topic. In most cases Mrs. Selepe would first teach in English and then only resort to repeating the lesson in Sesotho when it became obvious that almost no one in the class had understood the lesson. In comparison to most other teachers at the government school, Mrs. Selepe used English a much greater percentage of the time. The other two Standard 7 teachers, for example, were much more relaxed in switching between English and Sesotho as they taught, and they did not

demand their students to use as much English either. The lesson described above would be more typical of what I observed in their classrooms for most topics, not just those which are difficult or new for the students. The other teachers usually began their lessons in English, but would quickly switch to Sesotho, often switching back and forth between languages throughout the lesson.

The use of inserting Sesotho phrases throughout the lesson, such as, "Ha ke re." (I'm saying.) or "Le ultoana?" (Do you all understand?) was a common practice in nearly every lesson that I observed at the government school. Sesotho was also used commonly for scolding students or getting their attention intermittently in the lessons. (See Holmarsdottir 2005 for a detailed analysis of these language practices in South African primary schools). Students were encouraged to answer in English the best they could. This often meant that students answered with one word answers or incomplete, broken sentences, but the teachers rarely pushed them to explain more or to rephrase in complete, proper sentences. If a student could not answer in English it was usually okay for them to do so in Sesotho, after they had made an attempt in English.

Overall, the lesson example at the government school illustrated above did not stick to the official language policy of teaching in English. In contrast, the lesson example illustrated at the private school nearly completely followed the English-only policy. There are a number of different ideological influences, as well as social, cultural, and structural influences (which were discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5), which contribute to some of the differences in the classroom language practices illustrated in these examples. The significance of these examples for this study is what they reveal about the types of school realities and competing ideologies which have an

influence on the language and teaching practices of both the teachers and students in their classrooms. In the next few sections I will explore a few of these competing ideological influences which are mediated through the contextual realities in schools and classrooms, local interpretations of what the main purposes of education are, and differing views of how schools should be operated and structured.

Learning English versus Learning Subject Content

In the science lessons described above there are two competing, sometimes conflicting, pedagogical objectives which the teachers are trying to accomplish at the same time in their classrooms. These are the goals of (1) teaching students content knowledge in the particular subject lessons and (2) helping students to increase their proficiency in English, while also expanding their English repertoire to include the new content learned in these subject lessons. Although the explicit purpose of teaching these science lessons is for the students to learn the science content, the underlying assumptions of using English as the language of instruction for these lessons is that the students already are proficient enough in English and will be able to increase their English vocabulary and skills for engaging with the new subject content.

At the private school the teacher is largely able to accomplish both of these goals simultaneously, because the underlying assumption that the students have enough proficiency in English to effectively engage in the new content is largely true. In contrast, at the government school the teacher has a difficult time adhering to using English only while she teaches the science lesson because her students do not have the assumed proficiency in English. As a result, at the government school Mrs. Selepe initially

attempts to accomplish both goals at the same time but is soon thwarted in her efforts. She eventually has to make decisions about which goal to focus on at the expense of the other. As Mrs. Selepe explained to me, she decided to switch to using Sesotho and teach the science content all over again because she realized that her students did not understand what was being taught in English. Therefore, she felt it was important enough for her students to learn the science content that she temporarily put the other goal of providing her students with greater proficiency in English on hold. In this lesson example the two goals are in direct competition with each other because the students lack the necessary proficiency in English to make it possible for the two goals to be accomplished. In the private school lesson there is no such dilemma (except for the few times where the teacher uses a Sesotho word to help her students understand the English equivalent for new vocabulary). Overall, in the private school lesson the two goals are able to be accomplished simultaneously because the students have enough English proficiency to make it possible, and therefore the two goals complement each other.

There are a number of reasons why the private school teacher is able to successfully accomplish both pedagogical goals of teaching English proficiency and science content at the same time while the government school teacher is largely unsuccessful. These have to do with a combination of things, including, the amount of cultural and linguistic capital which their students possess, the many different interests which must be met at each particular school, and the differing organizational structures and daily operations of private schools compared to government schools.

Background of students

A major difference between private and government schools is the backgrounds their student populations come from. This has a great impact on the ways teachers can teach in their respective schools because schools cannot control the amount of cultural, linguistic, and other relevant capital their students possess, which has great implications on how they are able to teach. For example, if a teacher's students have very little background in English and few opportunities to use English outside of school, then there is only so much a teacher can do. In Chapter 4, I provided a number of examples of how students at the government school lack certain types of cultural, social, and linguistic capital which makes it difficult for them to gain enough proficiency in English to do well in school, when English is used as the medium of instruction. Now that the government schools are no longer allowed to charge school fees and must accept all students, as long as they have enough space, these schools have little control over selecting their student populations. Many teachers expressed to me that this has become frustrating for them and has discouraged them in their efforts to provide quality instruction in their classrooms.

Previously, when the churches ran the majority of primary schools in Lesotho (up until the mid-1980s), there was less disparity in the quality of education provided across the spectrum of primary schools. To be sure, there were a handful of private schools which catered to the elite of society, but not nearly as many as there are now. Amongst the church schools there were some that were widely recognized as providing much better quality of education than others, but the disparity between private, church, and government schools was nothing like it has become in the past two decades. Numerous private English Medium schools have been established since then, and there seems to be even greater demand for such private schools today than before.

This is especially true since the implementation of FPE in 2000. In this study, many teachers and parents expressed to me their disappointment with the performance of government primary schools after they opened their doors to all students, regardless of their economic or social backgrounds. Prior to FPE, all primary schools, even government schools, charged school fees. This played an important role in sifting out families who did not have enough economic capital to pay for their children to go to school, or, in some cases, those families who did not feel that formal education was important enough to invest their valuable income into paying school fees for their children. As a result, the student population at church and government primary schools previous to FPE came from families which possessed, on average, higher levels of economic capital, as well as greater cultural and linguistic capital, than students at government schools do today, on average. The principal and teachers at Morena Primary School claimed that the difference in the background of the current student population compared to students in the past has made it more difficult for teachers to use English for teaching because they feel the students at government schools now are even less prepared, and have even less support at home, on average, than they did before.

For example, one Standard 4 teacher, who had been teaching at the government school for over 27 years, said she has seen an enormous difference in the quality of students over the years (interview, May 17, 2007). She recalled that in the past it used to be much better teaching at her particular school because the parents seemed to be more interested and supportive of their children's education. She complained that these days most of the parents do not seem to care much about their children's education, and, as she stated, even if they do care, many of them are not able to assist in their children's

education because of their own lack of education. In addition, she expressed her concern

about the great number of students who are now orphans and come from extremely

deprived homes. She claims that teachers did not have to worry as much in the past about

their students' impoverished and deficient home backgrounds. She emphasized that she

was happy these poor children were now able to go to school, but she claimed it made

things much more difficult for them to teach effectively, especially with regards to using

English for instruction at school. This teacher told me that she always tries to begin her

lessons by using English for instruction (which was confirmed in my observations of her

teaching), but she finds that she has to switch to using Sesotho much more often now

than she used to because her students simply do not have the foundational knowledge of

English to understand what is being taught. This is a dilemma that she says she has to

deal with on a daily basis in her teaching.

When I asked private school teachers about their students' ability to understand

and follow lessons in English, nearly all said it was not a major problem for them. One

Standard 4 private school teacher said that a few of her students had difficulties following

along in English, but she attributed their inabilities to psychological and developmental

problems rather than the students' home backgrounds (interview, May 3, 2007). I

followed up with one of these student's parents to whom the teacher was referring (see

the section on Tsepo in Chapter 5), and indeed they had found that her child did possess

some learning disabilities. The mother said they had recently begun sending their child to

a psychologist, which was helping him improve tremendously in school (field notes &

interview, June 28, 2007). Most of the private school teachers attributed much of their

students' English proficiency to their own school's language policy of beginning English

medium instruction from day one in Standard 1. This may be a big part of the reason why their students are more proficient in English by the time they begin Standard 4 than at government schools. But as was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, there is a great difference in the amount of cultural and linguistic capital that private school students possess in comparison to government school students. This must have a great impact on their level of proficiency in English and ability to succeed at school.

I would argue that the home and educational backgrounds of students and their families has a much greater impact on students' ability to be effectively instructed in English than what the schools and teachers do themselves. When teachers have students who already possess the necessary cultural and linguistic capital it is much easier for them to adhere to the policy of teaching only in English, but when their students do not possess such capital and cannot understand English well, it makes it much more difficult for teachers to adhere to the language policy. One Standard 7 government school teacher explained to me that he doesn't even bother much anymore about whether to use English or Sesotho while teaching most of his subjects because it has become too tedious for him to try to stick to one or the other (interview, March 15, 2007). He rather adjusts to the abilities of his students and uses English whenever he feels it is working, but he often switches back and forth. In my observations of his class, this seemed to be true, as he freely code-switched back and forth between English and Sesotho during his lessons. His students seemed to follow along well and many of them expressed how they enjoyed having him as a teacher.

In one sense, these strategies used by the government school teachers could be viewed as acts of resistance, referring to Canagarajah's (1999) theory of resistance in

education and language practices. I'm not sure if resistance is the appropriate term for the strategies utilized by these teachers, because none of the teachers expressed an explicit desire to change the language policy. In fact, virtually all of the government school teachers I talked to strongly supported the English medium policy. Some even expressed their wish that the school would use English more in the earlier grades so they wouldn't have as much of a problem with teaching in English by the time students reached them in the upper primary grades. Regardless of whether these strategies should be considered as acts of resistance or not, they do clearly display acts of agency. They show that teachers constantly make conscious pedagogical and linguistic decisions based upon the realities of their classrooms. Most of the teachers I worked with expressed that they have an ideal goal of how they want their lessons to be taught (i.e., in English), but they also emphasized that their ultimate goal is for their students to understand the content of their subjects. Therefore, they use their agency to decide when to try to adhere to teaching in English and when they should switch, temporarily, to using Sesotho for instruction. This tension in their teaching practices, in fact, requires teachers to constantly use their agency while adjusting to the particular context of their lessons and students.

In this analysis I have used a policy as practice approach, which looks at the language and education practices of teachers and students in the classroom. By focusing on their practices we can make a link to how the specific policies influence, or do not influence, their practices. Under certain contexts the teachers and students effectively followed the policy expectations, while in other contexts they did not. If we can better understand what motivates teachers to make specific pedagogical decisions in their classrooms, in spite of the official language policy, then we can more effectively

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recognize what types of policies and support systems can help teachers to make more informed choices in their teaching practices and utilize their agency to adjust to their particular teaching contexts. One of the problems with a rigid, across-the-board policy, such as requiring English-only instruction in all classrooms and subjects, is that it assumes ideal teaching circumstances and does not provide official support for teachers to use their agency in "bending the rules" and adjusting to their own particular teaching contexts. By looking at the specific dynamics of teaching, within the context of each particular classroom, we can begin to gain such an understanding. This will require more systematic research which attempts to correlate the backgrounds of students in particular classrooms to the teaching strategies which are adopted by their teachers.

Competing Purposes of Education

Having discussed how the cultural and linguistic capital of students impacts the ways teachers can use language to teach in their classrooms, I would like to now focus on a few other issues which also have a strong influence on how teachers teach at school. The influences I will discuss in the next two sections are (1) the various ways that stakeholders, at all levels, view the purposes of schooling and (2) the differences in organizational and management structures between private and public schools. Although these influences also have a strong impact on the ways teachers teach in their classrooms, their connection to actual pedagogical decisions of teachers is less clear, especially with regard to language policy, and thus, more difficult to correlate with specific classroom practices. These two issues have a more general influence on how schools operate, but they also impact the ways teachers teach. Therefore, having discussed the two science

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lesson examples above, I will now turn to some other examples which portray some of the differences between how private and government schools operate on a daily basis.

One of the local ideologies which strongly impacts how schools and teachers operate is in what people believe the purposes of schools should be. Much like the competing goals in American schools that Labaree (1997) discusses (see Chapter 2), there are also competing perceptions of the major purposes of schools in Lesotho's education system. Two of the major purposes I observed in primary schools during this study include (1) preparing students to receive necessary credentials required to move on to higher levels of education and become qualified for limited, prestigious jobs and (2) providing a safe place to watch over and take care of the needs of school-aged children. These are obviously not the only perceived purposes of primary schools in Lesotho, but for this study I will only focus on these two because the government and private schools approached these two purposes in very different ways. Private schools tended to focus more on the first of these purposes while government schools tended to focus more on the latter. These different purposes have great implications on how teachers approach their teaching responsibilities at school and how much time they can devote to teaching.

Providing credentials for students

Under the current educational structure in Lesotho, where there is limited space for high school students, one of the major purposes of primary schools is to prepare students to pass the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) which is administered to all Standard 7 students upon the completion of primary school. The PSLE is one of the major criteria in establishing who is eligible to move on to high school. It is also used by high schools as a major selection criterion for admittance. The best high schools require

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their students to have high marks on the PSLE to even be considered for enrollment. Therefore, the PSLE holds great importance for students and their future. I would argue that for the private schools I worked with, this was perceived of by parents as the most important purpose of schools. This can be justified by the comments of the majority of parents I interviewed (see Chapter 5) who said their number one criteria for selecting a particular private school for their child was in looking at the pass rates and exam scores of each school on the PSLE. Parents tried to send their children to schools that had the best exam performance, if possible. This is not to say that the parents were not also interested in other aspects of the schools, such as how well the teachers treat their students, the quality of education provided at the school, and the facilities available for the students, but many of the parents explicitly stated that the pass rates were their top criteria for selecting a school. Consequently, the student population at private schools is basically self-selected from families who want their children to have the best chance to pass the PSLE at the highest level possible and can afford to pay for it.

This also played out in the ways Standard 7 teachers approached their teaching at the private schools. Even though the PSLE was not scheduled until October, most of the private school teachers finished teaching the full year's syllabus by the end of June (thus cramming a year's worth of subject content into half of the allotted time) so that they could begin reviewing and drilling the students solely in preparation for the PSLE. All of the private schools I worked with required their Standard 7 students and teachers to take only a two week Winter break in June while the other grades took the full six weeks off. This was so the students would have more time to review and prepare for the PSLE. Due to the structure of the PSLE, which requires all subjects other than Sesotho to be written

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in English, there was extra stress on using English during their preparations. At the government school the teachers also tried to begin reviews and preparations for the PSLE as early as possible, but they were not able to do so with nearly the same fervor or diligence as the private schools. Part of the reason for this is because there was constant pressure on the private school teachers from the students' parents who wanted their children to get the highest marks possible. In addition, because the PSLE results were the main thing that distinguished one private school from another, the principals were constantly looking over the Standard 7 teachers' shoulders making sure they were doing everything in their power to prepare their students for the exam. At the government schools there was very little of such pressure. Indeed, the government school teachers and principal also wanted their students to pass the PSLE with high marks, but there was not nearly as much pressure on them to prepare their students well. This had a great impact on how much time the private school teachers kept on task, especially with using English, while teaching in comparison to the government school teachers, which in turn had an effect on the quality of education the students received.

The difference between the government school and private schools can be seen in the students' results on the PSLE. At Morena Primary School, of the 84 students who took the exam, only two received a 1st class pass, 15 a 2nd class pass, 53 a 3rd class pass, and 14 failed. Out of 84 students, only 4 received a top score of "1" in math, while 64 students received a "1" on their Sesotho score, and 18 received a "1" on their English subject score. Similarly, only 8 students received a "1" in the science subject and 27 received a "1" in the social studies subject. In contrast, at the nearby Dayspring English Medium primary school the results were as follows: out of 138 students, 63 passed with

1st class, 47 with 2nd class, and 27 with 3rd class, with 1 failing. 133 received a "1" in English, 120 (out of 133) received a "1" in Sesotho, 65 received a "1" in math, 106 received a "1" in science, and 133 received a "1" in social studies.

Providing for the needs of children

In contrast to preparing students for the PSLE, another perceived purpose of schools is to provide a place where children can be safely watched over and provided for their needs. Ever since the implementation of the FPE program, government schools have been mandated with a number of simultaneous purposes by the MOET. Not only are government schools expected to provide an education to all of their students and prepare them to pass the PSLE, but they have also been required to open their doors to everyone, including those who previously could not afford to go to school. As has been discussed before, this has had great implications on the quality of education schools can provide because they cannot control the outside experiences, backgrounds, and influences of their students. With a new student population having been introduced, which possesses even less sources of valued capital than before, government schools find themselves having to deal with more pushes and pulls than ever before.

In addition to being expected to provide a good education to a larger population of students, government schools have also been mandated to provide for the well being of their students. One of the key components of FPE is that government schools must provide a free lunch to all of their students. This feeding program is ultimately funded by the government, but the schools are responsible for making sure it is carried out every day in practice. For some students this is the only meal they receive all day. Therefore, these schools provide a great service to many children who may otherwise go hungry.

This is especially true today where the number of orphans continues to rise as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is sweeping the nation. As was explained in Chapter 3, approximately 30% of the students at Morena Primary are orphans. This is more than twice as many orphans than were at any of the private schools I worked with. On top of that, as was illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5, the majority of students at the government school come from much more impoverished homes than those at private schools.

As an example, one of the Standard 7 students I worked with, Pontso, lived in a home without any parents because both of her parents had passed away in recent years. When I visited Pontso's home on four different occasions over a three month period, there were no adults living in the home until a 19 year old cousin, with a newborn baby of her own, came back to live with the girl and her two brothers. Pontso's oldest brother was already an alcoholic, while they feared the other brother, at 14 years of age, was getting into drugs and other trouble. When I finally was able to interview Pontso's cousin, barely an adult herself, who had come to take care of the children, she expressed how difficult their circumstances were (interview, September 9, 2007). The children survived off of meager financial support from distant relatives, which was inconsistent and often not enough for even the essentials. Pontso's cousin had been living with the children for over a year, but had to leave for a few months to give birth to her newborn baby. Thus the children were left to fend largely for themselves. Amazingly, Pontso was one of the top students in her class, according to her teacher. She ended up receiving a second class pass on the PSLE, receiving the top score of 1 in every subject except for math, in which she received a 2.

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When I spoke to Pontso's teacher, Mrs. Selepe (the teacher of the science lesson illustrated above), about the students in her class, she was able to provide rather detailed descriptions of nearly all of her students' home backgrounds. She was especially mindful of the orphans in her class, like Pontso, and did what she could to help them out. One day I arrived late to Mrs. Selepe's class to find a number of the students lined up at her desk waiting to receive new items of clothing for their school uniforms (field notes, May 16, 2007). I later found out that she had asked a number of her students to let her know which items of clothing they needed to replace because they had become too small or worn out. She had then organized with other teachers and families of former students to donate clothing in order to replace these items. This was a wonderful service to her students, who otherwise probably would not have been able to afford new clothing, but it took away time from teaching and preparation for Mrs. Selepe. When I asked her about this, she commented that she could not bear to see her students without these essentials, so she felt it was worth taking away some time from teaching to provide for these needs (field notes, May 16, 2007).

At the private schools the teachers rarely expressed worries about the welfare of their students. I do not recall observing any teacher take out time from their class to specifically address these needs like I did in Mrs. Selepe's class. Due to the fact that private school students could afford to pay for relatively expensive school fees, it was assumed that the students' welfare was taken care of at home. None of the private schools I worked with provided free lunches to their students. This was the responsibility of the students' families themselves. The private schools expected their students to have nice and clean uniforms and had strict grooming standards. If students showed up with shabby

clothes or looked dirty and unkempt their teachers would usually scold the students and tell them to go home to tidy up. The teachers rarely had to worry about whether their students were being provided with basic essentials at home and whether that was affecting their performance at school. I remember one day speaking to Mrs. Selepe in the government school about one of her students that she was very concerned with because her father had recently been sent to prison. She said that she had noticed the student's performance had decreased tremendously since the instance, and she did not know what to do about it. At the private school I'm sure there were also issues about the students' lives that worried their teachers, but none of the teachers expressed these worries to me, and I did not see it affect the teachers nearly to the same extent as at the government school. Although it is difficult to determine to what extent this had an impact on how the teachers taught at each school, it can be concluded that government school teachers had to deal with many more non-instructional related issues with their students than those at private schools, which in turn took away from the time and focus they were able to dedicate to teaching.

Private versus Public Education

The final ideological difference between private and government schools, which I will discuss in this chapter, is the contrast between their fundamental organizational structures, systems of accountability, and the basic ways in which they operate. These two features have a great impact on what is expected of teachers and students. They influence how teachers go about their daily tasks of lesson preparation, classroom teaching, marking of students' work, disciplining, and overseeing extra curricular

activities with their students. The management of schools also has a large impact on how much teachers are required to adhere to certain policies and to what extent they are held accountable for their actions. As will be illustrated below, the inherent nature of private schools – where families pay school fees and therefore expect to see direct results in their children's education – provides a direct structure of expectations and accountability which keeps teachers and students on task. In contrast, government schools – especially since the implementation of FPE – have a much less direct system of oversight, and therefore, are more prone to having a casual approach to policy guidelines and often do not hold teachers accountable if they are uncommitted and idle in their teaching responsibilities.

In the following sections I will provide an example from my field notes of a rather typical day in two Standard 4 classrooms, one at a private school, the other at a government school. Although I have referred to these days as rather "typical", it is not possible to provide a representative school day for these classes, because every day is different with constantly new and interesting things happening each day. I have called them typical because through my four months of experience and observations at these two particular schools the days which will be portrayed did not contain any extraordinary or overly unusual events. After presenting an illustration of each day, I will provide a short discussion.

School day at Dayspring English Medium (field notes, April 19, 2007)

7:45 – **Assembly:** Students from all grades line up in rows according to class outside in the open area between classrooms. A teacher from Standard 6 welcomes the students, gives a few announcements, and turns the time over to one of her

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students who recites a short speech to the assembled students. The students applaud for the speech. The teacher then leads the students in prayer.

8:00 – After all of the official business is taken care of, the students begin singing songs in unison as the classes file off to their classrooms in an orderly fashion, row by row, with the Standard 1 students leaving first.

8:15 – The Standard 4 students have been waiting outside for their teachers to open their classroom. Some students are waiting patiently while others start playing, a few getting a little rambunctious. The teachers are inside the classroom making last minute preparations for the day. At 8:15 they open the doors and the students rush into their classroom (in a not-so-orderly fashion). There are three Standard 4 classes, but for this school year they all meet together in the large assembly hall because the school is in the process of building a new set of classrooms to replace some outdated classrooms. Therefore, there are three teachers (Mrs. Kutoane, Mr. Pakisa, and Ms. Motaung) in the classroom, with nearly 150 students sitting in rows lined up all the way to the back of the assembly room. Under such an environment it is very easy for the students to get distracted and make a lot of noise. Therefore, the three teachers constantly work as a team. One teacher teaches the lesson, while the other two walk around the room maintaining discipline and helping mark students class work when needed.

8:20 – **English:** The teachers want the students to practice conversations and introducing themselves, so they have me come to the front of the class and introduce myself. After my introduction the teacher asks the students to ask me questions. A number of students ask questions, many of which make them all laugh. The students are

very engaged, but easily become noisy and overexcited. The teachers constantly have to remind the students to keep quiet and behave. The lesson ends after students have asked their questions and I was able to answer a few.

8:43 – **Math:** Ms. Motaung teaches the math lesson, which is about multiplication. She gives a brief introduction of the topic, leads the students in reviewing the times tables (as the students shout out the times tables unison), and then has students do problems for her on the board. After each student solves a problem, the teacher asks the class if it is correct. The class shouts in unison "yes" or "no". After doing this a number of times, the teacher tells the students to get out their notebooks and provides them with 3 problems on the board at 8:55. She tells them they have 3 minutes to finish the problems. As students complete the problems they raise their hands for the teachers to come and mark their work. At 9:16 they finish marking all of the students' work. Ms. Motaung then takes the next ten minutes to have students come up to the board to solve the problems. She walks them through the steps of how to correctly solve the problems. At 9:27 Ms. Motaung wraps up the lesson by telling the students that they will continue tomorrow with story problems.

9:30 – **English:** Mr. Pakisi teaches a lesson on the English vocabulary words used to describe different sounds made by animals. He begins by asking students what sounds various animals make. The students respond in complete English sentences and are very involved. They often laugh when students provide their answers. The other two teachers work hard to maintain order in the classroom. Mr. Pakisi writes a list of animals on the board and then has the students help him

write down the noises they make. Throughout the class the students are very engaged and excited because they are allowed to make animal noises and participate actively. At 9:52 Mr. Pakisi tells the students, "Okay, you take out your English notes and write them down," referring to the notes on the board. At 10:03 he says, "Okay, 2 minutes now." At 10:06 he ends the lesson by saying, "Now we are going to another subject. Let's close our exercise books."

10:07 – **Agriculture:** Mr. Pakisi also teaches this lesson, which is on "piggery" and the different products that we get from pigs. He begins the class by asking, "Who can remind us what we talked about last time?" One student stands and answers in a complete sentence, "Piggery is keeping or rearing of pigs for a certain purpose." The teacher goes back and forth with the students asking questions about why we raise pigs, what we use them for, what products we get from them, etc. As the students answer these questions, Mr. Pakisi writes their answers on the board. At 10:25 he says, "So you take out your agriculture notes," and the students copy the notes from the board.

10:30 – **Break Time:** Students break for lunch. They go get their lunches from their bags and disperse, some stay inside the classroom while most go outside to eat and play. The break is for 30 minutes only.

11:00 – As students file back into the classroom the teacher tells them to finish copying their agriculture notes from the board.

11:20 – **Sesotho:** Mrs. Kutoane teaches the lesson on "leetsi" (verbs in Sesotho). She begins by asking "Leetsi ke eng? (What is a verb?)" The students answer in complete Sesotho sentences, basically saying that verbs indicate action. Mrs.

Kutoane asks the students to provide different sentences and to indicate where the verb is in each sentence. Students provide elaborate sentences. When the students are correct the teacher says, "O nepile! Makofi! (You are correct! Clap your hands!)" The class claps their hands in unison. At 11:50 the teacher writes two sentences on the board for the students to copy down and identify the different parts of the sentence. Many of the students don't completely understand the assignment, so Mr. Pakisi explains in further detail what is expected from them. Teachers go around classroom marking the students' work. This takes a rather long time as the students finish the lesson at 12:30. The teachers take a short break but do not dismiss the students from the classroom. So the students stay in their desks and chat and play with their neighbors.

12:46 – **Science:** Ms. Motaung teaches the lesson on air. The teacher had previously arranged for one of the top students in the class to present a short lecture on air and what it is composed of. The student stands in front of the class, composed and confident, and gives her presentation. Ms. Motaung periodically steps in to help the student with key words and concepts. After the presentation the students clap. Ms. Motaung summarizes the student's presentation and writes on the board the words for the different gases that make up air. She then calls on another student to give a similar presentation on the properties of air. The students copy down the notes from the board.

12:59 – **Home Economics:** Mrs. Kutoane teaches the lesson on washing clothing. She begins the lesson by asking the question, "Why do we need to wash our clothes?" The students provide a number of different answers. She then states, "I want to

discuss the proper way to wash your clothes." Throughout the rest of the lesson Mrs. Kutoane has the students help describe to her the different steps they should take to wash their clothes. She asks questions like, "What should be done first? What type of soap should we use? What is the reason we use Stay Soft (a fabric softener)?" etc. By the end of the lesson many students begin to get wrestless and rowdy. It is becoming much more difficult for the teachers to keep order in the classroom. At 1:17 Mrs. Kutoane says, "Now I want to ask you questions." She asks review questions, which many of the students are no longer paying attention to. At 1:22 the teacher says she will give them some homework, but the students complain, claiming they already have too much homework. So, the teacher decides not to give them homework and says she will let them finish a few minutes early.

1:23 – **Prayer and Finish Day:** Students recite a prayer in unison and are dismissed from class. School ends at 1:30, so the students are excited to get out a few minutes early.

In the example above, the teachers keep on task throughout most of the day. They started the day about 15 minutes later than they were supposed to, but this was quite common in their class. The teachers often met with each other for 5-10 minutes to coordinate their plans for the day and make last minute lesson preparations. It usually took this long for the students to get settled and organized because there were so many of them in the assembly hall. Other than that, most everything stays on schedule. Most lessons last between 25-45 minutes, whit the exception of the Sesotho lesson which went for 70 minutes and the science lesson which was only 13 minutes long. This was the

common practice, to keep lessons close to 30-40 minutes long. At the end of the day the students' interest and attention waned off, and it became much more difficult for the teachers to keep order in the classroom and the students on task. But overall, the teachers and students were quite engaged and on task. There were a few periods where students were supposed to be doing course work on their own while the teachers marked their work. Typically in this Standard 4 class the students spent less than ¼ of the time doing course work. Most of the time was engaged with the teachers asking them questions and having students solve problems in front of the class.

School day at Morena Primary School (field notes, April 23, 2007)

7:45 – **Assembly:** Students line up in rows according to grade and class and wait quietly for teachers to start the assembly. Soon after 7:45 a teacher from Standard 2 opens the assembly by welcoming the students. She gives a few announcements, leads the students in prayer, and then dismisses the students. The students begin singing in unison as the rows file out, beginning with Standard 1, in an orderly fashion.

8:00 – **Classes begin:** At this time the classes are supposed to begin their lessons for the day, but the principal of the school has not arrived yet. Most of the classrooms are locked, so the students and teachers cannot get in. The keys for the classrooms are in the principal's office, to which she is the only one who has a key. A few classrooms, such as the Standard 4 class I am observing today, do not need a key to be opened, so I enter the class with Ms. Kolisang's students to begin class according to schedule. In the meantime, most of the other teachers stand outside and chat with each other. None of them seem to be too bothered by not being able

to get into their classrooms. Their students go ahead and begin playing on the school grounds.

8:10 – **Social Studies:** Some of Ms. Kolisang's students are busy fetching water for the teacher while others sweep the floors, clean the chalkboard, and make preparations for the day. At around 8:10 Ms. Kolisang begins her lesson on different occupations and employment. She lectures the class for a while on the different types of occupations that are prevalent in Lesotho. She does most of this in English while writing notes on the board in English about the things she has said. There is very little interaction with the students, other than when the teacher periodically asks, "Ha ke re?" (Okay?) and "Le ultoana?" (Do you understand?) to make sure students are following along. At 8:25 she has the students copy down the notes from the board.

8:39 – **Sesotho:** The lesson is on Pitsetso (Punctuation). Ms. Kolisang begins the lesson by reviewing their previous lesson on basic punctuation in sentences. She then writes some guidelines on the board for students to follow as they are supposed to do dictation with proper punctuation. Ms. Kolisang then reads a series of sentences, one by one, for the students to dictate. She repeats each sentence three times. At 8:46 she has the students turn their workbooks in to her and then goes to the board to write down each sentence. As she writes the sentences on the board students either cheer to themselves or squirm in disappointment when they see how each sentence is written. Ms. Kolisang then goes through each sentence in detail to show where capital letters, spaces, periods, etc. should be properly placed. She then goes to her desk to mark the students' workbooks. She does this

one by one, out loud, so that all students know how each student did on the assignment. The students tease each other as they get answers wrong and congratulate themselves when they are correct. At 9:09 the teacher finishes marking each of the students' workbooks and returns them to the students for revisions. At 9:16 the Sesotho lesson ends. I look outside and notice that the principal has still not arrived.

9:19 – **Math:** The lesson is on division of whole numbers. Ms. Kolisang tells the students, in English, to get out their math textbooks. The students distribute the books, but it takes a long time because many of the books do not have all of the pages in them. Therefore the teacher has to help them sort out which books are good and makes the students share with each other. At 9:24 she starts the lesson by writing a division problem on the board and says, "Joale ke mohlala. (Now here is an example.)" She then walks the students through the steps for solving the problem. Ms. Kolisang uses English most of the time, but periodically asks the students in Sesotho if they are following along and if they understand. She then turns to the book and has the students answer each question. Many students have a difficult time dividing 2 into 36 because they don't understand how to divide 2 into 3. So the teacher draws three lines on the board and circles two of them, explaining that one is left over. She repeats each problem three times to make sure all students understand, sticking largely to using English. At 9:40 she gives the students an assignment by saying, "Write 'class 4… Maths… Division'. You work out the following: page 22, number 1, a,b,c." She repeats herself and then lets the students work on the problems. At 9:49 she goes over the problems with

the class, in English. Most of the students got the problems wrong, so she switches to using Sesotho and goes to individual students to help them out while the others keep working on the problems. At 9:52 Ms. Kolisang gives another problem on the board. Students are still having trouble answering the problems, so the teacher says in exasperation, "Helang Batho! (Oh you people!)", and starts the lesson over from the beginning. This time she has a student come to the board to go through each step of division. When the student gets stuck she has another student come up to help out. At 10:14, after six students are unsuccessful in solving the problem she has them all sit down at their desks. She then starts the problem all over again. This time she switches completely to using Sesotho and draws a chart on the board which shows the steps they are to take when dividing. At 10:20 she then shows the students how to follow these steps by solving a specific division problem, 72 divided by 6. All of this is done in Sesotho. When she feels the students have understood she has them do the problems again in their workbook. She tells them, in English, that when they are done they should bring their workbook to her desk and then they can go for a toilet break.

10:35 – **English:** The lesson is on a poem titled "Mice". Ms. Kolisang begins the class by saying, "Now you take out your Junior English." While the students take out their English textbooks the teacher writes a few new vocabulary words on the board to prime the students for the poem they are about to read. For each word Ms. Kolisang has her students repeat it out loud three times. She then asks the students, in English, "What is mice in Sesotho?" The students answer in unison. The teacher then reads the poem, line by line, having the students repeat after her.

She does this five times. She then goes around asking students questions related to the poem, but more individualized in nature, such as, "Mpho, do you like mice?", "Class do you like snakes?", "Why do you not like snakes?", etc. The students usually answer with one word, but they answer appropriately and are very engaged. They laugh at certain answers and nearly every student raises his or her hand, wanting to be called on next. They seem to really be enjoying the lesson. Ms. Kolisang then returns to the poem and asks specific questions for comprehension. She tries to make the students answer in complete sentences to practice speaking. The students struggle but are willing to try. At 11:16 Ms. Kolisang tells the students to take out their exercise books and has the students answer the comprehension questions in the book. She tells them in English, "Don't answer the questions in short. And don't just answer, 'Yes, I do'." When the students are finished they go to Ms. Kolisang's desk to have their work marked on the spot. At 11:40 they are all finished being marked, so the teacher goes to the board to show how to answer each question. At 11:46 she says, "Now you close your books. It's lunchtime now."

11:46 – **Lunch Break:** The students go get their bowls out of their bag and go outside to get their free lunch for the day. They line up as the two lunch ladies fill their bowls. One of the students goes first to get food for Ms. Kolisang, who is also entitled to a free lunch. I cannot remember what they ate on that day, but there was a certain type of food provided on each specific day of the week so that students would get some variety throughout the week and have a balanced diet.

After getting their food the students return to the classroom to eat. When they are finished they are allowed to go outside and play on the school grounds.

1:22 – Ms. Kolisang returns to the class. Normally lunch is supposed to end at 12:30, but today it lasted more than an hour longer. Ms. Kolisang said the reason why she came back so late was because she was busy meeting with the principal and a few other teachers. They were busy making arrangements for one of the Standard 7 students who had won the national primary competition for the 100 meter dash and had been invited to go to Botswana for a regional competition. The student did not have the means herself to go, so the school was trying to collect enough money from the teaching staff, parents, and community in order to fund the girl and one teacher chaperone to accompany her to Botswana. The school had been preparing for this event for a couple of weeks. It was a great honor for the school to have one of their students represented at such a prestigious event. This was not the first time that teachers had been taken away from their classroom teaching to make preparations for the girl. In fact, when they first got news about the event, the whole teaching staff met for a couple of hours during school time, while their students were free to play outside.

1:26 – **Agriculture:** When Ms. Kolisang eventually came back to class she began a lesson on poultry. She has the students get out their agriculture textbooks and begins the class by asking the question, "What is poultry?" Only one student raises his hand. He tries to answer by reading the answer directly from the book. The teacher writes that definition on the board. She then asks, "What are birds?" One student answers in Sesotho, but Ms. Kolisang asks them to answer in

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English. One student answers, "Birds are animals that have feathers." The teacher then asks what feathers are in Sesotho. She then asks for the students to give her examples of birds. The students are able to do this in English. She then asks what we use poultry for and the students answer with a list of different products from poultry, which she writes on the board. She then asks what some of the products are used for, in English, and none of the students can answer. She has a short discussion in English about each poultry product and then ends the lesson.

1:45 – **Finish the day:** After she is finished teaching about poultry, Ms. Kolisang says, "It's time up." The students excitedly gather their items and put them in their bags and rush out the door.

This example helps to highlight some of the differences that were prevalent in my observations of the practices at the two different types of schools. At the private school the teachers largely stayed on task and on schedule throughout the day. In the government school there were a number of distractions which got in the way of the regular schedule of teaching. One example of this is in the punctuality of the principal and teachers. In the example provided above, most of the other teachers were not able to start their classes for a couple of hours because the principal showed up late and had the only key to the office, which held the keys to the other classrooms. In my experience at the particular government school I worked with, this was not an unusual occurrence for the principal or other teachers to show up late to school. Usually when this happened no one was reprimanded or punished. I rarely even saw teachers complain when the principal showed up late. They seemed to treat it as a regular occurrence and did not seem to mind having to wait to start teaching for that day. Granted, these are my own

impressions of the situations, so I cannot conclude whether the teachers felt this way or not. I can only report my interpretations of what I observed. At the private schools I observed the principals confront their teachers a number of times for not showing up on time or not keeping on schedule with their teaching.

In addition, it was quite common for teachers at the government school to leave their classroom during normal teaching hours for school business or other matters. An example of this is provided above, when Ms. Kolisang does not return from lunch until an hour later than lunch was scheduled to end. In my observations it appeared that nearly all school related business at the government school was taken care of during the regular hours of school while subjects were scheduled to be taught. Staff meetings, planning sessions, school related errands, and even soccer and choir practices for the students took place during the time that was officially allotted for classroom teaching. Sometimes the teachers would provide their students with things to work on while they were gone, but most of the time they left their students with nothing to do but play.

One last point about this example is the length of lessons at the government school. On the classroom timetables posted on each classroom wall, the school day was supposed to be divided up into roughly nine 30 minute lesson segments. The timetables even had specific subjects listed for each 30 minute slot on each day, in order to follow the guidelines in the national curriculum. Some subjects were listed over two time slots, intended to last no longer than an hour. At the private school the teachers largely followed their timetables, with exceptions here or there, when one class went over time a little, or when unexpected events created a need for adjustments. But overall the teachers followed their timetables. At the government school the teachers rarely followed their

timetables, and when they tried to they often taught lessons for much longer than scheduled. Part of the reason for this was because it often took twice as long to teach the lessons because the teachers had to repeat the lesson over again in Sesotho when the students didn't understand in English the first time. On top of this, the students spent a lot of time copying notes from the board and working on course work in class. As compared to the private school where I estimated that 25% of classroom time was spent by students doing course work and copying notes from the board, at least 50%-60% of the time was spent doing this type of work, or waiting for the teacher to mark their work at the government school. In a similar study, Schweitzer (2007) made observations in government school classrooms while working as a Peace Corps volunteer with primary schools in Lesotho. In her thesis she states that many teachers were absent from their classrooms for long periods of time during the day and the students were often left to their own devices while the teacher was absent. She concludes that one of the major problems with the government schools she observed was that teachers spent very little time teaching and were not held accountable for their time at work.

Importance of effective leadership at the schools

These are only a few examples of the differences between the ways private and public schools operated. One of the explanations for this is that private schools have an organizational structure which offers direct oversight and accountability for teachers. Private schools are usually led by dynamic and energetic principals who demand the best from their teachers. They are also under constant pressure from parents who are paying good money for their children to receive an excellent education. Therefore, if parents hear about or sense that their children's teachers are not teaching well and are wasting

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their students' time, then the principal is sure to hear about it from the parents. The private schools depend upon the school fees from students' families, so they are very sensitive to the needs and concerns of parents.

In an interview with one Standard 7 private school teacher (September 25, 2007), who had previously taught at government schools and was even a former principal of a government school for a few years, I was told about some of the differences from her point of view between government and private schools through her own experiences. I will provide a few lengthy excerpts from her interview to illustrate the different experiences she had while working at the two different types of schools:

> I worked [at my first government school] for one year, the principal was so, so, so, so troublesome that I could not stand him, anyway. Actually, what was happening at that time, people who were principals were those people who had been there for quite a long time, those old men and ladies who had been there who believed that the school was theirs. So whoever was coming with any new ideas was regarded to be trying to overthrow them. And then he was behaving like that. So I had to leave the school. I had to go away from that place. I went to one of the schools around [the area] and then I worked there for two years.

At one point in her career she became the principal of a rural school for three years, but then she was recruited by Dayspring English Medium. When I asked her what it was like when she started teaching at the private school she said:

> My dear, Dayspring is so much challenging. When I first came here it was as if I never knew how to teach. I had never been here to Dayspring. You get to learn a lot when you get to Dayspring. Because when you look at the way we work here

at Dayspring you find that we really stick to principles, we stick to rules, we do our best, we work so hard. Compare it to the government schools where we were, we were just doing what, my dear? Just to get salaries. When you get out there, you will find out that some people really do work there just to get salaries. Actually, it is not challenging at all. You do not learn a thing. You do not learn a thing. But at my school, where I was a principal, I think I brought a lot of change, but I don't think that was enough. If I happen to get there now I can do wonderful work.

When I asked her what she thought made the difference between her current private school and the government schools she previously worked at, she responded:

I think it comes from the leadership. Because I always tell the principal that I have learned a lot from him. I have been watching him. I have been looking at all the steps that he takes and then compare them to what I was…then I see that, oh yes, I was weak here and there. Now if I happen to be there I can add this to what I already had. And then I can do something wonderful. So I have learnt that. I have only learnt that when I got here to Dayspring.

Later she stated:

Dayspring is doing wonderful work, just because of the leadership. The head teacher is good at pushing people to do work. Because I want to tell you there are some people here who are very lazy to do work, but with that old man behind them they do it. They do it. And, he makes people to be, to want to do more.

According to this teacher's experience and perspective, she feels that the major key to successful schools is in the leadership that comes from the principal. Another

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teacher from a different private school, who had spent more than 35 years teaching at church-run government schools, including being a deputy principal at the school for a number of years, gave similar sentiments about the importance of strong leadership at schools. In my interview with her (September 14, 2007), I asked her why she thinks some government schools do much better than others, even though they theoretically have the same resources available. She said that if you look at the government schools which get good results on the PSLE, they always have a good, dynamic principal. This bore out in her own experience teaching at government schools. She actually left the government school to teach at a private school because the new principal was no longer providing good leadership, so she wanted to teach at a school that was performing well.

Many of the teachers I interviewed expressed the great difference in what is expected from them at private versus public schools. One first year teacher said that incoming teachers are also aware of these differences, which weighs heavily into their decisions of where they end up applying to teach, at either a government or private school. He stated:

> In fact, most of my friends did not want to teach at English Medium schools because they said there is too much work to teach in English Medium schools because the principal will be too much after you, and the parents will be making some follow ups so that they are doing the proper things. And they said there at the public schools they are just going to enjoy themselves. There's not too much pressure which is exerted on them. So, many of them wanted to teach at these public schools. (interview, September 6, 2007)

The responses from these different teachers help to illustrate some of the major differences in the ways that private school operate and are organized in contrast to government schools. Due to the fact that private schools are led dynamic principals who work closely with parents and are necessarily concerned about their needs and satisfaction, the teachers are driven by the principal to work hard and constantly stay on task. In contrast, at the government schools there is less direct pressure from parents, especially now that students do not pay school fees. Therefore, without the presence of a demanding principal who motivates and pushes teachers to work hard, there is little oversight and accountability in place at government schools to ensure that students are provided with a quality education.

The CEO of primary education discussed his concerns about this dilemma with me and explained what the MOET has done to try to address the issue of oversight and accountability. In his interview (July 19, 2007) he stated, "What we thought we could do, and we have invested a lot of money into this, was to empower the school committees, because the law gives them the powers to be able to take steps against teachers, for example."

He continued to explain:

So, what I'm saying to you is that we were hoping that by giving the power to the local committee, which has been by and large elected by popular vote of parents and a few nominees by the proprietor, then we would give them the tools and the skills on how to supervise teachers, how to work with the schools, to improve the school, and so on and so forth. What we know is that that's not quite happening. Especially because as the law is now, all the state can do now is advise while it is

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spending all the resources. So what we know is that, when the whole community

empowerment through school committees is important and should be sustained,

there has got to be a more authoritative power that comes from the state. Whether

or not everybody is going to like that is another question. But that's the way we

are going. But the way we organize is by changing the law and that is what we are

doing.

Therefore, according to the CEO of primary education, one of the major

problems with the lack of oversight and accountability at government schools is that the

government has limited power, under current laws, to discipline or terminate low

performing teachers and principals. If the local school committee does not decide to

discipline or terminate teachers, then the government has its hands tied, even if it knows

that certain teachers are not even showing up at school. It is only the local school

committee that can make those decisions. And, according to the CEO of primary

education, many of the local school boards are dominated by the interests of the teachers

and proprietors of the school, and therefore little is ever done to ensure the quality of

education at these schools. To him, he feels the laws need to be changed in order for real

oversight to be possible. He said they are working on changing those laws.

An additional factor that has contributed to the lack of oversight and

accountability at government schools has to do with the fact that the number of schools

(increased by 12% since 2000) and student enrollments (increased by nearly 60% since

2000, according to the CEO of primary education) has increased tremendously since the

implementation of FPE in 2000, while the number of supervisors, such as district officers,

has stayed relatively the same. Along with this, the duties – especially with a greater

amount of paperwork – of these supervisors has increased greatly. As he stated, "So we have got so many more people to supervise, but the number of people who supervise them is exactly the same, if not less than it was, you know, seven, eight years ago." As a result, many schools do not see a ministry official for years. At the government school I worked with they could not remember the last dime a district officer had come to visit. With such a lack of supervision at both the institutional and community levels, there is no wonder why many government primary schools do not provide the same quality of education as private schools.

As for the language and teaching practices at the private schools, they were very rigid and consistent at sticking to teaching in English only. They required students to speak in English in their classrooms at all times and tried to enforce the same on the playgrounds. When students were caught speaking Sesotho to their peers they were reprimanded and often punished. Teachers demanded that students speak in complete sentences with correct grammar and would rarely let them get away with short, broken answers. In non-teaching correspondence with students (e.g, to run errands, send a message, or clean the classroom), teachers nearly always spoke to the students in English. Teachers kept their students on task and rarely wasted time. If they were seen to be getting behind in their teaching or not using their time wisely they were sure to hear about if from their principal. But the teachers also had a very collegial relationship. They often turned to each other for help or advice with their teaching. At a few of the private schools, teachers were periodically assigned to observe and assess the teaching of their peers in other grades. Each private school held teacher's meetings on a regular basis to provide training, encouragement, and feedback from each other.

Along these lines, the government school I observed worked very different from the private schools. As has been illustrated in previous examples, the teachers tried to adhere to teaching in English but often had to switch to using Sesotho in order for their students to understand the lesson content. The principal told me that they gave up trying to enforce English-only on the playgrounds long ago because it was such a futile effort. By and large, the teachers had a good relationship with each other and usually helped each other within each grade level, but they did not have organized systems of professional support like the private schools. I cannot claim that the school was representative of all government schools, but many different accounts have confirmed to me that it is quite "typical" behavior for a government school. The PSLE results the school received were just above average for government schools, suggesting that it was not an exceptionally good or bad quality school.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to illustrate how various ideologies from different levels intersect and collide at the site of schools. These ideologies often compete with each other and can at times be contradictory or counterproductive. At other times they complement or combine with other ideologies to have an increased influence on schools. At the primary schools in this study there were a number of different ideologies at play. These included conflicts over teaching for English proficiency versus teaching for content knowledge, various perceived purposes of education, and the differences in organizational and operating structures at private versus public schools. Investigating how these different ideologies work in combination and/or competition with each other at

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schools helps to explain the diverse ways in which different stakeholders at both private and government schools approach language and teaching practices in their classrooms.

Using a policy as practice approach to understand the competing ideologies at play in school practices helps to show that there are a number of challenges which teachers at government schools must deal with which make it much more difficult to teach effectively and use English for instruction than at private schools. On the other hand, at the private schools there are a number of things which contribute to an environment where students can effectively learn in English. Schools are not just sites where teaching and learning takes place. There are many different contextual realities which have an influence of what goes on at schools. In this chapter I have tried to illustrate the great differences in the competing ideologies that government schools have to deal with in comparison to private schools by illustrating how they are manifest in practice. If we can come to a better understanding of the many different influences which impact language and education practices on the ground, then we can have a better understanding of the role that policy decisions play in those practices.

As has been discussed in this chapter, private schools are able to focus much more directly on issues of teaching and learning because they have less distractions and ideological conflicts in play. The ultimate purposes of private schools are largely in line with the national education policies and mandates. They are also in line with the goals and expectations of the families who send their children to these schools. In fact, parents are willing to pay for their children to go to these schools because they expect the school to meet their goals. In addition, students who attend private schools come from family backgrounds which provide them with the necessary cultural and linguistic capital to

succeed at school. All of these factors make it easier for teachers to focus primarily on teaching and preparing their students to succeed.

At the government school, on the other hand, there are many more ideologies and realities which compete and conflict with each other which are in contrast to the overriding national goals and interests, as manifested through its education policies. The students come from a greater diversity of backgrounds and often do not possess the type of cultural and linguistic capital which will help them succeed at school. There is a much greater diversity in the needs and expectations of various stakeholders at play in government schools compared to private schools. Not only are the schools expected to teach their students effectively, but they are expected to take care of their well-being. They are provided with many of the same goals as private schools, but they have much less oversight and support to accomplish these goals. Since the families of government school students do not pay school fees, it could be argued that they have less invested in their children's education, which in turn, puts less pressure on the schools to perform. In comparison to private schools where most of the goals and expectations are aligned, government schools have many more issues which are in conflict with each other and must be juggled and balanced by their teachers and administrators. As a result, it becomes much more difficult for government schools to provide the same quality of education that private schools provide.

With regards to language policy issues, understanding that there are many competing ideologies influencing government schools, which makes it more difficult for schools to teach students well, helps to put the issue of language policy into perspective. Many of the proponents of mother-tongue instruction claim that by changing the

language policy to one which uses a local language it will help to reduce some of these issues which prevent schools from teaching their students well. Even though using a local language for instruction may help students understand their lessons better, it will not compensate for the students' lack of cultural or linguistic capital in their homes. It will not overcome many of the students' needs as a result of their impoverished and challenging lives. Changing the language of instruction at schools will not change the organizational structures of these schools and will not provide them with better leadership, oversight, and accountability. It also will not change the importance of high stakes exams, like the PSLE, in providing credentials to students. The main point of this chapter is to show that language policy issues are only one of many different factors which impact the quality of education that schools are able to provide. By putting this into perspective we can better understand the role that changes in language and education policies can potentially make towards improving education in general, and we can avoid placing too much importance or credence to one aspect of education alone, such as policy decisions and mandates.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Language and education policy research often begins with the actual policies themselves as the unit of analysis. In this study I have used a policy as practice approach which analyzes language and education policies from the ground up by first looking at how local stakeholders appropriate policies in practice and analyzing what factors, of which policy is only one of many, contribute to local stakeholders' attitudes, perceptions, and practices towards language and education. As many policy researchers have come to increasingly acknowledge, there has traditionally been a lack of attention to the local dynamics which play into how policies become appropriated and applied in actual practice. Much of the research on language and education policy, especially in Africa, has focused on the global and national level dynamics which play into the formulation of language in education policies. Although those types of studies are helpful in understanding how national and international policies are formed, they do little to explain the local level factors which influence how policies are put into practice on the ground. Therefore, this study has attempted to provide such research which illustrates a more complex analysis of the many factors which influence how local stakeholders respond to the language and education needs in their own lives, schools, and communities.

In this concluding chapter I would like to discuss about a few main points that we can learn from a study like this. These are: (1) by looking at the lived realities of local stakeholders, and the sources of capital from which they can draw, we can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics between structure and agency and how they play out in the educational practices of students, parents, and teachers; (2) in order to understand

how policies become appropriated in particular ways on the ground we must look at the complex mix of ideological influences, simultaneously at the global, national, and local levels, which weigh into the attitudes, perceptions, and decisions of local stakeholders; and (3) with a better understanding of the actual language and educational practices of local stakeholders, along with an understanding of the local factors which influence how local stakeholders appropriate policies in their practices, we can better appreciate the role that policies themselves play in influencing local practices. With such an understanding we can hopefully gain a more realistic perspective of the impact and importance of policies and be more mindful of local realities in the formulation and implementation of language and education policies in the future.

The Structure-Agency Dynamic in the Lives of Local Stakeholders

A large portion of this dissertation has focused on portraying the lived realities of students and their families through the analytical lenses of Bourdieu's theory of capital and a theory of agency which places acts of agency within the social constraints placed upon groups and individuals. In order to understand how and why actors make the decisions they do in actual practice, it is important to investigate the dynamics between structure, as seen through people's available sources of capital, and agency, as seen through their actions and decisions. Neither structure nor agency operates in isolation from each other. The social, economic, and cultural structures within which individuals live play a strong role in the possible choices and opportunities available to them. In turn, the individuals utilize their agency to make decisions for their own lives, based upon the

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structural realities of their lives. These acts of agency are not determined by the structural

constraints placed upon individuals, but they are strongly influenced by them.

I have tried to portray these dynamics through the stories of the students and

families who participated in this study by showing how the lived realities of limited

sources of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital act as barriers which limit the

number and variety of choices realistically available to students and their families with

regards to educational decisions and actions. Those families who had very little economic

capital had their hands largely tied as to where they could send their children to school.

No matter how much they would have liked to utilize their agency to send their children

to better schools, they literally were unable to make those choices. Therefore, their

agency was not unlimited and largely determined by their circumstances. On the other

hand, within the structural constraints placed upon their lives, these families were able to

utilize their agency by making a range of different types of decisions, even though they

came from similar economic backgrounds and had similar forms of economic capital.

One key aspect to this dynamic is that there are a number of different forms of

capital operating simultaneously in the lives of the students' families which work

together in a unique way for each individual. For example, a family which has very little

economic capital may have a richer source of cultural and/or social capital than another

family which possesses a similar amount of economic capital. Therefore, the range of

choices available to each individual family is similarly different and unique. Thus, there

is both a difference (even if only a minor difference) in the structural constraints placed

upon each family as well as a difference in the available choices and opportunities

presented to them. In this way each individual family makes their own acts of agency

within their own unique structural milieu. Understanding what sources of capital and other lived realities contribute to each unique mixture of structural constraints can help to better understand how local stakeholders make the decisions they do and why they possess their particular attitudes and perspectives towards language and education. Having said this, it still does not determine how individual actors will utilize their agency in actual practice. Often individuals with seemingly similar social constraints often make very different decisions in their own lives from their peers, which can best be explained as acts of agency.

Another important aspect of the structure/agency dynamic is to understand the role that agency plays in providing the potential for change and variation. As can be seen in the lives of the government school and private school families, there was a similarity within each group which helped to distinguish the two types of families from each other, especially with regards to the social constraints and opportunities available to them, while there was also a diversity in the ways they reacted to their constraints and opportunities within each group. As Canagarajah (1999) and Pennycook (2000) have emphasized, these acts of agency are important to investigate because they are the sight at which variation is manifested and where change can occur. This is a very different model of social constraints than that presented by Bourdieu and many of the critical language policy theorists (as discussed in Chapter 2). Rather than social structures being deterministic, they provide the context, with both constraints and opportunities, within which acts of agency may occur. Understanding the realities of these social structures helps to put acts of agency into perspective. Rather than being viewed as free will for actors to choose to whatever they want, it helps to show that their choices are limited by social structures,

but choices, nonetheless, are available with variety. Therefore, although limited in their power to choose how to act, react, or resist their social constraints, as well as policies placed upon them, individuals do have choices and use their agency to navigate their way through their social realities, ultimately trying to reshape their lived realities for their own benefit and future improvements.

The Influence of Ideologies at all Levels on Policy and Practice

Another important contribution this study can make to policy studies and social investigations of language and education is by providing a deeper understanding of how ideologies at all levels, from global, regional, national, and local, combine together in the formation and appropriation of policies in actual practice. In Chapter 6, I discussed how the more global and national level ideologies have a very real impact on both the formulation of language and education policies as well as on the interpretation, reception, and appropriation of those policies on the ground. In Chapter 7, I investigated different ideologies which operate more on the local level to influence how schools and individuals act towards language and education issues in actual practice. An important point I have tried to emphasize in these investigations is the fact that both macro and micro level ideologies act together to influence the attitudes and actions of educational stakeholders.

The shortcomings of many critical language policy scholars is that they have focused too strongly on the influence of macro level ideologies in the formulation and perpetuation of LiEPs, especially in developing nations. I have argued (in Chapter 2) that these scholars' conclusions are too deterministic and put too much credence on macro

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level influences. They leave no room for the power of local actors to use their agency to act or react in a variety of ways to these macro level ideologies. Instead they have often been treated as empty vessels who are acted upon and manipulated by greater forces beyond their control. As I illustrated in Chapter 6, these macro level ideologies are indeed real and extremely powerful. They do have a strong influence on the attitudes and perceptions of the general population as well as on policy makers and government officials, but they do not fully determine how they will accept or reject these ideologies in their own attitudes and actions. Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of these global ideologies and try to come to an understanding of the extent and degree that they play into people's actions on the ground. But to claim that local stakeholders' attitudes and actions are largely determined by these powerful ideologies leaves little, if any, room for change and does not explain why different communities and constituencies react to similar policies and constraints in very different ways.

That is why it is important to also look at the mixture of local level ideologies which play into the attitudes and actions of local stakeholders. Not only are actors influenced by global ideologies, but they are also influenced by a diverse mixture of local realities and ideological influences. In Chapter 7, I illustrated how the complex mixture of attitudes, expectations, resources, and contextual realities create a different set of approaches to language and education policies and practices at private schools compared to those shown at the government school. This difference is largely due to the different contexts within which each school operates. To a large extent, each school is influenced by the same set of ideologies, but they receive and interpret those ideological influences in different ways. In this way, the mix of structural realities and constraints works in

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combination with the set of ideological influences is appropriated differently at private schools compared to the government school.

Placing the Role of Policies into Perspective

After investigating the economic, social, and cultural realities of local stakeholders' lives while also examining the ideological influences which impact their attitudes and practices, we can better place the impact of language and education policies into proper perspective. Ultimately, this has been one of the main goals of this dissertation. As I argued in Chapter 2, much of the research on language and education policy has put too much credence and focus on the policies themselves without investigating the local dynamics within which policies are put into practice. Educational scholars and practitioners often wonder why there seems to be such a divide between policy and practice. I propose that by looking more closely at the local dynamics and the lived realities of local stakeholders we can gain a better understanding of this divide. If we begin with the policy itself as the unit of analysis, then we are mainly investigating the theories, ideologies, and practicalities behind the policy, often with little regard to the complex dynamics on the ground where the policies are meant to be put into practice. Therefore, by using a policy as practice approach, we can begin with the actual practice on the ground and work backwards to the policy itself. In this way we can come to a better understanding of how and why policies become appropriated in very different, and often unintended, ways by various stakeholders. If we can better understand this appropriation process then we can create policies which are more informed and catered

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towards the local contexts for which they are intended and hopefully reduce the

policy/practice divide.

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Sample of Interview Questions:

Guiding Interview Questions for Teachers:

- Background Questions
    - What is your educational background?
    - Where did you go to school?
    - Why did you go into teaching?
    - How much teacher training have you received?
- Teaching Experience
    - How long have you been teaching?
    - How long at this school?
    - How is this school compared to other schools you have taught at?
    - Why are you teaching at this school now?
- Language of Instruction
    - How do you feel about using English for instruction? Why?
    - How do you feel about using Sesotho for instruction? Why?
    - What is the role of English/Sesotho in school? In society?
    - How well do your students understand things being taught in English?
    - How would you feel if the MOET changed the medium of instruction to Sesotho? Why?
    - What do you think is the best language for students to learn in? Why?
- Free Primary Education
    - How do you feel about the FPE program? Why?
    - Have schools changed much since the implementation of FPE? Why do you think they have or have not changed?
    - How do you feel about private English Medium schools?
    - Why do teachers decide to teach at one type or the other?
- Education in General
    - How do you feel about education in Lesotho in general?
    - What are the biggest problems in education? Biggest successes?
    - What do you wish would be changed in education in Lesotho? Why?
    - How do you feel about the PSLE?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Guiding Interview Questions for Parents:

- Background Questions
    - Where are you from? How long have you lived here?
    - How much education do you have? Where did you go to school?
    - How many children? Are you married? How many live in the home?
    - How much education does each child have? Spouse?
    - Where do you work? How do you feel about your work? Does anyone else in the home work?

- Questions about Child's School
  - Why do/did you send your child to their particular school?
  - How do you feel about the school?
  - How do you feel about your child's teacher? The instruction he/she is receiving?
  - If you have any problems with the school, what can/do you do about it?
  - Do you feel like the school listens do you?
- Language of Instruction
  - How do you feel about English being used for instruction at school?
  - How do you feel about Sesotho being used for instruction at school?
  - What is the role of English/Sesotho in education?
  - How would you feel if the MOET changed the language policy to use Sesotho instead of English?
- Free Primary Education
  - How do you feel about FPE?
  - How have schools changed or stayed the same since the implementation of FPE?
  - How do you feel about private schools?
  - Why do people send their children to one or the other?
- Education in General
  - How do you feel about education in Lesotho?
  - What are the major problems with education in Lesotho? Successes?
  - What is the purpose of education?
- Lesotho in General
  - How do you feel about things in Lesotho?
  - Are there any things you think need to be changed in Lesotho?
  - Are there any things you are especially proud of in Lesotho?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Guiding Interview Questions for Focus Groups with Students

- Do you like school? Why?
- What is your favorite thing at school? Why?
- What do you hate most at school? Why?
- What is your favorite/least favorite subject? Why?
- What is the most difficult/easiest subject? Why?
- What do you want to do in life? What do you want to be when you are older?
- What do you do for fun?
- How much do you read outside of school? Watch TV? Listen to radio? What programs, books, magazines, specifically?
- What do your parents do?
- How do you feel about English? How well do you know English?
- Do you like it when your teacher uses English/Sesotho to teach you? Why?
- Are some subjects easier to learn than others in English? Why?
- How much do you speak English outside of school? When? Where? Why?

- How do you feel about Sesotho?
- How do you feel about kids who go to government schools? Why?

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