

Call for Papers

The role of the African languages in education in southern Africa

Special issue of the *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*
(Volume 30, Number 4, 2012)

Guest-edited by **Vic Webb** and **Michel Lafon**, University of Pretoria

THE ROLE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Educationists, but also the broader public of South Africa, are rightfully concerned about the current state of education in South Africa.

The thoroughly disconcerting state of learners' educational development in SA schools is apparent from a recent newspaper report on findings in Sacmeq 3 (2007). Nic Spaull (U of Stellenbosch) is reported to have pointed out that SA's Grade 6 learners from poor backgrounds were the second to worst readers from 15 southern and eastern African countries.

There are, of course, several reasons for this unacceptable situation, including poor school management, poor learning support material in many schools, overcrowded classrooms and ineffective teaching/poor teachers, made worse by inadequate parent and community support for learners and the absence of a culture of reading in many communities.

One of the reasons for the unsatisfactory educational development of learners, however, is language: firstly, the use of a language for learning and teaching (generally English) in which many learners with an African language (AL) as home-language (HL) do not have the necessary proficiency, and secondly, as a "mirror image", the non-use (or restricted use) of these learners' home languages in which they do have the necessary basic proficiency.

The question of language in education is clearly a matter which requires intensive attention.

The objective with the proposed SALALS edition is to place the spotlight on the importance of African languages in primary education in South Africa and the region, both as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and as a subject of study.

Contributors to the special issue may offer theoretical or empirical studies on any relevant issue in the theme. Topics to be considered include:

- (a) The language political realities of African languages in schools in SA and the region
- (b) Home language teaching practices in the African languages
- (c) Literacy development in African languages
- (d) Skills development in African languages as home language in schools

- (e) Skills assessment in African languages as home language subjects
- (f) Language behaviour in school classrooms
- (g) Code-switching in school classrooms
- (h) The role of urban varieties (including code-mixing) in schools
- (i) LoLT modes in primary schools: dual medium, parallel medium, single medium (in the context of highly complex multilingual classes)
- (j) Teacher training in the didactics of teaching African languages as HLs
- (k) Language-in-education policy development and practice in classrooms
- (l) The role of state or regulatory bodies (e.g. PanSALB, DAC, etc. in SA) in the promotion and development of AL in education

Given the importance of promoting and developing the African languages of our region for the benefit of the region as a whole – economically, politically, socially and culturally, we think it is essential to place the spotlight, at least in the academic domain, fully on the topic: the role of African languages in education.

Articles must be in accordance with the Requirements for Authors. They will be peer reviewed as per SALAS general policy.

Key Dates

1 July 2011	Deadline for submission of abstracts (500 words)
1 September 2011	Notification of acceptance
1 March 2012	Deadline for submission of full papers
1 July 2012	Confirmation of acceptance of papers (and reviewer reports)
1 September 2012	Deadline for submission of final versions of papers
December 2012	Publication date

For all submissions and queries, please contact Vic Webb, and cc Michel Lafon.

Prof. Vic Webb
Vic.webb@up.ac.za

Dr. Michel Lafon
Michel.lafon@up.ac.za