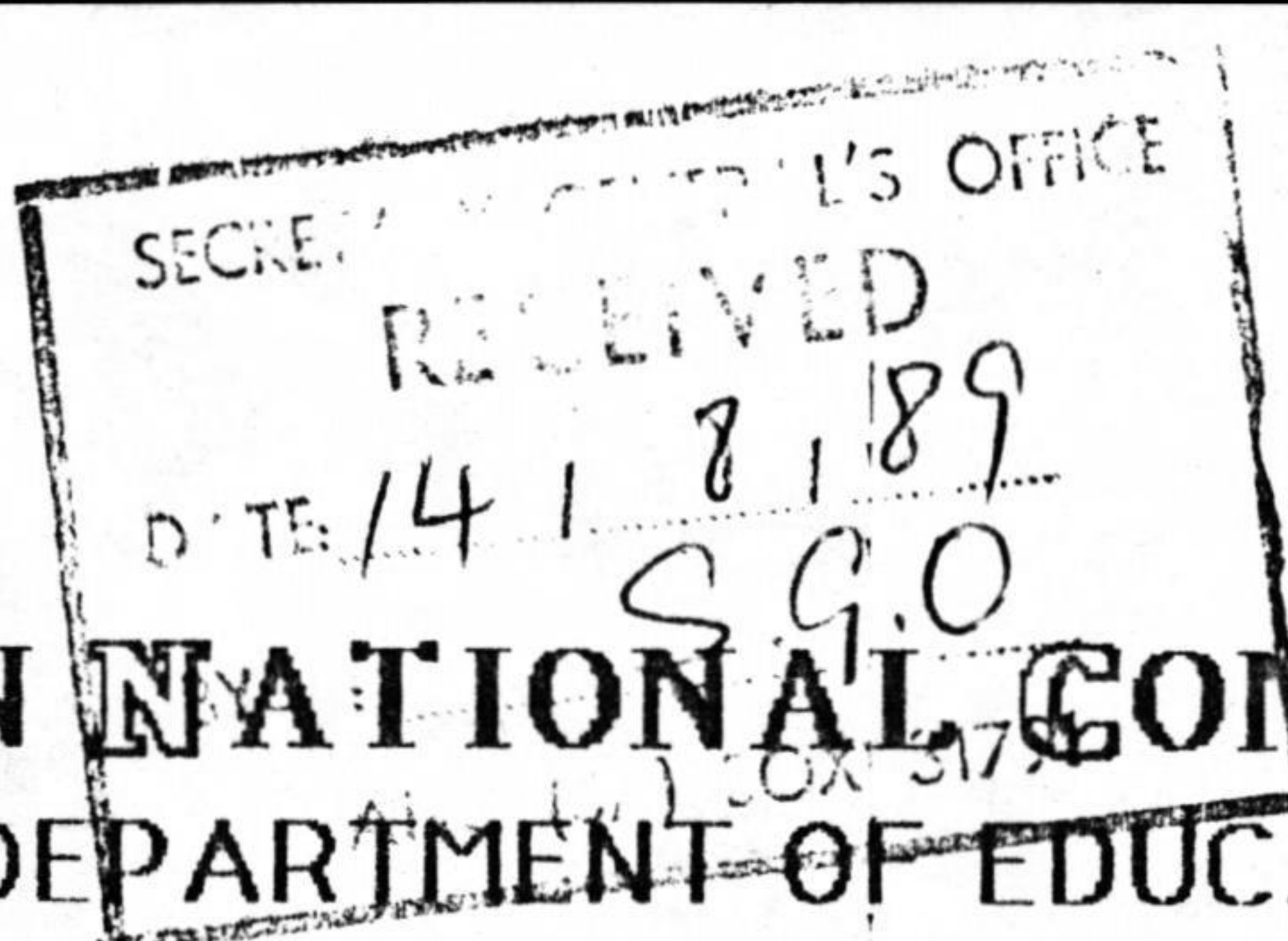


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AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (S.A.)
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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09/08/89

Dear cde Secretary-General,
Report on Language Seminar.

The Department of Education held a Language Seminar in Dar-es-Salaam on the 18-19 July, 1989 with the broad aim of preparing guidelines on a Language Policy in pre and post-Apartheid South Africa.

The seminar was a prelude to a larger seminar to be held in December, 1989 in conjunction with DAC and DCLA.

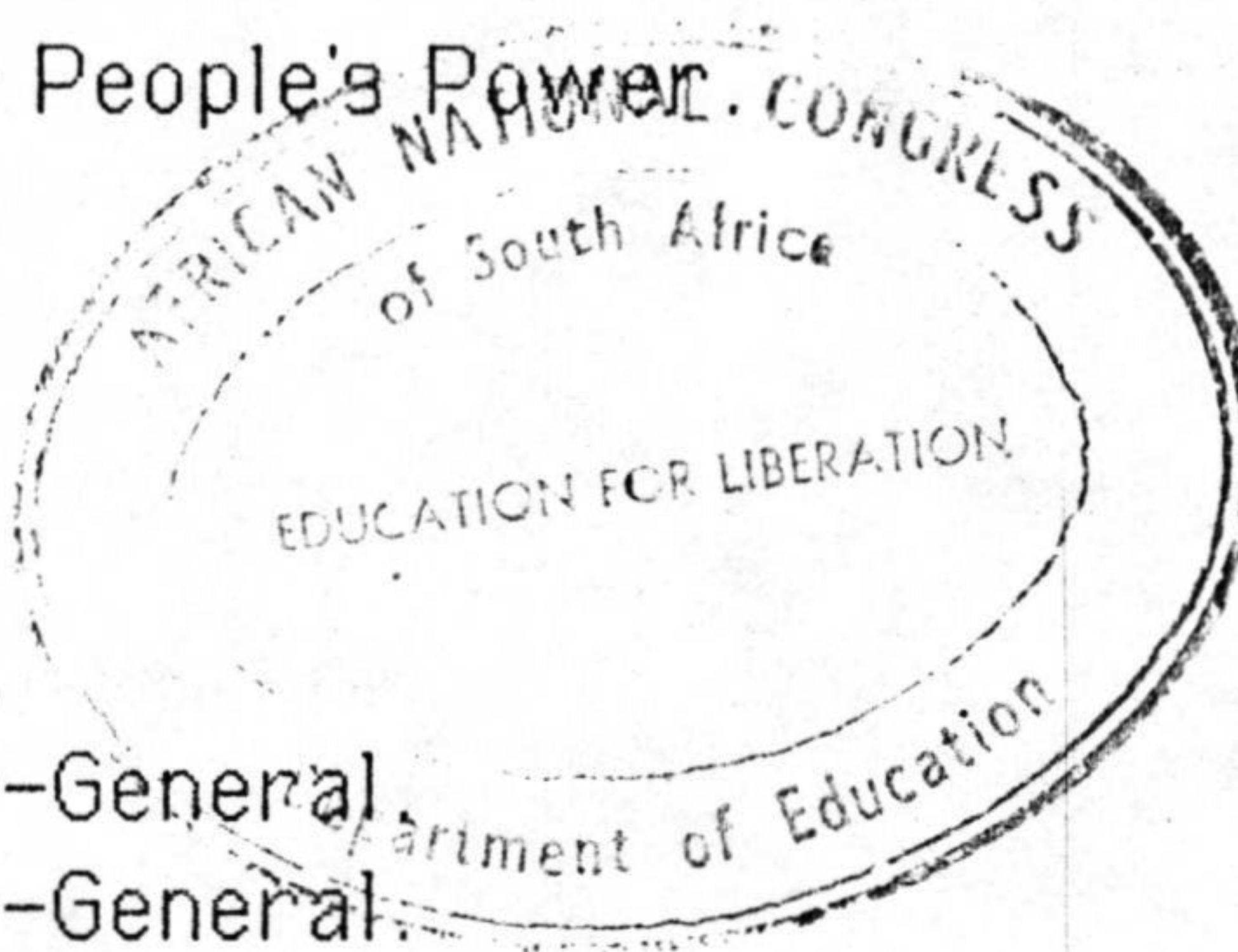
Herewith please find the Report of the Seminar.

Comments and suggestions will be welcomed.

In the Year of Mass Action for People's Power.

S. Choabi
S. Choabi.

Secretary for Education.



- Distribution:
1. The President.
 2. The Secretary-General.
 3. The Treasurer-General.
 4. NEDUC Members.
 5. Members of the Education Secretariat.
 6. Jennifer Dunjwa-Blajberg.
 7. Depts: DAC, DLCA, NWS, NYS, DIP.

SECRET

14/18/89

3.9.0

REPORT ON LANGUAGE WORKSHOP.

Date.

18--19 July 1989.

Venue.

Rungwe Hotel Dar-es-salaam.

Participants.

1. Language specialist: Dr Jennifer Dunjwa-Blajberg

Representatives of Divisions/Depts

2. Day Care Centre
3. Nursery
4. Primary School.
5. Secondary School.
6. Adult Education Centre.
7. DIP.

INTRODUCTION.

The Language seminar held in Tanzania was organised by the Department of Education. This seminar is a prelude to another much larger seminar intended to lay the ground for the formulation of a comprehensive language policy by the ANC leadership. Needless to say language policy formulation will not be an easy issue in a non-racial, democratic society because, as we are all aware, we come from a society characterised by a linguistic and cultural diversity, a society in which state bilingualism has become a reality in the structural ordering of inter-personal relations. As the Racist Regime is confronting a deep and growing socio-economic crisis, from which it cannot extricate itself, it has become imperative for the people of South Africa and the ANC in particular to address the problems related to language usage. . . . It would be the task of a unitary, democratic and non-racial state to redress the historical

injustices perpetrated by the racist regime pertaining in this case to languages and seek an equitable solution to the future status of each of South Africa's languages. The complexity of our situation is further compounded by socio-linguistic issues, such as the ideological interference of the Regime in language development and usage. We are confronted with a scenario in which many languages co-exist, each of which, while serving as a means of communication within a single community, is also intended to serve as a barrier to the social cohesion we seek through a deliberate political manipulation by the Regime, creating functional differentiation based on an imposed cultural identity that ignores the existence of other cultures and the possibility of developing a common culture that binds all South Africans in spite of their cultural differences to the vision of a unitary, democratic and non-racial society. In this situation each individual does not only have his native language through which he relates to his language group, but has also to interact with others of different linguistic groupings, on issues that bind us all politically. The seminar examined such issues quite calmly and even though we did not necessarily come up with solutions, we did discuss such issues in depth. Mazimbu was looked as a case study of the sort of linguistic complexities we expect to find in South Africa. The objective of the seminar namely, that of sharing ideas on these issues, was achieved. The seminar enabled our people to participate actively in the on-going debate aimed at the formulation of a language policy.

DELIBERATIONS. Papers presented and main points arising from the discussions.

1. DAY CARE CENTRE AND NURSERY.

- Language identified as a means of communication. Language as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values.
- Mazimbu, as a case study, is a multi-lingual community, several languages are spoken and there is absence or lack of a common language.
- Importance of the home and school environment in the

development for the child.

-- Mobility of manpower disturbs the child's language development as teachers speak diverse languages - there is no fixed language as a means of communication.

-- Culture and Language are inseparable. Our cultural values could not be easily transmitted as lack of common language acts as a barrier.

-- Mazimbu community speak a diluted language, while at school all children are expected to speak English, this set up has psychological effects on the child.

-- Origin of children- children of "mixed" parentage, and those with neither Zulu nor English background encounter serious problems at school. This leads to a process of slower learning. What was discernible from the discussions of the plenary session was that Mazimbu is a fluctuating community. It is therefore, not possible to have a single or fixed language as a means of communication.

-- Reference to multi-lingual societies, i.e., Switzerland and India as areas of study. We can have an official language, English cited as an example in our case while children continue to speak their home language.

-- Multi-lingual society/community enriches our knowledge/understanding of languages as all languages are borrowed from each other.

-- Psychological shock of change of language environment is not a unique experience for children. Parents and teachers should devise ways and means to lessen this problem for the child.

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- Psychological shock of change of language environment is a not a unique experience for children. Parent and teacher should devise ways and means to lessen this problem for the child.

- Transmission of values not in line with our values- i.e. capitalist or elitist values by use of foreign language.

3. SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Main focus on learning English as a second language. Second language was defined as acquiring the ability to use its structure with a general vocabulary essential conditions of normal communication among people.
- Also able to use, in speaking, the units and patterns of expressions of the second language.
- to understand the units and patterns of content when listening to the second language.
- In short, it means learning the expressions, the content and their association for rapid use correctly within the system of the target language.

Problematic Areas.

- Translation - students up to GCE level translate from mother tongue into English.
- Pronunciation - lack of pronunciation skills.
- Spelling - could be attributed to poor pronunciation
- Doubling of consonants - taped > tapped
sail > sell
- Agreement - ascribed to Afrikaans. In Afrikaans the verb "is" is used for all persons in the present tense. Students fail to see why for the plural should use "are" eg. The boys **is** black.
- The use for Prepositions.
- The unbridgable gap between primary and secondary school. The

children from primary often go to the secondary division almost blank.

*We noted that some of the teachers do not have the command of the English language.

-- A need to investigate the possibilities of integrated teaching to bridge the gap between what is taught in class and what is happening in the community.

-- Marking of essay scripts differs according to who marks it.

-- A need to improve relationship between primary and secondary divisions.

-- Promotion of children to secondary school should be based on academic achievement not by virtue of age.

-- Encourage work visits by secondary division teachers to the primary school to see what is taught..

-- The primary school does not have a syllabus or fixed programme.

4. ADULT EDUCATION

-- Literacy classes are conducted through the medium of English.

-- Adults have an experience of life - keen to learn because they see the purpose and the need.

-- Andragogy as the methodology applied in the teaching of learners.

-- Problem of teaching about the language instead of teaching the language.

- Contrasting English with African Languages, e.g. clicks and fricatives which exist in African languages but not in English e.g. (q:u:u, cele) > (queen, cent).
- Double consonants and doubling of consonants cause spelling mistakes e.g. double ---> success
doubling ---> run - running.
- Words with more than one vowel in the middle cause spelling mistakes, eg. beautiful, continuous.
- the environment influences the language eg. adoption of words like Mphando in English sentences. Wrong usage of words like ambush and demoralise in wrong context, eg. ambush - some more colour - color.

Discussions.

The question of which language was best to use in teaching literacy was discussed and there was a general feeling that under normal circumstances, the mother-tongue is always the best.

- Because of the colonial heritage there is sometimes a negative attitude towards our own languages. There is a need to develop a positive attitude toward our African languages.
- A need to increase vocabulary of the adult learners, i.e, mostly used in their places of work.
- Language laboratories to be developed.
- Language building games to be encouraged e.g. scrabble.

Dr. Jennifer Dunjwa Blajberg - "The Psycho-social Dimensions of Language in South Africa, and Considerations Concerning Post-Apartheid Language Policy."

The paper focussed on the Political sociology of language under apartheid, i.e., African Languages, English, Afrikaans and minority Languages.

- In apartheid S.A., language issues are determined at the politico- economic and socio-cultural levels of domination. This process is a product of European colonisation.
- National Liberation struggle is generating alternative language attitude which shall lead to new language policies determined by the South African people.
- Multi-lingualism will be a cornerstone for such policies.
- Western Education made necessary the command of European languages compulsory to the detriment of the African languages.
- British imperialism imposed English on Africans through education and conversion to Christianity.
- Boer Nationalism imposed Afrikaans.
- State Bilingualism to foster white supremacy while mother tongue instrument became ethnolinguistic fragmentation of the African population.
- African languages are interrelated structurally.
- African languages are developed literarily but limited in their socialisation across ethnic lines.
- In a post- Apartheid society, we should adopt a policy of deliberate language promotion and development of African languages.

- Studies should be undertaken to the varieties and styles of S.A. English and Afrikaans to combat negative content inciting ethnicity, racism, etc.
- Research programmes of African Language to make them applicable to the field of electronics, science and technology.
- All languages to be given equal status.

COMMISSIONS

Commission A:

Mother Tongue Instruction and Common Language

Jennifer Dunjwa- Blajberg:

- Mother tongue instructions for a post- Apartheid society should be seen in an uncostrained light.
1. Widely agreed that every human being first learns to formulate and express his ideas about himself and about the world in which he lives.
 2. Every child is born into a cultural environment of which the language is part and an expression of. Therefore, mother tongue is thus part of the process by which the child absorbs the cultural environment. This language hence plays an important part in the moulding of the child's early concepts.
 3. If a foreign language belongs to a culture very little different from the cultural environment of the child, the difficulties of the child will only be linguistic, but if foreign language is very difficult and different from his own e.g. European language, then the learning difficulties are greatly increased. He comes into contact not only with a new language but with new concepts. Ideas formulated in one language are difficult to express through the modes of another, so a person, habitually faced with this task can lose his facility to express himself. A child faced with a task of having to formulate ideas in an alien language, from an alien

culture, at an early stage when his powers of self-expression even in his mother tongue are incompletely developed, may run the risk of never achieving adequate self-expression.

4. World specialists firmly subscribe to the view that every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue - the hallmark of this doctrine was constituted by the historical UNESCO MEETING OF SPECIALISTS in 1951. (though in South Africa mother tongue instruction was imposed by Bantu Education according to the ideological precepts of Christian National Education).

5. Mother tongue instruction should extend to as late a stage as possible, for only the mother tongue can bridge the gap between school and home and reduce the shock which every small child is subjected to when he begins his schooling.

6. Mother tongue provides understanding between school and home and what the child learns can easily be expressed at home if literate parents are in a position to help in the language learning/acquisition by the child.

OBJECTIONS BASED ON UNSOUND ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION.

- a) The language has no grammar or no alphabet.
- b) The child already knows his mother tongue.
- c) The use of the mother tongue will prevent the acquisition of the second language.
- d) Use of the African language impedes national unity.

PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS IN THE USE OF THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE IN SCHOOL.

- a) Inadequacy of the vocabulary for the needs of the curriculum. In this case a second language will be introduced at an early stage.
- b) Shortage of educational materials.

- c) Multiplicity of languages in a locality.
- d) Multiplicity of language in a country.
- e) The need for reading material.
- f) the shortage of suitably trained teachers.

DISCUSSION.

- i) Mother tongue defined as the language on which a child conceptualises the world. We should also consider the environment and existence of other languages spoken at home. Mother tongue does not mean the language spoken by the parents, i.e. not necessarily the language spoken by the mother.
- ii) Language as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values.
- iii) Mother tongue assists the child in formulating concepts alien to his/her cultural environment.
- iv) The Commission felt that under normal circumstances instruction is always best in the mother tongue.
- v) Given the Mazimbu situation, English has become the functional language, therefore literacy in this language should be improved.
- vi) In line with the ANC policy on the development of national languages, facilities should be made available to enable the community to study these languages outside the curriculum - at least two languages for a start.
- vii) Mother tongue. has unifying and divisive aspects in a multi-lingual community, i.e. it can impede national unity.
- viii) Our country can be subdivided into areas of linguistic homogeneity. We should research on this with the purpose of seeking ways and means in which a national language policy can be determined or formulated.

COMMISSION B.

ON THE FORMATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES.

The terminology *section* on languages was preferred to *department* of languages.

--- The Commission recognised the fact that a considerable section of our people in the ANC is still not yet well disposed or cannot communicate in English.

--- Bilingualism as a state policy plays down the development of other languages.

--- Students at SOMAFCO still experience great difficulty in their studies because of poor background in English from Apartheid schools, influence of our own languages and lack of facilities to enhance teachers' ability to teach English effectively.

Duties of the Section on Languages.

- 1) To produce materials for publicity in our ranks and for home front.
- 2) To translate ANC documents into our own languages.
- 3) To ensure translation in our meetings.
- 4). To cooperate with linguistic specialists at home to provide their expertise/skills.
- 5) To establish a working relationship with linguistic specialists of other countries to provide expertise and professionalism.

COMMISSION C.

On Language Problems.

--- Child and environment: a setting where a child, teacher and parent interact.

a) Many children in Mazimbu do not stay with their parents. This

affects the language development.

b) Children with neither English nor African language background face problems of communicating with other children, cannot understand instructions, explanations given in English and can hardly express themselves.

--- Lack of and mobility of staff compared to numbers to be taught aggravates the situation, i.e. in developing the language.

--- Lack of trained personnel for remedial work.

--- Several languages spoken in Mazimbu affect the transmission of cultural values as the language plays a significant role in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Given the objective conditions obtaining in Mazimbu, the plenary session, , felt that English has become the functional, unifying language and literacy in English should be improved. However, in line with the policy of the movement on national languages, facilities should be created to enable these languages to be taught/learnt outside the curriculum. The community shall be expected to learn at least two of the national languages (where the situation allows).

2. On the formulation of the Language Policy in South Africa, the commission recognises that our country can be subdivided into areas of linguistic homogeneity and on the basis of this a recommendation is made that this should be researched into for the purpose of determining the way in which a national language policy can be formulated.

3. The Department of Education should ensure that a Desk on Languages is established and functions under the auspices of the Department of Education.

4. The Department of Education should procure a sponsor for the creation of the Section on Languages.

5. The Department should recruit and train the personnel to run

the section on Languages .

6. The Section on Languages should establish a dynamic relationship with DIP, Research Department and DAC.
7. The Section through the Department of Languages should create and maintain a dynamic working relationship with Department of languages / collectives engaged in this work at home.
8. The Parent-Teacher Association at Mazimbu should be revitalised and made functional so that it helps in seeking solutions to problems faced by the children who do not understand English
9. The teacher should help these children after school hours at their dormitories whenever possible.
10. Mazimbu community should be mobilised to voluntarily adopt these children to create opportunity for broadening their scope
11. Education excursion within the complex, especially by pre-school children be encouraged and supported.
12. More qualified teachers should be recruited.
13. We should look into the possibility of teachers attending lessons whereby basics of languages such as Portuguese, Kiswahili etc are taught.
14. Mazimbu adults should be encouraged to respond to the children in the language they are spoken to in.
15. Specialist and remedial work should be invited to Mazimbu to hold seminars or discussions with SOMAFCO teachers.
16. Vocational training in the form of art and craft should be introduced to children.
17. African languages should be included in the curriculum as a

long term objective.

AREAS OF RESEARCH FOCUS.

1. Teaching of indigenous languages with the view to developing them into languages to handle all levels of communication including scientific concepts.
2. Research into the possibilities of using indigenous languages as alternate official languages.
3. Research into the implications and possibilities of the usage of mother tongue.
4. Research into the use of English as a lingua-franca, and the elimination of its Euro-centric character.
5. Research into the politico-socio-cultural attitudes towards languages (in exile and at home).
6. Research into the phenomenon of bilingualism and multilingualism by region.
7. Demographic classification of language usage.
8. Survey of History Records in existence about the development of different languages.
9. Research into the character, scope and possibility of future development of indigenous literature (including an examination of existing language policies of publishing houses).

METHODOLOGY.

Research will be coordinated and directed by the ANC and MDM in conjunction with progressive researchers at home and abroad.