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Corrigendum: Communication and governance in a linguistically diverse human settlement in South Africa

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In the published article, Ngcobo, S. & Mvuyana, B.Y.C., 2022, 'Communication and governance in a linguistically diverse human settlement in South Africa', *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 3(0), a83. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v3i0.83, there was an error in affiliation 2. Instead of Department of Public Administration and Accounting, Faculty of Management Sciences, Mangosuthu University of Technology, Durban, South Africa, it should be Department of Public Administration and Economics, Faculty of Management Sciences, Mangosuthu University of Technology, Durban, South Africa.

The authors apologise for this error. The correction does not change the study's findings of significance or overall interpretation of the study's results or the scientific conclusions of the article in any way.

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Background: Integrated human settlement initiatives are aimed at altering the apartheid housing patterns of the old South Africa that kept people of different races and languages apart.

Aim: This article investigated how community leaders and municipal officials interact with their integrated constituencies to determine if the language(s) of communication used are unifying and are conducive for public participation in decision-making.

Setting: The study was conducted at the eThekwini region in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in South Africa where isiZulu, an African language, is dominant in terms of the number of speakers, but English has prestige as a lingua franca.

Method: The study was qualitative in that 15 participants were interviewed on their experiences, observations and perceptions of languages of communication usage in their integrated human settlement. The settlement was used as a case study and the participants were purposefully selected.

Results: The findings indicated that isiZulu dominates as the preferred language of communication at meetings and in written documents where it is often presented alongside English. There were speakers of other languages that were not happy with the dominance of isiZulu.

Conclusion: The dominant use of isiZulu bodes well for the promotion of African languages as they have in the past not been given the official status they deserve. However, its dominance in a multilingual environment it has the potential to make other community members feel linguistically discriminated against.

Contribution: The study undertakes an interdisciplinary approach to provide a deeper understanding on the role of language in the governance of multilingual societies. It raises an awareness on the importance of finding a balance between using the dominant community language and recognising other languages to ensure full participation of all immaterial of diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Keywords: communication; integrated human settlement; multilingualism; linguistically diverse community; service delivery.

Introduction

South African communities come from a long and tragic history of political injustice driven by the apartheid government. This past period witnessed the separation of societies across racial and linguistic lines through draconian legislations (Henrico & Fick 2019). Instrumental to the apartheid political agenda were mainly the *Land Act* (1936), the *Natives Resettlement Act* (1954) and the *Group Areas Act* (1950) through which black, Indian and mixed-race people that coexisted peacefully were forcibly removed from prime areas. Prime areas were then reallocated to white people while the other races were crammed in segregated townships located on the urban periphery. These acts destroyed the cosmopolitanism and multilingualism that existed in these spaces (Hart 1990, in Davids 2018). Mojapelo (2008) reported about a cosmopolitan place that was called Lady Selborne in which Sesotho as the language spoken by most black people in the area became the dominant language fluently used by Indian people, Chinese people and mixed-race people. Similarly, there were some black people who could communicate with Chinese and Indian people in their languages. Other destroyed multicultural and multilingual cosmopolitan spaces of note at the time were District Six and Sophia town which were located near the workplaces of the city for many community members (Davids 2018). As part of the mission to destroy multilingualism that especially promoted indigenous languages, the colonial and apartheid governments introduced policies that only recognised Afrikaans and English for use at political, economic and educational levels by all. In the process, ethnic divisions among citizens were developed and the

indigenous languages and multilingualism were denigrated to the margins (Cakata & Segalo 2017). The disenfranchised communities further found themselves without basic services such as transport, proper housing, water and electricity in the new areas.

Post 1994 democracy, it became essential for integrated human settlements to be introduced as a tool of redressing the past and bringing about significant social transformation (Mvuyana 2019). The integrated human settlement initiatives are in accordance with the Breaking New Ground (BNG) principles of the Department of Housing which aims to alter the apartheid housing patterns of the old South Africa that kept people of different races apart and away from cities (Department of Human Settlements 2004). Such projects are in line with the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998* (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 1998) in which Chapter 5's (Functions and Powers of Municipalities) sub-section (3) states that a district municipality must seek to achieve integrated, sustainable and equitable social and economic development of its areas. Among many things, equity could be achieved through communication which recognises the multilingual nature of South African society. In the local sphere of government, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) (2008) provided draft Guidelines for Implementing Multilingualism in Local Government which indicates the importance of meeting the linguistic needs of citizens who are not proficient in English, or who are illiterate or disabled (Cohen 2008). Multilingualism at this sphere of government is designed as a measure to promote effective participation of all stakeholders and 'improving communication within local government, and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity through the greater use of African languages' (Cohen 2008).

The language of communication chosen by political leaders at municipal level is important to investigate against the background where service delivery boycotts are common in the democratic South Africa (Zwane & Matsiliza 2022). Research in this area is informed by Msenge and Nzewi (2021) who argued that service delivery protests can be apportioned to poor communication channels between the local administration and communities. Toendepi (2021) explained the importance of communication in the context of community as something that should be driven by leaders through enabling individuals to express themselves and receive information in languages they are comfortable in. Communication is deemed healthy if it does not exclude any of the stakeholders in the provision of effective public services (Ngilambi & McCubbin 2017). Toendepi (2021) averred that when leaders adopt an effective communication approach, this would make them to be trusted and gain approval from their constituencies. This would also ensure that the decisions they make involve full stakeholder participation who would be able to freely communicate their needs and demands which should in turn make the leaders to be accountable for their actions (Rulashe & Ijeoma 2022; Zwane & Matsiliza 2022).

It is against this backdrop, that this article examines the experiences, observations and perceptions of citizens about the use of language by their political leaders to provide access to resources in a newly integrated human settlement. The unique contribution of the article is that it is interdisciplinary as it investigates the issue of languages of communication as a socio-linguistic issue and governance in a public administration context to understand the issue of access to information by poor communities. The question the article seeks to answer is as follows: What is the relationship between the languages of communication and governance in an integrated human settlement?

Problem statement

Poor communication between local government officials and the communities they serve has been identified as problematic because it is not adequately utilised as a tool to avert service delivery protests (Msenge & Nzewi 2021; Zwane & Matsiliza 2022). The language of communication in an integrated community context becomes an issue if it excludes certain stakeholders from participating fully in decision- making and receiving information they clearly understand. There is, therefore, the need to investigate the issue of language(s) used by officials when interacting with linguistically diverse communities (LDCs) in integrated settlements to ascertain if it supports the implementation of existing multilingual policies at local, regional, and national levels.

Literature review

Literature review is divided into two sections. The first section explores the two central concepts of the article which are governance and communication. The second part of literature focusses on relevant policy frameworks.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this article is interdisciplinary in that it integrates linguistic and governance issues. The approach is informed by the National Development Plan 2030 (RSA 2012a) as it emphasises that participatory governance should be at the centre of post-apartheid legislation towards local government. Municipalities are encouraged to establish mechanisms which enable mayors, municipal management, municipal councils, ward committees, and local communities to participate in decision-making (RSA 2012a). Language is an important aspect of communication and participation. Hence, the two interrelated concepts in this article are governance from public administration and language of communication from linguistics.

Mothapo and Kanyane (2015:729) explained that governance is a form of government that operates through formal structures composed of elected members from various societal groupings with a view to achieving a common goal. Similarly, the municipal structures in the form of councillors and committees in community settlements are a form of governance that is tasked with delivering services for the

local communities. Furthermore, governance refers to the measurement of governments' institutions capacity to allocate quality goods and services while enforcing sound policies that demonstrate respect for citizens as critical stakeholders (Kaufmann 2021; Kaufmann, Kraay & Zoido 2000). The measurement research approach that is recommended by Kaufmann et al. (2000) is qualitative. Similarly, the article seeks to qualitatively measure the extent to which leaders at local sphere of government promote access to information through their use of languages of communication that enables equal participation in decision making. More so, governance represents what Levi-Faur (2012:7) called 'newness' to signify 'change' or 'shift' in society that can take different forms that scholars may consider. Similarly, the current article views governance as a useful concept of examining change or rather transformation in South Africa since the dawn of democracy post 1994. The recognition of communities and their languages as equal is the newness that should be celebrated and protected in the integrated society. Levi-Faur (2012) also described governance as referring to a shift in power from the top to the bottom whereby the daily needs of communities are addressed by their local structures in the form of municipalities and ward councillors. Hence, the article examines how these local leaders exercise their power with respect to the use of local languages as tools of communication.

According to Avineri et al. (2019), the communication process should employ languages that help to bring about justice by providing access to services and enabling participation in civic and community practices. This approach assists in ensuring that all language groups, regardless of whether they are in the minority or majority have their languages utilised in ways that show them respect and value (Avineri et al. 2019). Zwane and Matsiliza (2022) emphasised that municipal officials and local leaders have the responsibility to redress the imbalances of the past by providing basic human needs and services to the previously marginalised, while being cognisant that they do not trample the human rights of other citizens. Key to the definitions of governance and language of communication are equal access to resources and respect for citizens by their leaders. Hence, the article qualitatively measures the relationship between service delivery and the choice and use of language(s) in a manner that recognises and respects linguistic diversity.

Steyn (2016:19) recommended improved 'public consultation and communication processes' as a way of addressing community protests by local government. In this regard, Rulashe and Ijeoma (2022:5) noted that indeed the government has created several platforms for public involvement and communication, such as Imbizo, public meetings, ward councillors and ward committees, and community liaison officials and media. The authors further stated that these platforms also serve to boost service delivery quality. This suggests that if communication channels are open, clear and satisfactory there would be no need for

communities to resort into public demonstrations and destruction of property. Communities would rather consult the officials using the available platforms and request them to address their concerns in a civilised manner. Similarly, when officials encounter problems, they would come back and explain the challenges encountered to the communities (Booysen 2007). This kind of an ideal situation would be in line with a proper and modern understanding of governance. Singh (2014) postulated that the modern meaning of governance is:

> [T]he creation of an enabling environment for citizens, management of economic stability within communities, provision of required resources and infrastructure, protection of the vulnerable in society, and delivery of essential services. (p. 58)

This suggests that communication channels in the form of chosen languages should be enabling to the vulnerable, especially the poor who rely on government for support such as in the form of housing and its related services. One such group that requires attention from the government and from researchers is LDCs that are found in integrated human settlements. However, Rulashe and Ijeoma (2022) cautioned that public participation and communication are quite complex processes that require a high level of coordination, consideration and tolerance from all stakeholders if they are to achieve the objectives that would benefit all. This would require the consideration and tolerance of differences that are likely to exist in any given community but would be more complex if the community is in an integrated human settlement as it might be a linguistic challenge to cater for all. It would be in circumstances like these that leaders would be tested on their ability to exercise equal consideration for all their constituencies. There has been scarcity of local government research that examines the language of communication as a governance factor among integrated communities.

Policy framework on multilingualism

The Constitution's (RSA 1996) Section 3(a) and 3(b) require the provisional governments and municipalities to use any of the official languages by considering 'the language needs, usage and preferences of the population'. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution (RSA 1996), however, cautions that in the process of considering preferences an effort should be made to ensure that no persons belonging to a linguistic community is denied their right to use their language. This caution is further articulated in the subsequent National Policy Framework (2003:6) which while emphasising 'the utilisation of the indigenous languages as official languages' also indicates that 'the broad acceptance of linguistic diversity, social justice, the principle of equal access to public services and programmes, and respect for language rights' should be maintained (National Policy Framework 2003:section 1.1.7). Consequently, the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Language Policy (2009), which applies to Municipal Councils and government bodies, identifies official languages of the KZN province as isiZulu, English,

isiXhosa and Afrikaans (KZN Provincial Language Policy 2009:section 2.1.1) while maintaining that all other languages, including South African Sign Language, must be used and promoted (KZN Provincial Language Policy 2009:section 2.1.5) where necessary. It is, however, stated that isiZulu and English are to be the main languages of publication (KZN Provincial Language Policy 2009: Section 2.4.5.3). Worth noting is the fact that there is also the Provincial Language Service which is tasked with the promotion and monitoring of multilingualism, good language management, and respect for language rights (KZN Provincial Language Policy 2009:section 10.1). Similarly, eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality took a decision of adopting English and isiZulu as business languages while acknowledging that the preferences of residents and diversity should be taken into consideration when communicating (eThekwini Municipality Language Policy 2009).

One of the ways of improving communication is using languages that enable access to information for all. In the same vein, section 6(4) of the Constitution (RSA 1996) calls upon the government to regulate and monitor the use of official languages as noted in the Use of Official Languages Act (RSA 2012b). These guidelines are provided because of the understanding that information is the most important tool; therefore, if well communicated it enables citizens to equally exercise their rights to goods and services provided to them by the government. In the process, this could serve to limit service delivery protests that are now common in South Africa. Even though these policies were mainly enacted with the intention to protect the previously marginalised African languages, this protection would also apply to speakers of minority languages.

Statistics South Africa (2019) data indicates that isiZulu is the most common language in the country and particularly in the province of KZN. IsiZulu dominance and its commonality with other Nguni languages, such as isiXhosa and isiSwati contributes to it being widely used in the public sphere. The fourth biggest language that enjoys the high socio-economic status of being the widely used common language across the country and many parts of the world is English. It is because of this recognition that English is considered as a bridging language for people of diverse mother tongue backgrounds (Kamwendo 2014:383). In addition, English tends to be used by many South Africans in contemporary societies as a language that they would alternate with their African languages in speech and written forms (Makaleka 2016; Ngcobo 2014).

It is these notions about the dominance of isiZulu and English that sometimes lead to them being assumed to be known by everyone, particularly in KZN. Such an assumption could, however, prove to alienate people who are not familiar with these languages by denying them access to critical information. Kamwendo (2014:378) cautioned that the language factor is one of the blockages to access to information that is packaged in a language that one does not fully

understand because of the fact that it is not a home language. Childs (2016) described such an experience as very dehumanising especially when it occurs among many black citizens in their own democratic country. This is not to suggest that the minorities deserve to be linguistically discriminated. It is perhaps in this context that Kamwendo (2014) applauded the public use of isiZulu with simultaneous interpretation into English and sign language being provided. This is indeed not a common sight in the country especially in the public sphere that it would warrant recognition. Ngcobo et al. (2016:12) described a situation in which more than one language is used as a gesture that contributes to equity and justice in society. Of concern to this article is to ascertain if consideration for others on linguistic basis is evident or not among government officials and political leaders in their dealings with integrated communities in municipalities.

Municipalities as government structures are an area of interest because of their closeness to communities and implementation of multilingual policies. This explains why at municipality level, the DPLG (now Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs [COGTA]), initiated a project called Multilingualism in local government (2008). According to Webb (2009:77, citing Keating 2007), this project was in response to concerns with unsatisfactory service delivery (for example regarding housing) and the non-participation of citizens in policy decisions and implementation. Webb (2009:78–79) applauded this project as 'clearly people-directed' against the background in which the South African government 'has made considerable progress in supporting its commitment to multilingualism' even though this has not 'been meaningfully promoted' or implemented at national, provincial and municipal levels. Makamani (2017:333) argued that failure to support and implement policy is unacceptable in a multilingual society where communication practices need to 'be geared towards accommodating the diverse linguistic repertoires'. An environment in which different communities have been integrated and their languages are dominant in one way or the other makes a curious case for an investigation on practices and preferences, as such studies have been conducted in educational settings.

Methodology

The article adopts an interpretivism or constructivism paradigm because of its potential to enable the participants to interpret their social reality. This paradigm is associated with qualitative methods of data collection which can be provided by either individuals or groups that have been exposed to a particular social experience and their interactions with other members of their community (Olsen & Pilson 2022).

The systematic and scientific process followed in conducting research involved the use of focus group interviews (Kumar 2019). In this process, the participants' responses were audio recorded about their experiences, observations and perceptions on languages of communication in their area. This research

technique generated rich, detailed qualitative data which were aimed at providing the participants' perspective on the phenomenon under investigation. Eight semi-structured interview questions divided into two sections were utilised. The first section was on the biographical information and language usage of the participants. Section B was on the use of language(s) by municipal officials and community leaders to ascertain if there was any correlation between some of the information gathered in Section A, and what the policies that inform this article articulate.

The population that formed the totality of persons from which participants were selected were residents of an integrated human settlement found in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality in KZN. From this population of residents of an integrated community, a purposive sample of 15 randomly selected members were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allow participants greater freedom and flexibility to express their opinions and share experiences on a given situation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2013). Prior to conducting interviews, permission was sought from the local leaders and the participants themselves. Names of participants were neither sought nor used in analysing and reporting the results.

Data analysis was conducted manually because of the limited number of participants and their responses, which were easy to manage without the use of any research software, such as NVivo. This was whereby the transcribed interview responses were grouped in accordance to the specific questions they meant to address. The main subject of each question formed the theme under which the transcribed data were listed verbatim. However, the names of interviewees were not utilised as they were referred to as participants to ensure anonymity. The results of the analysis are described and discussed in the next section.

Ethical considerations

University of KwaZulu-Natal approved the study protocol when author two was registered for her doctoral degree. HSS/0161/0160. 14 March 2016.

Findings and discussion
Language profile

To gain a better understanding of the views expressed by the participants, it was important to align it with their background language information. The study was able to recruit 15 participants of whom eight were men and seven were women. Most participants were black people with a total of 11, and the remaining four were Asian people. The community appeared racially integrated even though black people were in the majority. The high number of black people was indeed expected in a country where black people are in the majority. The only other races found in this integrated community settlement were Asian people because the settlement is located close to areas that were previously reserved for Asians.

It was not surprising to find among the participants that seven black people were isiZulu-speaking, two were isiXhosa speaking, two Sesotho speakers, and four Asians who identified themselves as English speakers. However, non-isiZulu speakers indicated that they were familiar with isiZulu at different levels of proficiency, such as being able to speak and/or hear but not read and write. This is in line with Statistics South Africa (2019) census data which identifies isiZulu as the most common language in many parts of the country while mainly dominant in the province of KZN. The language distribution in this finding is in accordance with what the province considers as its official languages, other than the absence of Afrikaans and the availability of Sesotho (eThekwini Municipality Language Policy 2009). The community is therefore linguistically diverse which gives the community leaders and the municipality officials the challenge of coordinating their communication activities in this complex context (Rulashe & Ijeoma 2022).

Language proficiency

A related follow-up question inquired on language proficiency levels of the participants when it came to writing, speaking and reading of isiZulu and English. The focus on these two languages was influenced by the fact that they have been identified in the KZN Provincial Language Policy (2009) that the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality draws from for administrative purposes. The question on fluency emanated from the DPLG (2008) *Guidelines for Implementing Multilingualism in Local Government* which indicate the importance of meeting the linguistic needs of citizens who are not proficient in English, or who are illiterate or disabled (Cohen 2008). IsiZulu was indicated as the dominant language of proficiency when it came to speaking and reading. Not surprisingly, the Asian participants were not very proficient in both aspects even though two of the participants said they were average speakers of isiZulu. The ability of Asians to speak isiZulu is in line with what Mojapelo (2008) reported about a cosmopolitan place that was called Lady Selborne in which Sesotho as the language spoken by most black people in the area became the dominant language fluently used by other races. English proficiency among the whole group of participants was claimed to be generally good to survive in the workplace where employers would be less familiar with African languages. Reading received less ratings as most of the participants identified themselves as poor readers. None of the approached participants indicated any disability such as the one that would require the use of sign language. Yet, in the South African context and elsewhere non-discriminatory communication should entail the use of an African language with simultaneous interpretation into English and sign language being provided (Kamwendo 2014) to promote equity (Ngcobo et al. 2016).

Educational qualifications

To link the preceding claims with educational qualifications, the participants were asked to indicate their educational background. During the interviews it emerged that the

majority of the participants claimed they had a schooling level that was below secondary school with a few in possession of secondary education. None of the participants said they had any diploma or degree. This finding was on the whole taken to suggest that the literacy levels were low in the area and would require special care when communicating with the community. Khuluvhe's (2022) findings confirmed this state of low literacy levels among adults who were in 2020 at 10% with women (10.7%) faring worse than men (9.3%). In this case, written English could prove to be a challenge to many community members as much as spoken English to a certain extent because the majority were black people. Spoken English could be expected not to be a serious issue because many black people tend to use it in their everyday lives together with their African languages (Makaleka 2016; Ngcobo, Ndebele & Bryant 2021).

The language of communication

The next question sought to understand if other than false promises, the language usage was one of the issues. IsiZulu was indicated by all the participants as the language used to announce meetings in the form of loudspeakers and notices. This practice suggests that those not familiar with isiZulu, even though few, are left out or get to receive information second hand. Thus, some of the participants said:

'Loudspeakers pass by announcing in isiZulu when there is going to be a meeting.' (Participant 3, female, black person, isiZulu-speaker)

'Flyers and notices informing us about meetings are in isiZulu.' (Participant 4, female, Asian person, English-speaker)

'Meetings are usually conducted in isiZulu. But when there are external persons that do not speak isiZulu, you find that English is used by some of our leaders without any interpretation provided sometimes.' (Participant 5, male, black person, isiZulu-speaker)

Other than the issues of calls for meetings, it was also revealed that the language of conducting meetings was insensitive to both non-isiZulu and isiZulu speakers. Local leaders conduct their meetings mainly in isiZulu. In cases where there are visiting leaders, it was revealed, leaders tended to address the community in English without any interpretations provided on certain occasions:

'IsiZulu is used most of the time because we all know it and our leaders speak it.' (Participant 1, male, black person, isiZulu-speaker)

'Yaah … I agree with you … but that sometimes become a problem to some of us who are not fluent isiZulu speakers. I wish they could find a balance of some kind.' (Participant 2, female, black person, SeSotho-speaker)

'A balance … how? I hope you don't mean English because that could … ehh … mmh … make many of us not follow what is said. Or you mean … eeh … interpretation?' (Participant 3, female, black person, isiZulu-speaker)

'Ohh yaah…they do interpret sometimes when a visitor cannot speak isiZulu… it helps.' (Participant 4, female, Asian person, English-speaker)

The above transcripts indicate some poor communication which has the potential to contribute to service delivery protests emanating from communities not sharing the same information equally (Msenge & Nzewi 2021; Toendepi 2021). Moreover, this practise goes against the *Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012)* (RSA 2012b) which strives to give effect to the constitutional obligation of multilingualism. This Act requires that every national department, national public entity, and national public enterprise must adopt a language policy and establish language units to facilitate language policy implementation. The finding implies that the officials do not involve all communities in decision-making processes so that they are later accountable to the citizens (Rulashe & Ijeoma 2022).

This linguistic insensitivity also extended to private meetings in the offices of officials. As leaders are isiZulu-speakers they usually converse in isiZulu with all Africans to the disadvantage of those who are not isiZulu-speakers. The concern raised by Asian community members was that while they would be addressed in English, they found it unacceptable that the leaders would switch to isiZulu when communicating among themselves while one is there waiting for a response on the issue they have raised:

'I find it disrespectful when someone switches languages in my presence when they know very well that I cannot fully understand what they are saying.' (Participant 6, male, Asian person, English-speaker)

'They will gossip about you in their language in your presence.' (Participant 7, female, Asian person, English-speaker)

Dos Santos (2022) found a similar situation in South Korea where Asians would linguistically discriminate against each other. In the case of the context of this research, it is considered discriminatory and insensitive not to acknowledge speakers of other South African languages other than the dominant one (isiZulu) in the province of KZN.

Awareness of municipal processes

Participants were also asked on their awareness of municipality processes in taking decisions which affect community matters. The follow up questions were specific on certain types of documents, such as the Municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP), that were assumed to have been shared with communities. The following responses were received:

'I don't know about others, but I have never heard of such documents.' (Participant 8, male, black person, isiZulu-speaker)

'What is a Municipal plan for?' (Participant 9, female, Asian person, English-speaker)

'They do explain some of the processes and procedures without actually presenting the documents they are talking about. We know that certain procedures have to be followed in doing certain things. Sometimes they will say that the Municipality or the regional government expect things done in a particular way and then we will do as told by following their guidance.' (Participant 10, male, black person, SeSotho-speaker)

The majority of participants were not aware of Municipal Plan and the role that they can play in making the municipality accountable in the provision of services. This may suggest that the number of service delivery protests frequently experienced are a result of communities not knowing the intentions of the municipality. The Integrated Development Plan for local government (IDP) is a thick document written in English, which could be problematic to most members of the community and their leaders to read and understand because of limited education and proficiency in written English. These critical documents should be simplified, translated and disseminated to the public. Msenge and Nzewi (2021) have argued that poor communication channels account for the high rate of service delivery protests. In the same vein, Toendepi (2021) emphasised the importance of leaders to communicate critical information with their constituencies in a language they understand. This finding therefore indicates that information that is available in English only is not communicated with the communities and measures are not undertaken to translate such information into the language(s) that would be easily understood by the majority. This practice points to a shortcoming from an informational justice viewpoint.

Multilingual communication

On a positive note, written communication from the municipality was mainly received in both isiZulu and English, as indicated below:

> 'Letters on rates and notices on water and electricity disruptions from the Municipality are communicated in both English and isiZulu.' (Participant 4, female, Asian person, English-speaker)

> 'There are now offices called … Sizakala Centres to which we can go to make enquiries and receive services in our languages.' (Participant 5, male, black person, isiZulu- speaker)

This is to be noted as it is in line with the KZN Provincial language policy (2009). The current finding contradicts the earlier one that was made by Hadebe (2009) when English was dominant and eThekwini Municipality was without a language policy. The change suggests that there is transformation as indicated in the enactment and implementation of multilingual policies.

Conclusion

The article aimed to understand if multilingual communication was used fairly by political leaders in an integrated settlement for poor communities to provide them with equal access to resources and participation. It was found that most community members were satisfied with the use of their language (isiZulu) by the leaders and the municipality. Concerns were raised by the minority of citizens who felt marginalised in some instances because of their limited use of isiZulu. It also emerged that critical documents such as the Municipality Integrated Development Plan was neither provided in simplified language nor cascaded to the communities in their

languages. The raised linguistic shortcomings are against the principles of governance which promote equal treatment of all despite any differences. Multilingual policies are available in South African, provinces and municipalities to cater for all. It is therefore important for leaders in a democratic state to adopt resources that are available to address the linguistic needs of all their constituencies. These include the use of translation and interpretation to accommodate all equally. Multilingual policies are an important tool that should be implemented by government officials to promote equality under the new political setting to redress the past linguistic inequalities, promote participation, and to provide services.

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