

Teaching and Learning Mathematics in Multilingual Classrooms

**Issues for Policy, Practice and
Teacher Education**

Anjum Halai and Philip Clarkson (Eds.)



SensePublishers

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Issues for Policy, Practice and Teacher Education

Edited by

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SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-94-6300-227-1 (paperback)

ISBN: 978-94-6300-228-8 (hardback)

ISBN: 978-94-6300-229-5 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858,
3001 AW Rotterdam,
The Netherlands
<https://www.sensepublishers.com/>

All chapters in this book have undergone peer review.

Printed on acid-free paper

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTIONS

All chapters included in this volume underwent a blind review process. We acknowledge the reviewers who were kind enough to participate in this process.

This volume gives voice to a range of contributions from a variety of countries many that rarely if ever have a voice in the international research literature. We first list the home countries (and where appropriate place of residence) of authors:

- Australia
- Congo-Brazzaville
- England (Canada)
- France
- Germany (3)
- India
- Iran-England (Chile)
- Mali
- Pakistan (England)
- Pakistan (Tanzania)
- Tanzania
- South Africa (7)
- Sweden (2)

The countries in which various studies are situated are (noting there are three general chapters):

- Congo-Brazzaville
- England
- Germany (2)
- India
- Mali
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Tanzania
- South Africa (5)
- Sweden

SECTION I

REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS

ANJUM HALAI AND PHILIP CLARKSON

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATHEMATICS IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

An Overview

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Mathematics education has increasingly in the last 30 years acknowledged the crucial role that language plays in learning. However, this has mainly been the role of language in cognition, such as students' understanding of mathematics concepts and relationships, and not necessarily its impact on social, cultural, and political issues and learning in mathematics. Furthermore, multilingualism in mathematics classrooms has been underpinned by a deficit discourse that viewed languages other than the language of instruction as a "problem". This situation is beginning to change, and there is a shift away from the traditional deficit discourse and views on the advantages that can be conveyed by additional language/s in the classroom.

Contemporary concerns in mathematics education recognize that in the increasingly technological and globalized world, with concomitant change in population demographics (e.g., immigration, urbanization) and a change in the status of languages (e.g., English as a dominant language of science and technology) multilingualism in classrooms is a norm rather than an exception. Shifts in perspective also view language not simply as an instrument for cognition with all learners equipped with this instrument in service of learning, although clearly in the classroom that remains of importance. Rather, it is now also being acknowledged, as it has been in other areas of cultural construction, that language use is inherently political. Hence the language that gets official recognition in the classroom is invariably the language of the powerful elite, or the dominant societal language, or in the case of post colonial contexts the language of the colonisers. Using this socio-political role of language in the learning frame, quite different issues arise for teaching, learning and curriculum for linguistically marginalized learners than that of only cognition (e.g., immigrants, second language learners, other).

In researching the issues noted above, this edited collection draws on recent and emerging insights, as well as understandings about the approaches to improving policy and practice in mathematics education and mathematics teacher education in multilingual settings. The main objective of the book is to present, and discuss critically, examples of work from a range of contexts. In doing so the authors use these examples to draw out key issues for research in mathematics education in

language diverse settings including in teaching, learning and curriculum, and fit these with appropriate policy and equity approaches.

Another strong theme within the book is that the policy environments both nationally in most countries, and globally, are overwhelmingly concerned with improving student performance in mathematics achievement. Towards this end, policies on language in education are being considered and reconsidered with specific reference to mathematics teaching and learning. However it appears that most of the time policy changes seem to be made for only political ends, with scant attention paid to the relevant research. For example, the language in education policy swings in Malaysia over the last decade, or the current shift towards changing the language of instruction in upper primary mathematics classrooms to English in Pakistan and Zanzibar (Halai & Muzaffar this volume; Kajoro this volume) were made with no acknowledgement of either pertinent national and international educational research. Given such a global policy environment, this publication both teases this issue with some case studies, and challenges both researchers and politicians and their advisors to find better ways for making decisions.

A further significant dimension of this book is that it brings insights mainly from developing countries where relatively less research activity takes place. We have drawn together both established researchers who are able to give perspectives that reach back across years of involvement with these issues, with new colleagues who bring fresh new insights. In particular there are a number of examples drawn from different contexts in Africa, which brings a new and exciting perspective to bear on this area of mathematics education research.

BOOK STRUCTURE

The book is divided into four sections that provide a focus on some of the different dimensions of the issues of mathematics teaching and learning in multilingual settings. The first section entitled '*Review and Critique of Mathematics Education in Multilingual Contexts*' provides both an historical overview of this area of research, but goes beyond that to critique the work that has been undertaken. Strengths are acknowledged, but research gaps and inadequate approaches are also noted. The second section entitled '*Policy and Mathematics Education in Multilingual Contexts*' examines three specific contexts in different ways to show that this area of education, like any educational process, is not immune from politics. Exemplars of policy interventions in language are shown to impact on mathematics education in multilingual contexts quite directly. The third section, namely '*Learning Mathematics in Multilingual Classrooms*', includes chapters from a range of geographical contexts. It mainly provides issues of learning mathematics in contexts where the language of instruction is not the first or the second language of the teachers and learners. Finally the fourth section, '*Mathematics Teaching and Teacher Education in Multilingual Classrooms*' looks at strategies and approaches to teaching and teacher education in the context of multilingual mathematics classrooms. We now

give a brief overview of the substantive issues and discussions as presented in the various sections of the book.

This opening chapter is followed by Phakeng's, in which she provides a historical overview of research on mathematics education and language diversity through a review of research published in selected international journals. She maintains that research on language and learning started with a focus on bilingualism and the bilingual learner. The 'problem' at that stage was mainly located in the learner and was based on an underlying assumption that there is something wrong with the bilingual learner. Studies in the eighties moved from focusing on the bilingual learner to the bilingual classroom. In the nineties there was another shift to a focus on multilingualism, a global phenomenon, which until then was not taken into consideration by research in mathematics education. In recent years, Phakeng notes that research on mathematics education and language diversity has come to recognize the socio-political role of language. This shift also brought with it recognition that fluency in more than one language per se has no necessary effects (either negative or positive) on learners' mathematics achievement or the cognitive and intellectual development of children in general. Her review suggests that the contradictory results reported in the literature may be accounted for by the socio-economic and psychosocial differences between learners, and not their fluency in multiple languages per se. Phakeng highlights significant advances, findings, gaps and future research directions.

In the final chapter of this opening section, Barwell offers a critical examination of research on the learning and teaching of mathematics in contexts of language diversity, multilingualism, second language learners, among other issues. He draws on ideas from the contemporary sociolinguistics of multilingualism, including the concept of superdiversity, to explore three aspects of previous research in mathematics education. Specifically, he shows how research on the learning and teaching of mathematics in contexts of language diversity is often based on simplistic ideas about language, about language groups and speakers, and about communication. Barwell maintains that the ideas presented in his chapter reframe quite fundamentally some of the challenges faced by learners, teachers and policymakers in this area of mathematics educational research.

The next three chapters in the second section provide specific cases of language education policies that have impinged directly on mathematics learning and teaching. In chapter four, Clarkson details some of the sociocultural and linguistic context of the journey that the Papua New Guinea education system has travelled since independence in 1975 looking specifically at the teaching of mathematics. Starting by endorsing the colonial political policy of using English only in teaching, then gradually moving over some 20 years to privilege vernacular languages for teaching in the early years, to a sudden and surprising reversion of policy to that of independence in 2013. Clarkson provides a succinct overview of the issues for mathematics teaching and learning within the changing policy landscape of Papua New Guinea and clearly shows that mathematics teaching at least in this context has

never been divorced from political decisions made by others outside of the education system. He ends with a plea for researchers to become involved with the political process and indeed see this engagement as a crucial part of their professional life.

In the following chapter Halai and Muzaffar examine the paradoxical effects of a policy whose fundamental aim was to achieve greater equity in distribution of cultural capital by mandating English as a language of instruction for all learners in the education system. It draws on data from a large-scale empirical study carried out in the Punjab province in Pakistan. Taking a social justice perspective on the issue they maintain that the attempt to distribute the cultural capital, including linguistic and mathematical capital, among learners is a nuanced and a political process. For any anticipated success, this process must recognize the role of learners' first language, or the proximate language, as a resource to learn mathematics. In turn, this recognition would require challenging some deep-seated assumptions about the role of learners as recipients of knowledge in the classroom dynamics of teaching and learning mathematics.

Next, Kajoro traces the history of national educational language policy in Tanzania from its colonial past to post independence, highlighting particularly the change of medium of instruction in primary schooling from English to the national language, Kiswahili. With insightful cases from the mathematics classrooms, he illustrates how Kiswahili, though officially the medium of instruction at primary school level, is taken to be a mere linguistic placeholder for the real language of education, that is English. Kajoro then identifies the political and socioeconomic forces that are working against the promotion of Kiswahili and also explores why intense pressure is currently being exerted on the government by many educational stakeholders, especially academics, to review the school language policy and look into the possibility of either reinstating English as the medium of instruction for all disciplines and at all levels of schooling, or using Kiswahili as a medium of instruction throughout the schooling years.

The third section of the book looks closely at issues of mathematics learning in multilingual classrooms. The section opens with Prediger's and Krägeloh's work with immigrant learners in Germany, focusing in particular on conceptual understanding of variables, a crucial topic for school success in algebra. They draw on a case study from a larger design research project in which multilingual low-achieving students are supported to gain access to this topic in a 'content- and language-integrated learning arrangement.' Through rigorous empirical analysis of videotaped teaching-learning processes they show the epistemic role of the language of schooling, a register to which these underprivileged students have limited natural access in either of their languages.

In the following chapter Noren and Andersson explore theoretically the construct of students' agency, and then use it for an analysis of classroom social interactions with a combination of sociocultural and critical theoretical perspectives. Using empirical evidence obtained through intensive engagement with learners from Arabic speaking homes in Swedish classrooms they illustrate how agency works

and how students' agency varies in different contexts. They maintain that in learning mathematics, student's agency is much more powerful if the classroom discourse enables the use of bilingualism.

Bose and Clarkson look at how multilingual students in a multi-school institution in Mumbai India negotiate the meanings of and process problems in mathematical contexts. They show that students switch between languages and registers as well as drawing on available contextual cues as they engage in their mathematical learning. Their findings show that in this process students utilized a wide range of cultural resources and cues in their negotiation of meanings. These cues in many cases are only accessible by the students if they switch to their home languages and then back to the school and formal technical mathematical languages.

Reporting from his study with learners having another first language (Turkish) than the language of instruction at school (German), Meyer holds that every German classroom can be characterized by the presence of a certain language variety: that is, some languages spoken in the classroom are not shared by all students. He maintains that learners can make use of their first language to learn mathematics in the classrooms, even though the teacher does not share their first language. According to his results, a great advantage of use of a language, which is not the language of instruction but is the first language of the learners, is that learners can use this language in flexible and multiple ways in the course of learning mathematics.

Nkambule's work is also with immigrant learners but in multilingual classrooms in South African schools. She explores discourse practices with immigrant and local learners during the teaching of linear programming in an urban school in South Africa. Through empirical data collected from immigrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo, she found that the teacher supported immigrant learners by switching to two additional languages, French and English during the teaching of linear programming. She concludes that the teacher's support for the immigrant learners by resorting to their additional language paradoxically raised questions about the extent to which local learners were marginalized in the process of learning.

The fourth and the final section took account of issues for teaching and teacher education in the context of multilingual mathematics classrooms. It opens with Essien's and Adler's work with Wenger's (1998) communities of practice (CoP) theory to understand and describe pre-service mathematics teacher education practice in multilingual classrooms. Drawing on empirical data to operationalize theoretical constructs, they show how Wenger's communities of practice theory was expanded into a framework that could productively analyse the nature of pre-service mathematics teacher education classrooms in multilingual settings. They argue that this elaborated framework enables researchers to examine, in an integrated manner, the mathematics content, the interactional context and the discourses in multilingual pre-service teacher education multilingual classrooms.

Next, Webb and Webb look at teaching strategies that could promote numeracy achievement and mathematical reasoning in bilingual classes in South African

township schools where both the teachers and pupils were English second-language speakers. To this end the pupils in six purposively selected grade seven mathematics classes in three township schools engaged in pre- and post-tests of numeracy and reasoning skills and their teachers were observed over a period of nine months, teaching them mathematics using strategies to promote numeracy and mathematical reasoning. Their findings concur with international research which suggests that using selective questioning, demonstrating the relevance and procedures for solving problems, and developing a social and dialogic space using exploratory talk improves mathematical reasoning and numeracy skills in language diverse mathematics classes.

Tshabalala and Clarkson provide two illustrative classroom vignettes from a classroom in an informal settlement, west of Johannesburg to explore the impact of the teacher's language practices when the teacher's home language was different from that of the learners in a grade 4 mathematics multilingual classroom. The study provides convincing evidence that the teacher's use of the learners' home language, positioned as a tool to enhance conceptual understanding, was not always effective. Confusion and misconceptions in teaching arose because the teacher was not proficient in the home language of the learners (Setswana or Zulu), or in the English mathematical language that was the focus of the teaching.

In the following chapter Farsani illustrates how the bilingual orientation of a particular complementary school in the UK developed a different pedagogy to what is perceived to be the norm in monolingual contexts. This different bilingual pedagogy provided a space for British-Iranian bilingual learners to incorporate not only their languages, but aspects of histories and experiences of how complex fractions (for example) were solved in Iran. He further maintains that the bilingual orientation of the complementary school not only offered a perspective on how complex fractions can be seen differently, but how this knowledge can be transferred in different tasks and settings.

In the final chapter of the fourth section Galisson, Malonga-Moungabio and Denys look at the case of Mali and Congo-Brazzaville where the 'Harmonization Project Mathematics (HPM)' was launched in 1992 to support reform in mathematics curricula and teaching, mainly in the post independent French-speaking region of Africa. Their study looked at the teaching of mathematics in the early years of secondary education (students 11–15 years of age) in each of these two countries. They maintain that in both countries French was the official language of instruction in secondary schools, but local languages were treated differently. What was taught remained influenced by the French curricula, but teaching methods developed differently in the two countries. They conclude that the different paths of evolution in Mali and Congo-Brazzaville since 1992 show that the HPM has led the two countries to teach mathematics in a way which takes into account, to a lesser or greater extent, the difficulties encountered in their educational systems and their socioeconomic contexts. However, both the Congolese and the Malian curricula bear witness to the persistence of an educational discipline (mathematics as taught in the first years of French secondary education) produced by a Western educational system.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

This edited volume arose mainly, though not exclusively, from the deliberations in the Topic Study Group 30: ‘Mathematics Education in Multilingual and Multicultural Environments’ in ICME 2012 in Korea (Halai & Barwell, 2015). Some participants chose post conference to develop their ideas into quite new contributions. We also invited some additional authors to contribute to round out some sections. As in the case of the TSG 30, the volume brings together contributions from diverse geographical contexts including technologically advanced countries with increasingly large immigrant populations (e.g., Canada, Germany, Sweden, UK), postcolonial countries with concomitant colonial languages as the medium of instruction (e.g., Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Tanzania) and countries with varied indigenous and official languages (e.g., India, Papua New Guinea, South Africa). It is reaffirming the changing and increasing impact of research into the role of language in mathematics learning that the International Commission on Mathematics Instruction commissioned the Study 21 entitled *Mathematics Education and Language Diversity* (Barwell, Clarkson, Halai, Kazima, Moschkovich, Planas, Phakeng, Valero & Villavicencio, 2015).

In this volume the conversation is progressed by illustrating the extent and breadth of issues that impinge on teaching and learning mathematics in multilingual classrooms. One significant contribution that it makes among others is it identifies new questions and issues for research. For example, a crucial issue is the need for cross-disciplinary approaches and frameworks for informing issues in teaching and learning of mathematics in multilingual classrooms. Although in the past researchers looked elsewhere for ways to approach this issue (e.g., Cummins’ work), Barwell not only illustrates this well, but by using new perspectives for mathematics education research from linguistics he revitalizes and informs our area anew. Likewise, Halai and Muzaffar raise significant social justice issues when they examine a ‘policy of language of instruction’ that takes into account issues of redistribution of cultural capital, but does not necessarily take into account issues of cognition and learning of mathematics. These contributions suggest that the mathematics education research including in multilingual settings needs to shift its somewhat inward looking stance and be open to fresh ways of advancing our research, but without losing sight of the main aim.

The issues of mathematics teaching and learning in multilingual contexts as noted in this volume are strongly located in the dynamics of a highly globalized society of the 21 century, especially the issue of rapidly changing demography in the wake of rapid immigration and urbanization (Atweh, Clarkson, & Nebres, 2003). However, a significant aspect of the global society of 21st century is that of an increasingly technological world. What is the interface of technology, teaching and learning in the context of multilingual classrooms (see Borba, Clarkson, & Gadanidis, 2013 for a small beginning in this area)? These are further issues, among others, that need to be investigated.

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2. MATHEMATICS EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Past, Present and Future

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing body of research on mathematics education and language diversity and increasingly this research is published in international mathematics education journals as well as linguistics journals focusing on language and education. The first journal paper on mathematics and language diversity to be published in an international mathematics education journal appeared in 1979. The paper, entitled “Language and mathematical education”, was authored by Austin and Howson and published in *Educational Studies in Mathematics (ESM)*. ESM is the oldest English international mathematics education journal, which was first published in 1968. An interesting question to ask is why the first journal paper on mathematics and language diversity was only published in 1979.

This Chapter provides a brief review of research on mathematics and language diversity internationally. The review focuses on research published in selected key international journals and was guided by the following questions:

- What research has been published in this area of study internationally?
- What contribution has this research made to our understanding of the complexities of teaching and learning maths in contexts of language diversity?
- What are the gaps and silences visible in research in this area?

The phrase language diversity is used to refer to contexts in which any of the participants (learners, teachers or others) are potentially able to draw on more than one language as they go about their work. The presence of these languages, however, does not necessarily mean that language diversity is recognised as an asset in that context. I deliberately use the phrase language diversity rather than bilingualism or multilingualism to highlight the significant differences between what I refer to as the politics of bilingualism and politics of multilingualism. While multilingualism is about inclusion and recognition of all languages, bilingualism is about competition between two languages to the exclusion of others. In all the contexts that are labelled as bilingual there is an existence of other languages that are wittingly or unwittingly silenced. For a detailed discussion on this matter see Phakeng (forthcoming).

I begin this Chapter with a discussion of research on language and learning published before 1979. What follows is a brief background on how this discussion began in mathematics education. Here I highlight the important role that the second International Congress on Mathematical Education (ICME-2) held in the United Kingdom in September 1972 as well as the international symposium on “Interactions between linguistics and Mathematical Education” held in Kenya in 1974 played in shaping the debates. While the review presented in this Chapter does not include conference papers, I specifically focus on these two conferences because they gave the impetus for the Austin and Howson paper published in *ESM* in 1979. These discussions provide a theoretical context for what follows: a description of the methodology used for the review and an analysis of research done in this area of study internationally. From these bases I highlight gaps and possibilities for future research.

Setting the Scene: Research on Language and Learning before 1979

While the first paper on mathematics education and language diversity was only published in 1979, there were extensive debates among researchers and educators about the effects of bilingualism on the learner before then. Many of these debates happened in psychology journals and books (e.g., Child development) while there was silence in mathematics education journals. There are authors who argued that bilingualism has negative effects on language development, educational attainment, cognitive growth and intelligence (Reynold, 1928; Saer, 1963 both cited in Grosjean, 1982). Others argued that under certain conditions bilingual skills can have positive effects on the learning process (Ianco-Worrall, 1973; Been-Zeef, 1977; Pearl & Lambert, 1962).

A great majority of studies completed before 1979 concluded that bilingualism had negative effects on learners’ linguistic, cognitive and educational development. Bilingualism was seen as unnatural and it was argued that a bilingual child hardly learns either of the two languages as perfectly as he would have done if he had limited himself to one. There was also a widespread view that the brain effort required to master two languages instead of one diminishes the child’s power of learning other things, which might and ought to be learned. Leo Weisgerber (1933 in Saunders, 1988), a highly regarded German linguist, argued that bilingualism could impair the intelligence of a whole ethnic group, while Reynold (1928 in Saunders, 1988) was concerned about the fact that bilingualism leads to language mixing and language confusion which in turn results in a reduction in the ability to think and act precisely, a decrease in intelligence, an increase in lethargy and reduced self-discipline. From his study of Welsh-English bilingual children in rural areas Saer (1923) concluded that bilingual learners had lower IQ scores than monolingual children, and this inferiority became greater with each year from age seven to eleven. Saunders (1988) warned, however, that caution must be exercised when comparing monolinguals and bilinguals on tests of intelligence, particularly on the tests of verbal intelligence,

and particularly if, as often happens, the bilinguals are tested in only one of their languages, perhaps the second language.

It was in 1962 when Pearl and Lambert conducted a study that indicated that bilingualism is an asset to the child. They studied the effects of bilingualism on the intellectual functioning of ten year-old children from six Montreal schools. They found that instead of suffering from 'mental confusion' bilinguals were profiting from a language asset. They concluded that:

Intellectually (the bilingual's) experience with two language systems seems to have left him with a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities, in the sense that the patterns of abilities developed by bilinguals were more heterogeneous. It is not possible to state from the present study whether the intelligent child became bilingual or whether bilingualism aided his intellectual development, but there is no question about the fact that he is superior intellectually. In contrast, the monolingual appears to have more unitary structure of intelligence, which he must use for all types of intellectual tasks. (Pearl & Lambert, 1962, p. 20)

Although these results were criticised on the grounds that only the intellectually brighter children were chosen for the bilingual group (e.g., by Macnamara, 1966), the studies that followed also indicated that bilingualism is an asset. Ianco-Worrall's (1972) study of Afrikaans-English four to nine year-old bilingual children in South Africa showed that bilinguals reach a stage in semantic development two or three years earlier than their monolingual peers. They analyse language more intensively than do monolinguals. Been Zeef (1977) found the same results in a similar study with Hebrew-English bilinguals and monolingual English and Hebrew children. Bilinguals realise sooner the arbitrary nature of language because the link between a word and its meaning is less strong in bilinguals than in monolinguals. This result had some implications for the bilinguals' cognitive abilities. As Cummins (1981, p. 33) argued, the ability to separate the meaning of a word from its sound is necessary if a child is to use language effectively as a tool for thinking.

In 1979, Swain and Cummins compared the positive and negative studies and concluded that the positive findings are usually associated with majority language groups in immersion programs. In such cases there is a high value attached to knowing two languages. The second language is added at no cost to the first and the parents are of relatively high socio-economic status. Negative findings, on the other hand, are found with submersion students who are surrounded by negative attitudes. They are forced to learn the majority language and are not encouraged to retain their first language. They also do not live in a social environment that is conducive to learning. Swain and Cummins also argued that while there were a variety of factors impacting children's intellectual development, bilingualism was one of the significant factors that could have a positive impact. While research in this area of study at this stage did not foreground the role of the social, it is clear that there was an acceptance that it is possible that bilingualism per se might have

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no necessary effects (either negative or positive) on the cognitive and intellectual development of children in general. What may account for the contradictory results reported in the literature during this period are the psychosocial differences between bilinguals and monolinguals, and not bilingualism per se.

The Beginning of the Conversation in Mathematics Education Journals

During the second International Congress on Mathematical Education (ICME-2) held in the United Kingdom in September 1972, the need for fundamental research on the relationship between the learning of basic mathematical structures and the language through which they are learnt was highlighted as critical. It was as a result of this ICME-2 decision that an international symposium on “Interactions between linguistics and Mathematical Education” was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 1st to 11th September 1974. The symposium was sponsored by UNESCO in cooperation with the International Congress on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI) and the Centre for Educational Development Overseas (CEDO). Prior to 1974, it seems that there were no formally organised international conferences focusing exclusively on the relationship between mathematics and language. The Symposium highlighted the lack of research on the relationship between language and mathematics and concluded that difficulties in mathematics learning depend on the language of learning. It further affirmed that all languages include linguistic features of benefit for the acquisition of mathematical concepts and thus can be used for mathematics teaching and learning.

One of the issues that the symposium highlighted is the fact that the problems of learning mathematics in an additional or foreign language are not peculiar to learning in a world language such as English or French because there are many other countries such as Tanzania and India, where many learners have to learn mathematics in a national language (e.g., Kiswahili, Hindi) which is not their home language. This practice still continues and increasingly so in European countries that do not have any of the now world languages as the main language (e.g., Spain, Italy) and are experiencing the pressure to ensure that their learners are fluent in at least one of the world languages. In my view this is an important matter that remains a gap in research in this area of study. So far research published in the selected journals focuses on bilingual and multilingual contexts and not yet on the specificity of trilingual contexts where learners are exposed to a home language, national language and official language. The specificity of trilingual contexts in mathematics teaching and learning lies in the fact that unlike in multilingual contexts where there is a presence of multiple languages but only two languages (home language and LoLT) that are in competition, learners in trilingual contexts have to deal with three languages, each of which has its own power and influence – one as a home language, the second as a national language and the third as a world language.

The paper published by Austin and Howson in *Educational Studies in Mathematics* in 1979 was a follow up on the Nairobi symposium and it concludes

that the challenge of language and mathematics learning and teaching is not just an issue for developing countries but for the whole world. In developing countries the challenge is that of learners learning mathematics in a language that is not their mother tongue; in developed countries such as Wales, the USA, Belgium and Canada there are communities of immigrants with well-established ‘minority’ languages and in some countries there are instances where problems arise because of the non-standard nature of the local vernacular (e.g., Jamaica, England, USA, etc.). Austin and Howson acknowledged the fact that bilingualism is a political matter and thus change in society may lead to policy change. Indeed much has changed since 1979: the world has become more multilingual and some countries have changed their language policies and practices, which makes this review timely and relevant. The section that follows focuses on the methodology used in this review – essentially, where and how relevant research published was identified.

METHODOLOGY

Research on mathematics and language diversity is published in mathematics education journals as well as linguistics journals focusing on language in education. In completing this review it was thus important to consider journals across these disciplines. Focusing specifically on published research in journals means that other research that is completed on mathematics and language diversity was excluded because it is not published in the selected journals. The decision to focus only on research published in specific journals was influenced by the need to pay attention only to work that has gone through a rigorous process of review and published in generally recognised leading journals in mathematics education international.

In identifying papers focusing on mathematics education and language diversity, there were also papers focusing broadly on different aspects of language and communication in mathematics education, for example work of Pimm, Pirie, Morgan, Rowland and others. These papers are excluded from the review because they do not focus specifically on language diversity in mathematics education, but on the nature of the mathematical language or ways of communicating mathematically. The [Table 1](#) provides details of the journals selected for the review, the year of inception of the journal as well as the number of papers identified as relevant for the review.

The main limitation of this methodology is that it covers only international journals that only publish in English and thus excludes authors who do not write in English as well as research conducted in regions where English is not the language of research. [Table 2](#) shows how the number of publications has increased per decade since the seventies.

Most of the research completed in this area of study is empirical and the data is analysed qualitatively. The section that follows explores the content of the research that has been published, its contribution as well as the gaps and possibilities for future research.

Table 1. Details of journals selected for the review

	<i>Name of Journal</i>	<i>Year of inception</i>	<i>Number of papers</i>
Mathematics Education Journals	Educational Studies in Mathematics (ESM)	1968	18
	Journal of Research in Mathematics Education (JRME)	1970	6
	For the Learning of Mathematics (FLM)	1980	8
	Mathematics Education Research Journal (MERJ)	1989	9
	International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education (IJSME)	2000	2
	Sub-Total		43
Linguistics Journals	Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (JMMD)	1980	0
	Language and Education	1987	5
	International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism (JBEB)	1998	2
	International Journal of Multilingualism (IJM)	2000	1
	Sub-Total		8
Total			51

Table 2. The number of papers published per decade

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of articles published</i>
1970 – 1979	1
1980 – 1989	6
1990 – 1999	11
2000 – 2009	25
2010 – 2012	8
Total	51

REVIEW OF RESEARCH IN THIS AREA OF STUDY

Table 3 tabulates the most dominant topics or themes that the research has focused on. In order to systematise the review of the papers I developed a framework for looking at the papers. I looked at the journal in which the paper is published, the author, level (i.e., primary/secondary/tertiary), central problem, research approach and the arguments the paper is making. This enabled me to look across the papers and it also made visible the themes and trends emerging from the review. While on the surface it may seem unproblematic to decide which paper focuses on one theme rather than another, in practice the distinctions were more complex. So in deciding on the theme I focused more on the central problem that the paper is addressing rather than issues that come up in the process of the exploration. For example, while Moschkovich (1999) refers to the practice of code-switching, the central problem that the paper is exploring is how teachers can support the participation of English Language Learners in mathematical discourse.

Table 3 shows in brief what research has been undertaken in this area of study. It is not surprising that learner performance has the highest number of papers published because the concern with the performance of learners who learn mathematics in a language that is not their home language is at the core of most of the research completed in this area of study. As I argued elsewhere, at the core of this concern is the need to address the uneven distribution of mathematical knowledge and success (see Setati, 2012). Studies that focused on learner performance compared the performance of learners who learn mathematics in their home language and those

Table 3. Research topics covered in the papers published

<i>Research topics/themes</i>	<i>Number of papers</i>		
	<i>Mathematics Ed Journals</i>	<i>Language journals</i>	<i>Total</i>
Code-switching	8	3	11
Teachers supporting bilingual or multilingual learners	6	0	6
Learner performance	18	3	21
Curriculum planning & Development	4	0	4
Policy	1	1	2
Learner participation	1	1	2
Conversation between researchers from the north and the south	2	0	2
Research Methodology/theory	2	0	2
Research Review	1	0	1
Total	43	8	51

who learn in a language that is not their home language. Research concluded that poor performance is due to lack of understanding the language of the test (Adetula, 1989; De Courcy & Burston, 2000; Evans, 2007; Farrell, 2011; Llabre & Cuevas, 1983; Ni Riodan & Donoghue, 2009; Zepp, 1982). What we have learned from this research is that for the performance of learners who learn mathematics in a language that is not their own to improve it is important that the language, culture and the logic or reasoning system of the learner should match with that of the teacher, the textbook and the curriculum (Berry, 1985; Evans, 2007; Zepp, 1982). Recent research suggests that competence in both the home and the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) can be an advantage in mathematics achievement (Clarkson, 1992; Clarkson & Galbraith, 1992). While Farrell (2011) and Gerber, Engelbrecht, Harding, and Rogan (2005) caution that causal relationships should never be assumed when it comes to the relationship between language fluency and learner performance; he agrees with Clarkson that competence in the home language and the LoLT has a bearing on learner performance. These findings encourage bilingualism and in many ways are at odds with those of the sixties, which positioned bilingualism as a problem.

Research in this area of study does not only encourage bilingualism but also argues for the development of the learners' home languages as a strategy to motivate them to succeed in mathematics (e.g., Barton, Fairhall, & Trinick, 1998). While encouraging the development and the use of the home languages may be an ideal for many countries, it is due to the hegemony of what is regarded as the language of power (e.g., English) that the use of code-switching to support learners has become a common practice in many classrooms all over the world (Adler, 1998, 1999; Barwell, 2003a, 2005; Clarkson, 2007; Heng, 2006; Khisty & Chval, 2002; Lim & Presmeg, 2010; Moschkovich, 1999; Planas & Setati, 2009; Setati, 1998; Setati & Adler, 2000; Setati, 2005). This is mainly because teachers are trying to ensure that while they use the learners' home languages to support learning they do not disadvantage their learners by not ensuring that they have access to English, which is seen as a language of international communication.

The research theme/topic that has the least number of papers in [Table 3](#) is the one on reviews. This is because there has not been a review since the 1979 paper by Austin and Howson that provides a bibliography indicating the wide variety of relevant articles and books in this area of study. The other categories that have fewer than five papers published are the category on research methodology/theory, north-south conversations, policy issues and learner participation. The first paper in the category on methodology/theory highlights the fact that research in mathematics education is mainly published in English and discusses how this may discriminate on the basis of language use both within the community of researchers and in the practice of research (Barwell, 2003b). Discrimination here refers to differential opportunities afforded for using language with resultant effects of unequal access to power and resources. Barwell (2003b) observes that most of the research in

mathematics education is carried out in multilingual settings and thus the languages and the language practices in such settings influence findings of the research even if it is not exploring issues of language.

What is most interesting is the fact that the two publications that focus on issues of language policy are both based on the Malaysian experience (Heng & Tan, 2006; Lim & Presmeg, 2010). These papers are as a result of the language policy changes that happened in Malaysia, which implemented its new education policy of teaching mathematics and science in English in 2003 in a move to keep abreast with global developments and have greater access to science, technology and business knowledge. The research was mainly to understand the impact that this new policy has on classroom practice and to find out how teachers were dealing with the challenges of teaching mathematics in English. Given the recent (2011) switch again in Malaysia on language policy, it might be anticipated that further studies will be undertaken to track its impact on learning and teaching mathematics. It is interesting that while policy changes also happened in several countries in Africa during the nineties none of the papers focusing on policy were published in the linguistics and mathematics education journals selected for this review.

The papers in the north-south conversations category focus on interactions between researchers in South Africa, Britain and the USA about language diversity issues in mathematics education (Barwell & Setati, 2005; Phakeng & Moschkovich, 2013). The papers specifically compare how some mathematics teachers and learners in the different countries deal with the complexities of learning and teaching mathematics in linguistically diverse classrooms. On the one hand, Barwell and Setati (2005) foreground code-switching as a common practice in multilingual classrooms in South Africa, but it is never used in UK classrooms. On the other hand, Phakeng, and Moschkovich (2013) raise two important issues that until then had not been attended to by research in this area of study. First, is the fact that while research in this area of study refers explicitly to language and culture, it does not foreground race. There is no doubt that language plays an important role in the social construction of race, racism and racial identity in mathematics classrooms and thus interesting that research in this area of study has ignored these important links in its analyses. The second issue is the fact that research in this area of study in the USA refers to bilingualism despite the multilingual nature of the country and the classrooms. While the political agendas of bilingualism are different from those of multilingualism, it is clear that research in this area of study uses the two labels as a proxy for race and socio-economic status.

It is perhaps important at this stage to indicate that research in this area of study has tended to treat bilingualism as a form of multilingualism, which is convenient but problematic because it ignores the different political agendas of bilingualism and multilingualism. It is often true that in contexts that are regarded as bilingual are in fact multilingual but foreground two dominant traditions that are in competition. For example Canada is regarded as a bilingual country, with English and French