
New pedagogy, old pedagogic structures: a fork-tongued discourse in Namibian teacher education reform

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Abstract

This paper reports on a component of a broader study that investigated how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy that underpins the Basic Education Teachers Diploma programme. It focuses specifically on the section of the study that illuminated the fork-tongued discourse in the Namibian teacher education reform. Located in the qualitative-interpretive paradigm, and adopting the case study approach, the broader study used semi-structured interviews, naturalistic non-participant observation and document analysis to understand teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. The study revealed contradictions not only between teacher educators' ideas of learner-centred pedagogy and their practice of it but also within official pedagogic texts. Underpinning the contradictions is the observed official transmission to the classroom of two but conflicting messages where, on the one hand, teacher educators are told to change their classroom practice and adopt learner-centred pedagogy as the new approach in post-apartheid Namibian classrooms while at the same time there is still official clinging to traditional pedagogic structures and arrangements that are antithetical to the new pedagogy. The fork-tongued discourse manifests a narrow reduction of learner-centred pedagogy to a technical rationality concerned only with changing teacher educators' pedagogical skills while ignoring broader structural changes that frame their uptake of the new pedagogy.

Background

The shift from apartheid to a new political dispensation in 1990 saw many changes on the Namibian education landscape. One such change was the adoption of a learner-centred pedagogy. Learner-centred pedagogy in post-apartheid Namibia traces its historical roots to the education activities of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in exile, in education centres such as the refugee school in *Kwanza-Sul*, Angola. Many Namibians who acted as teachers in *Kwanza-Sul* were not trained, and manifested pedagogic practices that were antithetical to the political values and aspirations of the SWAPO liberation movement. It was in the context of

contradictions between the pedagogic practices of teachers in *Kwanza-Sul*, which largely reflected the prevailing classroom situation back home in apartheid Namibia (Dahlström, 1999), and SWAPO's ideological vision of a transformed society built on democracy and social justice, that the search for alternative pedagogic practices based on learner-centred education first started.

With the financial and professional support by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) SWAPO's search for alternative pedagogic practice culminated in a three-year pre-service teacher education programme for primary school teachers, the Integrated Teacher Training Programme (ITTP) (Dahlström, 2002). The ITTP programme offered opportunities in terms of empowering exiled teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement a new pedagogy. The new pedagogy, learner-centred pedagogy, centred on the learner and "was guided by principles of social constructivism: critical and transformative pedagogy, democratic education, conceptual learning, integration of knowledge, and meaning making and reflective practice" (Dahlström, 1999, p.7).

Not only were the education activities in exile seen as "the starting point for undoing apartheid in education and training" in Namibia (Angula, 1999, p.15), but they also provided the 'model or basis' upon which post-apartheid education reform would be based (Cohen 1994; Swarts 1999). Consequently, learner-centred pedagogy, whose practice was started in exile schools, was adopted at independence as the official pedagogy in post-apartheid Namibian classrooms. In its *Toward Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training*, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993, p.10) declared: "as we make a transition from educating an elite to education for all we are also making another shift, from teacher-centred to learner-centred education. . . teacher centred education is inefficient and frustrating to most learners, and certainly is not consistent with education for all". Thus, despite an implementation terrain moderated by a policy of National Reconciliation, post-apartheid education reform in Namibia has been modelled, to a large extent, on the philosophical and ideological principles of the education programmes in exile.

According to Storeng (2001, p.209) learner-centred education is "a world-model of teaching" that has been adopted in many parts of the world. The work of Tabulawa (2003) in Botswana, Altinyelken (2010) and Raselimo (2011) shed light on the contradictions and tensions associated with the

imposition of learner-centred pedagogy particularly by international donor agencies in developing countries. Chisholm and Leyendecker's (2008) analysis of curriculum reform in different contexts in sub-Saharan Africa reveals a significant disjuncture between policy intentions and practice. This paper forms part of a broader study which investigated how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy that underpins the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) programme. The research took the form of a case study and drew upon interviews, naturalistic non-participant observation and document analysis to understand teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. Drawing on Bernstein's theories of pedagogy and recontextualisation, the broader study revealed a disjuncture between teacher educators' ideas of learner-centred pedagogy and their practice of it. Central to this disjuncture was the preponderance of structural, personal-professional and psychological factors that conditioned how teacher educators enacted this new pedagogy.

This paper focuses particularly on one aspect of the findings that illuminated a 'fork-tongued discourse' in the Namibian teacher education reform which, on the one hand, exhorts teachers to transform their practice to learner-centred pedagogy while at the same time still clinging to traditional structures and practices.

Theoretical framework

In this paper, Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing are used to make sense of how teacher educators interpreted and practiced learner-centred pedagogy. According to Bernstein (1971) classification refers to power relations and is concerned with the strength of boundaries or the degree of boundary maintenance (demarcation, insulation) between the various actors, agents, categories and discourses. Thus, depending on the degree of insulation, classification can either be strong (C^+) or weak (C^-). Where classification is strong (C^+), insulation between the various agents, discourses and practices is strong, with highly specialised identities and voices coupled with little interchange between the various categories, agents or discourses. Where classification is weak (C^-), insulation between the various categories, agents and discourses is weak, with less specialised identities and a high level of interaction between the various categories.

The concept of framing, on the other hand, refers to control relations between the teacher educator and the student teacher. It is about the 'locus of control' over the selection, sequencing and pacing and evaluation aspects of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000). Thus depending on the locus of control, framing can either be strong (F^+) or weak (F^-). Where framing is strong (F^+), the teacher educator or external authority (policy or curriculum) has explicit control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of the instructional and regulative discourse. Where framing is weak (F^-), the student teacher has more apparent control over the instructional and regulative discourse. Framing values are, therefore, regulated by the locus of control in the pedagogic relation between the teacher educator and the student teacher.

Framing can either be external (eF) or internal (iF). External framing (eF) refers to pedagogic contexts where external control factors such as the curriculum, policy, authorities and other macro-level structural forces constitute the locus of control over the instructional and the regulative aspects of pedagogic discourse. Internal framing (iF), on the other hand, refers to pedagogic contexts where internal forces, such as the teacher educator, the scheme of work, etc. constitute the locus of control over the instructional and regulative discourse. Both external and internal framing can either be weak (eF^- , iF^-) or strong (eF^+ , iF^+). Bernstein refers to the regulative discourse as the discourse for order, character and manner in a pedagogic relation while the instructional discourse is the discourse that defines the knowledge and skills transmitted or acquired in a pedagogic relationship. The two discourses constitute pedagogic discourse with the regulative discourse being the dominant discourse.

Closely related to the classificatory and framing values is Bernstein's corpus of rules, namely: recognition, realisation and evaluative rules. These rules are also essential to the present study as they illuminate teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. The recognition rule operates at the level of the acquirer and serves as a means by which the acquirer is able to recognise the specificity of the context in which he or she is in. It orientates one to the speciality of the context; it helps one to determine what the context demands. Unless one possesses this rule, one will not be able to read the context and will remain silent or ask inappropriate questions (Bernstein, 1996, p.31).

The classificatory principle regulates recognition rules (reading of the context), and the recognition rule refers to power relations. Strong classification (C^+) gives rise to clear contextual specialties and identities. The context is clearly spelt out, and the acquirer can thus recognise the context or read the context. Weak classification (C^-), on the other hand, gives rise to ambiguities in contextual recognition. The acquirer is given more room to infer what the context might be, instead of having it clearly spelt out to him or her.

Bernstein further argues that while the recognition rule enables the acquirer to distinguish the specificity of the context, the realisation rule, on the other hand, enables the acquirer to speak, act or write in appropriate ways. Realisation rules determine how one puts meanings together and how one makes these meanings public, that is, how one produces the legitimate pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1996). Realisation rules can either be ‘passive or active’ (Alves and Morais 2008). Alves and Morais (2008) argue that passive realisation rule enables one to say what a particular discourse means, while active realisation enables one to produce a legitimate text in a given pedagogic context. Where framing is strong (F^+), realisation rules are explicit. Where framing is weak (F^-), realisation rules are implicit or tacit. The third rule, the evaluation rule, determines the standards that must be reached, and the criteria for attaining these standards at the micro-level of pedagogic practice where the legitimate text is transmitted or taught. The evaluation rule entails actualising the official pedagogic discourse in practice and being able to provide evidence of this.

The foregoing discussion has outlined the theoretical framework for the study. The following section presents the research methodology that was followed by the study.

Research Methodology

The case study focused on Education Theory and Practice (ETP) described in the BETD Broad Curriculum as occupying “a central role. . .cementing together all the other elements of the curriculum” in the BETD programme (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture [MBESC] 2001, p.1). Five teacher educators in the ETP Department participated in the study. As part of the ethical commitment, the teacher educators were assigned

fictitious names: Peter, Mary, Loide, Bob and Patrick. In addition, ethical considerations were further met by seeking permission or authorisation from relevant authorities to enter the research site for the purposes of the study. The case study comprised three interrelated phases. Phase one consisted of a literature review on learner-centred pedagogy. This initial review of policy and other related literature was essential as it helped clarify the objectives of the study. The second phase consisted of an engagement with the research site and the research participants in the form of semi-structured interviews and naturalistic, non-participant observation. During this phase, the goal was to generate data so as to understand:

1. how teacher educators interpret learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description, and
2. how teacher educators practice learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of pedagogic practice or implementation.

Interviews and lesson observations were conducted with the participants during three site visits that spanned a period of 14 months. Five pre-observation interview sessions, lasting about ninety minutes each, were held with each of the participants while a total of fifteen lessons taught by the same participants were observed. Lesson observations were followed by several follow-up interviews probing further the observed practices of the new pedagogy by teacher educators. Narratives generated through interviews and field-notes are italicised in the paper for easy identification.

While phase two of the study comprised mainly field-work, phase three was characterised by a withdrawal from the research site, focusing on analysing and interpreting the data. The literature review continued throughout this phase to illuminate the findings emerging from the data gathered in the field. Drawing on Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing a data analysis model was constructed. The construction of the model drew on antecedent studies such as Morais and Neves (2001) that extended the classification and framing concepts into four point scales in order to mitigate the dichotomisation within the Bernsteinian theory. Consequently, a model was constructed based on decreasing or weakening scales of classification and framing, ranging from very strong to very weak power relations (C^{++} , C^+ , C^- , C^{--}), and very strong to very weak control or framing relations (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{--}). The four point scale was necessary in order to avoid giving the impression that pedagogic reality can be neatly packaged into unproblematic,

dichotomous categories of strong classification (C^+) versus weak classification (C^-) or strong framing (F^+) versus weak framing (F^-). The extended scale increased chances of appropriately addressing the messiness of pedagogic reality. The four point scale data analysis model also served to highlight the potential mixed nature of pedagogy in any pedagogic context. In order to ensure research quality, various protocols for maintaining the validity and trustworthiness of the data were followed. These included: methodological triangulation, meaning the use of multiple data generating tools within a single study so as to enrich the data (Stake, 1995); member checking which entails taking raw data such as transcripts to the research participants in order for them to read through the transcribed data, comment on its accuracy and make any corrections or additions (Bassey, 1999); use of critical friends, peer examinations (Merriam, 1998) or peer-debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the following section, the findings are presented and discussed.

Analysis and presentation of data

In order to understand how teacher educators interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the classification and framing concepts, their views and practices of the pedagogy were explored both at the level of description and the level of implementation. This entailed analysing and interpreting interview narratives and lesson observation data by using the decreasing or weakening four point scale of classification and a weakening and decreasing four point scale of framing with descriptors constructed for each of the classification and framing values.

Learner-centred pedagogy as adoption of new pedagogic identities for the teacher educator and the student teacher

One of the key findings of the study was the interpretation of learner centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that entailed adoption of new pedagogic identities for teacher educators and student teachers. The pedagogy was seen as one where the teacher educator becomes a facilitator while the student teacher becomes an active pedagogic agent. This was evident as follows:

Patrick: According to my new role I am a facilitator. I am supposed to plan tasks for students and various activities and then facilitate these in class.

Loide: Me, I am a facilitator. I am facilitating learning and at the same time I have to guide. Guide and direct the learning. . .and at the same time I am also a co-learner. I also need to learn from them. Ok, here and there, I am also, as you know, a kind of, but not really a dictator or a so-called boss. There is somewhere where I can say: here you were supposed to do A, B, C or D. Like a leader.

Mary: The teacher educator should be able to facilitate the learning process instead of preaching throughout the lesson. So, it requires the teacher educator to prepare more than just sitting at the back of the classroom.

The pedagogy was further interpreted to mean student teachers becoming active pedagogic agents:

Bob: Learner-centred pedagogy is an approach that gives us the opportunity to empower our students so that they can be actively involved in class and do things for themselves instead of getting it from the teacher educator all the time.

Loide: When we talk about learner-centred pedagogy, we think in terms of making students to be involved in the whole teaching and learning process. Especially during the classroom situation, we really do not want to see the students seated, listening to the teacher educator and at the same time taking notes, and sometimes they do not even understand those notes. We would like to see students reacting in class. There should be some kind of movement, talking and working.

The interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy in the foregoing presentation of narratives suggest not only a repositioning in the relationship between teacher educators and student teachers but also a power shift. The new pedagogic identity of '*facilitator*' suggests a much softer position and relocation of the teacher educator to the backstage of the classroom. In addition, it also suggests the waning of the teacher educators' pedagogic power and authority. Seen in the Namibian context, it can be argued that this

repositioning or relocation to the backstage of the classroom as a '*facilitator*' is a radical departure from what is largely described as an authoritarian position of the teacher characteristic of the classroom under apartheid Namibia.

Equally, the pedagogic identity of the student teacher as an active agent suggested not only a relocation of the student teacher from the margins to the centre of the classroom but also a power shift towards the student teacher. This repositioning to the centre of the classroom as an active participant was coupled with a simultaneous weakening or diminishing of the pedagogic power and authority of the teacher educator as seen in the narratives above. Seen within the context of the data analysis model, learner-centred pedagogy was being interpreted at the level of description as a pedagogic practice based on weak power relations or weak rules of the regulative discourse in pedagogic relations between teacher educators and student teachers. Insulation in terms of power was weak with less specialised power identities. The teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description were consistent with official interpretations in official policy texts that were examined. For instance, in the National Curriculum for Basic Education, it is stated that "learners learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process through a high degree of participation, contribution and production" (National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), 2008, p.31). Similarly, the pedagogic image of the teacher educator as '*facilitator*' with less power than in the past was also evident in the BETD course material which states: "in learner-centred pedagogy, the teacher is seen as facilitator and guide, motivating students to learn, and creating a conducive learning environment" (NIED, 1998, p.23). While the consistency between teacher educators' interpretations and that of the policy documents might possibly be construed as the mere reproduction of official discourse, the examples teacher educators gave of how they might implement learner-centred pedagogy in their own classrooms indicated possession of both recognition and passive realisation rules.

Lesson observation data were further examined in order to understand teacher educators' practice in relation to their interpretations at the descriptive level. While teacher educators claimed during the interviews that learner-centred pedagogy is based on weak power relations (as seen in the pedagogic identities of facilitator and student teacher as active pedagogic agent), observation of their actual practice depicted an approach characterised by strong power relations at the micro-level of pedagogic practice. For, instance,

Patrick's practice of learner-centred pedagogy during the observed lessons was characterised by explicit and hierarchical power relations in defining his preferred order, character, manner and social conduct during his lessons. In one of his lessons, Patrick made very clear what he expected in terms of punctuality, attendance and preparation for examinations:

Patrick: Please, always remember to come to class on time. Don't forget that examinations are around the corner. I don't like people who come late to class. I don't like disturbances when classes have started.

Later on in the study, several observations of Patrick's lessons revealed strong power relations. For instance, in one lesson, an exchange with his third year students exemplified a strong control scenario centred on the teacher educator as the authority:

Patrick: My friend, I don't want late comers. If you don't want to come to my class, please stay away.

Student

Teacher: [student teacher tries to explain something] Please sir. . .

Patrick: Just sit down; you have already spoiled our mood.

Patrick: [continues to explain the activity. Two students arrive late at the door, trying to knock at the door]

Patrick: Guys, just go away. You are disturbing my class.

In this scenario, the two late comers were literally turned away by Patrick and excluded from the lesson. Patrick's power over his students was thus demonstrated: from his position of authority he exercised the privilege of selecting and transmitting rules of social order which students were simply made to accept and obey. This understanding of learner-centred pedagogy as a practice based on strong power relations was also evident in Mary's practice:

Mary: Yesterday other people were taking chances. There are those students who were misbehaving yesterday during the test. Those students need to come and see me at the office after class and explain to me why they were behaving like that.

The power held by Mary over her students in the pedagogic relation was clearly manifested in her labelling certain students as ‘misbehaving’ and summoning them to her office for reprimand.

In one of Loide’s lessons, strong power relations were exhibited as follows:

Loide: Hey [calls out name of student], listen to me...a teacher should never chew something in front of learners. It is not professional.

The data generated through lesson observation revealed that, despite the interpretation expressed in the interviews – of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on less power of the teacher educator – the actual enactment of learner-centred pedagogy in the classrooms by teacher educators reflected a pedagogic practice based on strong power relations. Thus, contrary to the purported role of being ‘soft-hearted’ facilitators, as framed by weak power relations, in the observed lessons, the teacher educator still exercised a prominent and visible position of power and authority. As will be seen in the subsequent paragraphs, this contradiction could be interpreted in the context of the fact that teacher educators were operating in a pedagogic environment that was strongly framed externally. In addition, narratives in the broader study also indicated self-doubt among teacher educators regarding their own professional abilities to enact the new pedagogy. While cognisance is taken of these inhibiting factors it could be argued that the disjunction between teacher educators’ ideas of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the regulative discourse and their practice of it is a possible indication of their lack of the appropriate recognition and realisation rules needed to become creative practitioners of learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of implementation.

Control relations in instruction

Teacher educators’ interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy were further explored in terms of the control relations in instruction. This entailed examining the control relations between teacher educators and student teachers in terms of the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation aspects of instruction. Interview narratives were analysed using a weakening four point scale of framing with descriptors constructed for each of the framing values. The findings are presented as follows:

Strong external and internal control relations over the selection of the instructional content

The data were examined in terms of the degree of control or participation either by teacher educators, external authorities and student teachers in the selection of the instructional content. The selection is strongly framed externally when external authorities are the locus of control while the selection is strongly framed internally when the teacher educator constitutes the locus of control. The selection is weakly framed when there is active student participation and involvement in the selection of the instructional content. Data generated at the level of description revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong external framing in terms of selecting content for inclusion in the syllabus and final transmission to students. The content selection process was described as externally controlled and facilitated by the NIED, with some teacher educators working alongside NIED in the official recontextualising field, for example:

Bob: NIED is the leading institution. They are the people upfront because they direct everything. So, even if people are being invited to curriculum meetings, it is the NIED people who are in the final position to take decisions on whether or not our contributions to syllabus development are acceptable. NIED is taking the lead.

Alongside the strong external control over the selection of discourses data also revealed the exclusion of students from the content selection process.

Peter: I like the idea of students taking responsibility of their own learning. I like that notion. One thing I am not sure about is the standard of our students in the BETD. In as much as you would have loved to involve them in syllabus development or selection of content areas, and take charge of their own learning, they can't. They are unable to do so. You will just end up spoon feeding them.

Bob: My personal concern here is that perhaps the person who came up with the notion of letting students decide on what to learn was so excited that he did not look at the other side of the coin. Yet these students who are joining the BETD have not gone far academically. They don't have much knowledge and experience to decide on what they should be taught. They are coming here to learn.

Students were thus seen as incapable of deciding on what to learn. There was no evidence to suggest a collaborative approach that would involve students or community organisations in the selection of instructional content. This could reflect contradictions in the Namibian official policy documents. For instance, while official pedagogic texts advocate active student involvement in decision making pertaining to what to learn (Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC] 1993; Ministry of Education [MoE] 2007), procedural rules and guidelines for curriculum panels make no provision for student involvement.

Teacher educators' enactments of learner-centred pedagogy were observed in order to understand how learner-centred pedagogy was being practised in relation to control over the content selection aspect of the instruction. Analysis of the data revealed strong internal control by the teacher educator over the selection aspect through lesson planning, which determined the content areas to be covered in a given lesson. This was often announced to student teachers:

Bob: [introduces the day's topic] Today's topic is motivation. [Writes the word motivation on the chalkboard];

Bob: Who can define the word motivation for me?

Student: Motivation is anything that guides a person in order to achieve what he wants to achieve.

Bob: [receives a number of definitions from students and acknowledges that all definitions are correct]. . .

In Mary's lessons, control over the selection of content for transmission was centred on her as the teacher educator:

Mary: Yesterday we looked at lifelong learning and what can be done to cure the diploma disease.

Mary: I have decided that for today you work in groups and look at the issue of education for all.

Mary: I will give you these questions, I have them typed out.

Mary: [reads out and explains the questions]. This is your time to engage in discussions.

While at the level of description, learner-centred pedagogy was described as a pedagogic practice in which the selection of content for inclusion in the syllabus and final transmission to the students was externally controlled, the lesson observation data revealed that at the micro-level of implementation, content selection was more teacher-centred, with the teacher educator retaining full control over which topics to cover and when to cover them. These findings were also confirmed through an examination of teacher educators' daily lesson plans which reflected that they selected topics for the day and prepared accordingly. Of course, from the teacher educators' point of view, the selection of topics may well be perceived and experienced as externally controlled by the demands of the syllabus. However, the non-involvement of student teachers in the selection of discourses was in contradiction of official policy. For instance, the policy document: *Toward education for all* (MEC, 1993, p.11) states:

Much more than has been our experience previously, learners will be involved in setting objectives and organising their work [. . .] learners and teachers will share responsibility for the learning process.

In almost all the lessons observed, the content to be transmitted was initially known only to the teacher educator, who announced it to the student teachers at the beginning of the lesson. It can be argued, in this case, that the macro-level strong framing over the selection of discourses (who selects content to be taught) was translated at the micro-level of pedagogic practice into a strong internal framing over the selection of discourses in a manner that centred on the teacher educator.

Strong external and internal control relations over the sequencing of the instruction

The data were further examined in terms of the control relations over the organisation, ordering or sequencing of the instruction. At the descriptive level, in the interviews, learner-centred pedagogy was interpreted as a pedagogic practice informed by strong external control relations underpinning the sequencing of the instruction. The sequencing aspects were underpinned by strong external framing arising from curriculum requirements, that is, what

is regarded as the logical order in which the curriculum content should be presented. For example:

Loide: Teacher educators normally look at which topics come when, but also taking into account the precedence or order of topics because there are some topics that should be covered before students can go for school-based studies, for instance. We want them to go for school-based studies with relevant knowledge that they can use when they are teaching during practice teaching.

Thus, the professional requirements of teaching practice rather than student learning interests constituted the locus of control over the sequencing or ordering of the transmission of discourses. In addition, student teachers were perceived as mere recipients of the sequencing schemes drawn up for them by their teacher educators rather than active participants in their construction:

Bob: Actually, what we normally do before students report in the new academic year is that we meet as teacher educators and look into what we are going to offer that academic year. And when we have agreed on all the areas, and have arranged these areas chronologically according to how we want to present them to students, then we task one of us to prepare the document [scheme of work].

Bob: When the students report in February, the scheme of work will already be in place, indicating the assignments and due dates on which topics are to be covered, even though to some extent there are always some difficulties in meeting those deadlines.

Loide: We are supposed to give this [scheme of work] to student teachers right from the beginning of the year so that everybody has a copy, the lecturers as well as the students.

By adopting an approach that excluded students from participating in the sequencing of discourses, teacher educators contradicted their own perceptions of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic approach that is not only centred on the student teacher but assigns him or her an active pedagogic role. This particular finding was further accentuated by data obtained at the implementation level where the sequencing process was further de-centred from the student teachers. Findings demonstrated that at the micro-level of

pedagogic practice, the sequencing of discourses was strongly controlled internally by teacher educators who exercised control over the chronological order or progression of topics which were themselves mandated by external framing factors.

Thus, despite teacher educators' description of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process, the data revealed that students were not involved in the sequencing of discourses and were relegated to a subservient position of mere recipients of sequencing schemes drawn up by either external authorities or by their teacher educators. While it can be said that teacher educators did not demonstrate possession of recognition and realisation rules to meaningfully recontextualise learner-centred pedagogy, the demonstrated lack of these rules should be seen in terms of a pedagogic context conditioned by various factors as cited in this paper.

Strong external and internal control relations over the pacing of instruction

Pacing defines the amount of time spent to cover a given content area, and who has control over this amount of time in a pedagogic relation. Strong external framing over the pacing of instruction denotes a pedagogic situation where the locus of control over the pacing aspect resides with external authorities. Strong internal framing denotes a pedagogic context where the teacher educator constitutes the locus of control over the pacing aspects. Weak framing over the pacing aspects happens when student teachers, particularly their learning needs, constitute the locus of control.

Teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy was further examined in relation to the locus of control over pacing aspects in the pedagogic relations with their students. The findings revealed a learner-centred pedagogy interpreted as an approach based on strong external control of the pacing of discourses. Key external pacing factors cited during interviews included the scheme of work, syllabus coverage, the college composite timetable, college authorities and the NIED moderation exercise. This particular finding was evinced as follows:

Peter: We don't have much liberty because we are time-tabled in the college composite timetable. After thirty minutes another class

starts and you must vacate the classroom for the other teacher educator or you must proceed to your next class where other students are waiting for you. So, you can't do much, unless you have double periods. We don't have any liberty within the college timetable. You are given thirty-five minutes and after those thirty-five minutes another teacher educator is waiting for the students. So, not much time is available.

Peter: The time is not enough. If you have to be learner-centred you need a lot of time. From the college point of view we do not have enough time to really inculcate the philosophies and principles of learner-centred pedagogy into our students. We have very little time. Today, with all the learner-centred talk and the lesson is still thirty-five minutes. Now, if we have changed the thinking and we want the teacher educators to become facilitators of learning and students to be involved in the teaching and learning process, I think we need to rethink how much time is needed for a period. Thirty-five minutes, I think was for the era where the teacher educator did the talking and students did the listening.

Aside from the time table, another external control factor identified was that of the college authority:

Bob: The aim of the authority who manages the colleges is that we should cover the syllabus. The syllabus should be covered as a whole. . . .even if they are driven by that intention they do not know what is on the ground in the classroom. It is only me, the teacher educator who knows what is here and who knows what the students are demanding from me. So, I must know how to play the game so that I can satisfy both parties. While I should make sure that the syllabus is covered I should at the same time make sure that my students are learning. Teaching should be focused on students' learning rather than coverage of the syllabus or scheme of work. Otherwise when the NIED people come for moderation they will start blaming you as a teacher educator that you haven't done anything.

Another identified external frame factor shaping pacing is that of the scheme of work:

Peter: Another issue is the scheme of work. You are given a scheme of work saying this is what and this is how much we are going to cover in this time period. You have to cover that and seem to have completed the work and show that things are covered. . .there is not much room for a teacher educator's own initiative. Because you have, as it were, a schedule to follow and work has to be covered. That is how it is supposed to be.

While some teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on flexible and responsive pacing that takes into account the tempo of student teacher's knowledge acquisition, it is evident that in most cases the narratives reflect that this was constrained by a strongly structured pedagogic environment. This environment negated the progressivist and constructivist assumptions of learner-centred pedagogy:

In learner-centred pedagogy, [. . .] the "time-table" is less of a regimen than it once was. There are fewer scheduled "class" hours; students use the institution's learning centres at any time of the day and any time of the week. Similarly, traditional semester dates take less importance. A student completing a specific learning outcome can work ahead, concentrating on weaknesses, or pursue other priorities. Within the year, traditional subject sequences become less a function of programme organization and more a function of learner-needs and priorities (Van Aswegen and Dreyer 2004, p.296).

While alluding to the costs involved in terms of time, Morais (2002, p.560) also argued for a weakly framed context for pacing:

[. . .] successful learning depends to a great extent on the weak framing of pacing – that is, on conditions where children have some control over the time of their acquisition. This has generally been politically unacceptable, since it raises the cost of education.

Constrained by the college composite timetable and the scheme of work, data sourced at the implementation level revealed that at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, in their own classrooms, teacher educators controlled the rate of pacing, thus suggesting strong internal control of pacing. In all the lessons observed, the teacher educator prescribed the deadlines for submission of assignments and specified when specific tasks had to be completed, expecting all student teachers to progress at the same pace regardless of their individual interests and abilities. During presentations by student teachers or groups of students, the teacher educator not only decided who spoke when but also for how long one could speak. Teacher-centred pacing of the instructional discourse was manifested in the data as follows:

Bob: [checks each group] Are you done? Please finish quickly. We are waiting for that group to finish. There are a few minutes only for you to finish.

Mary: [giving instructions to her student teachers] I am giving you 10 to 12 minutes to do the task because you have been reading already about this task. One should be the secretary while another group member should be prepared to report. . . [Mary walks around helping groups. Later on she announces]: a minute, one minute remaining then you will be reporting.

Loide: I am going to give each of you fifteen minutes to present your lesson. After your presentation we will take five minutes to look at the strong and weak points of your lesson.

It is evident from these excerpts that pacing of the instructional discourse was centred on the teacher educator rather than the student teacher. Absent from the data was evidence of an approach to pacing that was flexible and accommodative of the student teacher's tempo of learning. Thus, no weak framing relations over the pacing aspects of the instructional discourse were observed, despite the teacher educators' views that learner-centred pedagogy is a practice in which pacing is controlled by the student teachers' pace of acquisition of the pedagogic discourse. The teacher educator seemed to teach in order to cover the syllabus or scheme of work, and as if all the students were progressing at the same tempo, presumably under the pressure of external expectations. Once again, it is possible to conclude that teacher educators did not meaningfully and creatively recontextualise learner-centred pedagogy, suggesting that they lacked recognition and realisation rules. Again, the observed practice could equally be the result of numerous factors such as the strong external frame factors.

Aside from external frame factors cited in the narratives above, note should be taken of other factors that might possibly constrain educators' meaningful uptake of learner-centred pedagogy. For instance, O'Sullivan (2004) and Altinyelken (2010) identify factors such as the deep-seated cultural beliefs educators have about learner-teacher relationships that are based on authority, and about the purpose of education which is to impart knowledge, especially in an examination driven system. The broader study on which this paper is based also identified, among others, personal-psychological factors such as teacher educators' own self-doubt and lack of professional confidence in

implementing the new pedagogy as some of the factors that constrained their meaningful interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy in addition to structural external frame factors.

Strong internal control relations over the evaluation aspect

Assessment in the BETD programme is supposed to be learner-centred, emphasising positive achievement as opposed to focusing on weaknesses (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture [MBESC] and Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation [MHETEC], 1998). It is intended to be implicit and various, involving multiple and diffuse approaches, and always accommodative of the student teacher's contributions.

Teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to evaluation aspects were examined. The following views emerged:

Peter: Assessment in the BETD, I think, theoretically speaking is good, but seriously speaking it does not motivate serious learning. You will find that even those who are committed to serious work at the beginning of their studies, after some time they will get demotivated. We don't want to go back to the old system where everything was about tests and examinations but we are really struggling with the current approach. Assessment in the BETD is a problem. We are struggling.

Loide: In order to promote learner-centred education, assessment in the BETD needs to be revised. Like the way we are trying to assess our students, okay, students write assignments and then fail. We give them again a second chance, a third chance, and a fourth. It is really too disturbing because now what will happen is like teacher educators will not mark or assess for the correct information or really to assess students based on the information they want. They will only mark to make them pass. Why, because I cannot again set up a third paper, and a fourth paper.

Mary: The college should change and try to use the same system that the University of Namibia is using whereby students write tests and accumulate marks which allow them to enter and write an

examination. Even though we do not want to emphasise examinations I think it is now time to do so, we have had enough.

While official pedagogic texts advocate evaluation rules that are more implicit, multiple, diffuse and inclusive of student teachers' contributions, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on explicit and specific evaluation rules that are strongly framed. The narratives emphasised the gradable performance of the student as attained in an examination or test. Teacher educators advocated a more visible, explicit and specific form of assessment arguing that the blurred and implicit type of assessment currently in practice does not promote serious learning. They advocated strongly framed evaluation criteria as opposed to weakly framed evaluation criteria advocated by the official pedagogic texts. This contradiction could result from teacher educators' own educational backgrounds based on strongly framed evaluation criteria, and perhaps a lack of professional competence to implement the new assessment approaches. In the broader study, teacher educators expressed their own self-doubt and lack of professional confidence in implementing the new pedagogy. Further to this, teacher educators' preference for strongly framed evaluation criteria could be seen in the context of studies that suggest that strongly framed evaluation criteria are supportive of learning (Morais, 2002; Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Weakly framed evaluation criteria do not necessarily lead to effective learning. Teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strongly framed evaluation criteria could be seen as good pedagogy, suggesting their possession of recognition and realisation rules needed for interpreting and practicing the new pedagogy.

The lesson observation data were examined in order to understand how teacher educators implemented learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the framing of evaluation aspects. Their practice was consistent with their views that insisted on strongly framed assessment practices. Contrary to the weak framing advocated by the official pedagogic texts, the observational data revealed a strong internal framing of assessment practices that are explicit and specific, for example, Loide reacted as follows to one of the student teacher's practice teaching lesson:

The word "pest" was incorrectly written. The "P" was not written in capital. The heading should also be written on the chalkboard. Chalkboard writing was not good. You need to come back in the afternoon and practice chalkboard writing skills. You should avoid putting hands in your pockets when teaching because that shows a bad image. Boys, remember that. When you explained some concepts you were too fast. . .

In another lesson, Loide dismissed a lesson offered by one of her student teachers in no uncertain terms, and instructed her to re-plan and re-teach the lesson:

Loide: Eva, please, improve on that. You also ignored when learners said they did not understand. Please, Eva, attend to students. You have to be attentive. It was a good topic but the way you presented it, I think Eva you did not prepare. Eva, please, always prepare for your lessons. I think you just did the preparation this morning. . . Eva, we really need to be serious. I want you to re-teach this lesson. I will allocate you time. You need to go to the hospital and get more material on the subject of your lesson.

In many instances, teacher educators opted systematically to point out what was incorrect in the student teacher's text and indicated in clear and detailed ways how to correct it; a practice consistent with research that indicates that clear feedback and explicit assessment criteria support good learning (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Thus, while the official pedagogic texts advocated weakly framed assessment practices, teacher educators preferred practices based on strong internal framing. Weakly framed assessment practices such as allowing students several resubmissions of failed assignments, reliance of assignments and de-emphasis of examinations and tests, using multiple and diffuse assessment approaches, etc. were perceived to generate problems, inhibiting teacher educators' meaningful recontextualisation of learner-centred pedagogy.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted contradictions in teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy, and within official pedagogic texts. Underpinning the contradictions is an official double-speak or fork-tongued discourse that transmits simultaneously to the classroom two contradictory messages, which on the one hand, tells teacher educators to change their classroom practice and adopt learner-centred pedagogy as the new approach in post-apartheid Namibian classrooms, while at the same time clinging to traditional pedagogic structures and arrangements that are antithetical to the new pedagogy. Despite exhortations of teacher educators to teach in a learner-centred manner, college authorities mandate the duration of lessons (thirty-

five minutes), and impose rigid and strongly framed schemes of work and time-tabling and authoritarian expectations in terms of syllabus coverage in a manner that turns a blind eye to the student teachers' tempo of learning. Strong, macro-level external framing over aspects of the instructional discourse such as the selection, sequencing and pacing of discourses dominated the data. This in turn dictated strong internal framing by teacher educators over aspects of the instructional discourse at the micro-level of their classrooms. The call to transform to a learner-centred pedagogy has not included changes in the broader systemic factors. What seems to matter is the policy to change teacher educators' pedagogic skills from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness while fundamental pedagogic frame factors such as the external controls on selection of discourses, time-tabling, scheduling as manifested by the scheme of work remain unchanged. The dominant discourse has thus tended to reflect a narrow reduction of learner-centred pedagogy to a technical rationality concerned only with simple tricks of the trade while ignoring changes in the broader structural sphere – structural changes that condition or frame teacher educators' interpretation and practice of the new pedagogy.

We argue that the fork-tongued discourse, anchored in a technicist approach, constitutes one of the key factors that constrain and stifle teacher educators' meaningful uptake of learner-centred pedagogy in the Namibian teacher education reform. We further argue that the fork-tongued discourse, with its attendant structural frame factors largely inhibit teacher educators' acquisition of recognition and realisation rules needed to meaningfully interpret and practice the new pedagogy. While some teacher educators demonstrated possession of the recognition and realisation rules for interpreting learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description, at the level of practice, most of them did not. In order for meaningful transformation of pedagogy to take place, there is a need for a broader perspective that will take into account not only changes in teacher educators' pedagogic skills but also changes in the broader structural arrangements such as time-tabling, sequencing, pacing and authoritarian views regarding syllabus coverage. When the selection or sequencing of discourses is strongly framed externally, there is little possibility of the teacher educator executing his or her facilitative role or engaging in weakly framed pedagogy that involves students in discourse selection. Instead, chances are high that the teacher educator will simply become a transmitter of externally prescribed knowledge. Such a pedagogic context is antithetical to the teacher educator's professional empowerment.

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