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Discrepancy between Speech and Written Versions of Shona: The Case of the Karanga of Chivi District in Masvingo, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

Schooling in Zimbabwe have a socially constructed hidden definition that impacts language learning. The ‘racialised bilingual tainted educationists’ measure learning through the influence of some recognised languages. Scholarship underestimate linguistic power dynamics in the ‘nativised foreign languages’. The phenomenon of ‘linguaging education’ can be traced back to Christian missionaries in the 1890s and orthography harmonisation efforts. In an effort to decentre English, the government attempted a native language centred approach through Section (6) of the Zimbabwean Constitution, officially recognising 16 languages. To inclusivity, the medium of instruction for infant learners during the first three years is to be done using their native language. This reversal corrective measure has, in some circumstances, caused more harm than good. Through cultural capital theory this article examines, the discrepancy between written Shona and spoken Karanga dialect, the extent to which the Karanga dialect is a social capital for native infants in school, and its impact on academic success. The research is qualitative in nature and it employs case study design of purposively sampled experts. Key informants were interviewed and focus group discussions were done. The findings were triangulated with the textual analysis of reports, circulars and policy documents. The findings revealed a disjunction between the language spoken by the Karanga dialect native speakers and written versions of Shona. Thus, Shona just like the English language, is to quite an extent a foreign language that is neither native nor cultural capital to the educational success of Karanga learners.

Keywords: Cultural Capital Theory; Native Language; Inclusivity; Orthography; Mono-Dialect; Multi-Dialect

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1. Introduction

One is born with speech organs whereas writing skills develop later. Bloomfield says writing is not a carbon copy of speech^[1]. In Zimbabwe, people of different dialects have their oral speech, which is distinctive to their regions, for example, Karanga in Masvingo, Ndau in Chipinge, Manyika in Manicaland, Zezuru in Harare, Korekore in Guruve and Karoi, and Kalanga in Plumtree. Writing came to Zimbabwe in the 1890s with the coming of the whites. In the different places where the missionaries settled, such as Masvingo, Mutare and Mazowe, they tried to establish the writing system using the local dialects like Karanga in Masvingo, Zezuru in Mazowe and Manyika in Mutare. Kahari^[2] says the main aim of the missionaries in Zimbabwe was for the people to be able to read the bible. In a bid to unify the dialects of Mashonaland for easy writing of religious books, Doke was invited by the government of Rhodesia to carry out research on the dialects of Mashonaland. Doke^[3] discovered that 80% to 90% of the vocabulary of the Mashonaland languages was similar, which evidenced that they were dialects of the same language which he called Shona. Doke, together with representatives of different dialects, made the Shona alphabet that had 32 characters compared to the Roman alphabet that had 26 letters. The writing system was regarded as a representation of all the dialects of Mashonaland.

Doke's orthography marked the birth of the standard Shona writing system in Mashonaland^[3, 4]. The orthography by Doke was revised in 1955 and 1967, respectively. Minor additions and subtractions to the writing system were made by Doke^[3]. Most of the aspects of Doke's writing systems are still in use by people of different Shona dialects. This researcher noted with concern that the writing system of Doke differed greatly from speech in some circumstances. Doke's orthography provided a common way of writing that is not a representation of all Shona speech dialects^[3-5]. Doke adopted a mono-dialect rather than multi-dialect approach to the unification of five Shona dialects, which was mainly based on the Zezuru dialect. The attendant Shona orthography designed was therefore Zezuru in outlook. This article therefore sought to uncover discrepancies between the Karanga speech of Chivi and Shona writing styles. Writing is governed by the availability of letters in the alphabet that represent speech sounds, which are the orthography rules. International phonetic association that stipulates that one

sound one letter or symbol guides the standard Shona writing. It is against this background that this article, using the cultural capital theory, sought to uncover the discrepancy between the Karanga speech of people in Chivi District and the written Shona.

2. Materials and Methods

Ever since Doke's application of mono-dialect against multi-dialect approach to the unification of Shona dialects in 1931, Shona writing and speech systems have never been consistent. There is a notable variance between the universalised written version and speech styles from dialect to dialect with varying degrees and sometimes even bigger as to warrant a standalone language like Ndau, which is now a language on its own. Shona writing system in general started as early as the 1890s with the coming of whites. Standard Shona writing system specifically started in 1931 with the coming of Doke's system of writing. This system of writing is the one with most aspects that people use today for writing Shona in Zimbabwe. The article is premised on the view that the Education Act as Amended in 2020 Section 13 states that, Every school shall endeavour to -

- a) Teach every recognised language;
- b) Ensure that the language of instruction shall be the language of examination;
- c) Ensure that the mother tongue is to be used as the medium of instruction in Early Childhood Education (ECE); and
- d) School curriculum shall as far as possible, reflect the culture of the people of every language used or taught in this section.

The above highlighted constitutional provisions have implications for the implementation of the language education policy among the Karanga people of Chivi. The inference is that the recognised language is Shona. This is the language of examination for Early Childhood Education. On the contrary, the mother tongue for the Karanga infants is Karanga, which is a dialect of Shona. If the curriculum is going to reflect the culture of people of every language used or taught in this section, whose culture and language is Shona to the Karanga infants? Thus, the study finds it imperative to find out the extent to which the Shona writing style is different from the Karanga speech style. Employing

the cultural capital theory, the study also attempts to account for the discrepancies and possibilities of harmonising the two Shona written and speech styles for both to serve as assets for Karanga infant learners in Chivi.

2.1. Justification

The thrust of this article is to explore the discrepancies between Karanga speech and Shona writing styles and how that may affect learners and users. By employing the cultural capital theory, the study sought to add value to the area of policy formulation and implementation in dialectology thereby providing possible solutions to the differences of speech and writing styles. The rationale for selecting the Karanga dialect is to focus on a workable case in which the findings can be transferrable to other dialects facing the same challenges depending on the applicability. Geographically, the Karanga are found in Masvingo Province. For this article, the research singled out Chivi District in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The language situation among the Karanga is worsened by the non-existence of the national language policy in Zimbabwe serve for the language in education policy that language researchers base their inferences^[5-8].

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Cultural Capital Theory

Bourdieu^[9] says cultural capital theory is inculcated in the higher-class home and enables students to gain higher educational credentials than the lower class. The education system recognises class inequalities. Success in the education system is facilitated by the possession of cultural capital and higher-class habits. The cultural traits of the higher class are mostly subsumed in the education system. The domination of the higher-class cultural traits put students from that class at a greater advantage over their counterparts from the lower class. If the education system uses the methodologies of the higher class in imparting knowledge, that further destroys the chances of educational attainment of the lower-class students.

This theory may possibly be applicable in accounting for the discrepancies between Karanga dialect speech and Shona writing styles. The Shona writing system does not carbon copy or represent exactly the way the Karanga people speak in their communities. In support of this view,

Chivhanga^[10] avers that the Shona writing system is greatly dominated by the Zezuru dialect. The Zezuru dialect influences the spelling system and word meanings and anything else from other dialects that digresses from Zezuru faced the chop in the Dokean report. Thus, learners from the Zezuru dialect are advantaged in educational attainment and, conversely, for learners without any background of Zezuru, learning Shona is like learning a foreign language. Basing Shona writing on mono-dialect kills the other dialects of Shona, according to Chivhanga^[10].

Cultural capital has been established in education and; in the case of Shona writing, that came as a result of Doke^[3] borrowing a lot of traits from the Zezuru dialect. The high status of the Zezuru dialect was established as became used frequently in the home, education, media and in business. A lot of literature has been documented in Zezuru compared to the Karanga dialect. Literature raised the status of Zezuru making it a stepping-stone for Zezuru pupils over the Karanga students in education.

An inferiority complex may affect the Karanga children as they discover that their dialect is not used in education or in writing and; according to Gora^[7], children would then take Zezuru as a dialect of higher status over their dialect. Teachers extend the gap by teaching Karanga learners using Zezuru, a dialect that is foreign to them. This, according to Gora^[7], destroys and disadvantages Karanga learners in terms of speech, creativity and writing words with similar meaning to Zezuru. Karanga dialect is a cultural capital asset that Karanga learners can leverage on in enhancing academic success.

2.3. Contextualising the Article

Deliberations on national language policy issues have been ensured for some time now. International, regional and national fora have taken time to discourse national language policies illustrating that it is a topical debate.

In the international arena, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)^[11] conference on national language policy made a resolution that cultural and language diversities are an important element to strengthen peace and harmony in the world. Gora^[5] confirms that language and economic development are twins and that they move together and unite people towards development, peace and stability.

The UNICEF and UNESCO reports are of importance to the current study as they advocate for the use of the mother tongue socially and economically. Both reports discourage the use of foreign language in learning. This is similar to the current situation in Zimbabwe where Shona is used to teach Karanga learners. UNESCO cultural policies are therefore aimed at protecting and promoting cultural diversity in its forms, both heritages related and contemporary. Language is also important in society as it helps to maintain cultural traits, beliefs and ways of living.

The importance of the use of mother language in children's education is well acknowledged^[8]. Previous studies in bilingualism observe that learning takes longer in a foreign language than in a mother tongue. The right medium of instruction and transfer of knowledge would be the mother tongue^[12, 13]. Both studies by Maseko and Ndlovu^[12] and Hikwa^[13] are of significance to the current study as they highlight the significance of using the mother tongue over a foreign language. In this case, the Karanga students are deprived of the opportunity to learn using their mother tongue as they are compelled to use Shona, which is mainly based on the Zezuru dialect that is different from their Karanga dialect. When Karanga children are learning Shona, they are learning a foreign language and not their mother tongue.

Regionally, Mutasa^[14] notes three major declarations that have been made concerning the language issue in Africa:

1. The Language Planning for Action for Africa,
2. The Harare Declaration, and
3. The Asmara Declaration.

The heads of states met in Addis Ababa from 28th to 30th July 1986 and agreed that language is at the heart of a people's culture. OAU (now AU) reiterated that social and economic development can be accelerated through the use of indigenous languages. In the process, some recommendations on languages were proffered, which are:

1. Africa needs to assert its independence and identity in the field of languages,
2. Africa needs to take practical action to accord its indigenous languages their rightful official roles as provided for by the cultural charter for Africa, which was arrived at in Lagos,
3. Each state has the right to device a national language policy that reflects the cultural and socioeconomic realities of its country,

4. Adoption and promotion of languages of the state can be achieved when there is political will,
5. The promotion and adoption of African languages as official languages of the state is of advantage in education, politics and cultural affairs of the state.

It is now well acknowledged that mass literacy campaigns cannot be achieved without the use of African languages. The promotion of languages across national borders has been noted to be a vital factor in achieving African unity. The process is meant to help in liberating African people from undue reliance on the utilisation of non-indigenous languages.

In Zimbabwe, Nhongo^[15] explored developments in Zimbabwe concerning the formulation of a plausible national language policy. The study assesses how Zimbabwe's language situation affects its social, economic, political and educational development. The study traces the history of language use from pre-colonial times and links this to what is obtaining now. The study explored the suggestions, declarations, recommendations and acts to do with language developments in Zimbabwe. Findings reveal that there is a need for careful language planning to cover the status, corpus and acquisition planning to have clear-cut language practices, beliefs and management decisions in the communities at micro and macro levels. Such a move could clarify the status planning, that is, the social status of the Shona language, corpus planning to do with the structure of Shona language and language in education clarifying Shona language operationalisation in unique contexts such as the Karanga learners in Chivi District in Masvingo.

The National Cultural Policy^[16] reported that Zimbabwe's indigenous languages constitute a rich linguistic and literacy heritage for all the people and should provide fertile ground for enhancing national understanding. It also spells out that studies be carried out in indigenous languages so that dictionaries, textbooks and literary works as well as scientific and technological works are available in these languages. Meaningful and holistic development is realised if indigenous languages are given recognition. The report is of significant value to the current research as it highlights the need for understanding language development. The Karanga community cannot contribute fully to the national development as they cannot express themselves properly using either Shona or English, which are alien to them. Meaningful participation

of citizens in development needs people to use their mother tongue that they feel free to express their ideas for national development. The current research builds on these reports, as literature is needed in Karanga to raise its status.

Language directs and organises the thinking processes^[17, 18]. Vygotsky argues that thinking is shaped and directed by increased language skills. Where learners are forced to learn using a language they have not mastered, it becomes very difficult for them to conceptualise what they are learning^[19–24]. This research is of vital importance as it exposes the challenges the Karanga infant learners are facing when they are forced to think in Shona, which is divorced from their mother tongue, Karanga. The creativity of Karanga children is affected as they struggle to master Shona, the foreign language, rather than the use of their Karanga mother tongue that they learnt from birth. The use of the mother tongue encourages the development of deeper cultural understanding and increasing of national consciousness. This report is of importance as it questions whether the Karanga people are using Karanga as a medium of instruction and whether cultural values can be preserved if people use Shona as a mother tongue. The thrust of this research is to expose the discrepancies between Shona speech and writing styles.

Several studies on the importance of mother tongue in education argue that, even if education is compulsory or offered free of charge when learning is conducted in an unfamiliar language, it is not possible to achieve universal primary education, let alone education for all. There are scholarly studies that explored the importance of mother tongue in education and that indigenous languages are much more than cultural phenomena^[19–26]. This is so since they argue that language is an important vehicle for cultural transmission, identity building and value creation. Indigenous languages can contribute to the economic development and social progress of the African continent. These previous studies are important to the current research as they highlight the significance of using the mother tongue for development and to achieve the education for all policy by 2030. In this case, the Karanga infants cannot learn effectively using Shona, which is not their mother tongue. Their contribution to national development is insignificant as their voices would not be clearly heard. The current research is different from prior studies in that it aims to bring about discrepancies between

speech and writing styles, which might be in vowel form or syllable.

Several researchers studied attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue in education. They discovered that the negative attitudes were the result of colonial language policy^[5, 7, 27–32]. During the colonial era, the colonised communities adopted the languages of their colonial masters^[23, 33]. The students were forced to use English and the two national languages (Shona and Ndebele) that were officially recognised^[3]. All the other national languages were regarded as dialects of either Shona or Ndebele.

Chabata^[34] researched the contribution of the African Languages Research Institute in raising the status of indigenous languages that include orthography and dictionary for documentation. Chabata contends that writing leads to the standardisation of spelling and word division. Chabata concludes that the formulation of orthography and documentation means the language's status has been raised. Similarly, Sibanda^[35] through decoloniality examined whether the language policy of Zimbabwe is a radical departure from the colonial language policy and concluded that despite that the government claims to be revolutionary the language policy is a continuity of colonial practices.

The Education Act of 1987^[36] and 2020^[37], as amended in 1990, states that the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows: The medium of instruction from ECD to grade 3 shall be the mother tongue. From grade 4, English shall be used as the medium of instruction and Shona and Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal time allocation as the English language. In areas where minority languages exist, the Minister of Education may authorise the teaching of such languages in primary schools. The research or report is of importance to the current study as it shows the disadvantage of the Karanga children when they are learning at school. Shona is not their mother tongue, but a new language like English.

The negative attitude towards indigenous languages dates back to the colonial era Awoniyi^[38] pointed out that the teaching of reading in Shona might be very easy. As Mkanganwi^[39] puts it, when reading Shona aloud, most learners fail to do so fluently. When reading aloud, the dialectical variations become visible in the pronunciation of

syllables such as |*rwa*| the Karanga put |*gwa*| and in |*dya*| they put |*rya*| as in *kurya*. Magwa^[40] researched the problems of the current Shona orthography and established that it lacked certain sounds of other dialects like |*l*| in Ndau as in *Dhliwayo* or *Hlahla*, the |*x*| in Karanga also is omitted as in *xarami* or *maxheu*. Magwa says the writing system makes it difficult for people of other dialects to read Shona loudly due to fear of stigmatisation. The research is of importance as it highlights the reasons why the writing style and speech of Shona vary. The current research justifies its originality by focusing on discrepancies in speech and Shona writing among the Karanga people of Chivi, Masvingo.

Chivhanga^[10] confirms that Shona people have negative attitude towards their language. The negative attitude could be due to the fact that the Shona writing system does not represent all the dialects fully. In other words, the writing system is not a carbon copy of the speech style, especially of non-Zezuru Shona dialect. As noted by Gora^[5], the writing system side-lined other dialects such as Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, and Ndau because they were not fully represented in the unification. Some dialects are therefore not fully represented in the unified Shona language.

Doke^[3] carried the research concerning tone patterns from various dialects of Shona and examined and compared tone patterns of five main dialects. The research reveals that there are significant similarities among the five dialects though there are inherent differences that cannot be ignored in the study of Shona language. The research is of importance to the current study as it shows that there are differences in tone, syllables, sound systems and word meanings/semantics in the dialects of Shona, and this helps to highlight why there are discrepancies between Shona speech and writing style, and within and between dialects. The current research highlights these differences by further looking for ways of harmonising speech and writing styles.

Sibanda^[35] carried out a study on students' performance in four school primary school subjects in the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum. The research concluded that more students failed Shona than other subjects. Sibanda^[35] goes on to note that; in 2007, only 47% of students passed Shona, dropping to 43% in 2008. The research by Sibanda^[35] concluded that the failure rate in Shona is even more pronounced when statistics are compared to Ndebele. Sibanda concluded that more students failed Shona because

it is difficult for pupils deeply immersed in their local dialects to switch from the daily language they use at home to suit the standard Shona examination requirement, which is largely Zezuru. The research is of paramount importance to the current study as it highlights the underperformance of learners in the learning area of Shona despite it being an indigenous language and part of learners' cultural capital asset. It is not the intention of this article to account through cultural capital theory the factors contributing to the performance of Zimbabwean learners in Shona at the national level but simply to note an anomaly in Shona as a learning area.

2.4. Research Methodology

This section outlines the research methodologies used in this article. The outline gives a description of the techniques for gathering, presenting and analysis of data. The section further gives an explanation of and justification for the research paradigm, research design, instruments, and population of the study and the sampling procedures that the researcher employed. The data analysis procedures shall be outlined as well as ethical considerations made in undertaking the research.

2.4.1. Qualitative Paradigm

The article employed a qualitative paradigm in the study. Qualitative paradigm is concerned with non-statistical methods of inquiry and analysis of social phenomena mainly Creswell^[41]. In addition, a qualitative paradigm is a method of inquiry which cuts across academic disciplines. This paradigm is appropriate for studying discrepancies between speech and writing in the Karanga dialect of Shona. It further sought an in-depth understanding of the unit of analysis. According to Nieuwenhuis^[42], qualitative research is concerned with understanding the processes and social cultural contexts that underlie various behavioural patterns and is mainly concerned with explaining why. Morgan and Sklar^[43] add that a qualitative paradigm is concerned with interpretations and meanings. Therefore, the paradigm leads to the emergence of the subthemes, themes and global themes through analysis of data collected by such techniques as interviews, observation case study, document analysis and tape recording, which suits the purpose of the study. The qualitative paradigm aims at gathering an in-depth understanding of human attitudes, feelings and perceptions regarding the discrepancies between

the speech of the Karanga learners of Chivi, Masvingo and the writing of Shona. The researcher selected the method as it gives an individual's own accounts of their attitudes, motivation and behaviours regarding the Karanga dialect speech and writing of Shona. The qualitative paradigm was suitable for the researcher as it leads to the discovery of spoken dialect patterns and written Shona language styles as the paradigm permits close observation and careful documentation.

The qualitative paradigm was opted as it is responsible for changes that occur during the conduct of a study and allows a shift of focus as the study progresses. The paradigm was found worthwhile for this research as it allowed the researcher to learn the situation of Shona speech from the participants and from an emic view.

2.4.2. Research Design: Case Study (Karanga Dialect)

The study adopted a case study design as it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the nature and causes of discrepancies between speech of the Karanga speakers of Chivi, Masvingo and Shona writing style. A case study allowed an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in its context. The aim was to obtain true findings from the respondents through specialisation on one specific sub-dialect of Karanga while *in situ*. The case study design recognises the complexity and embeddedness of social truth hence suitable for the purpose of the study that sought to uncover discrepancy between Karanga speech and written versions of Shona. The case study clarifies social situation and represents conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants. Use of the case study facilitated the inclusion of all the respondents who were language specialists, educators, elders and village heads. The decision of employing a case study was influenced by Nieuwenhuis^[42] who opines that, it enables a holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation. The focus was on how participants made meaning of the study phenomenon in a bid to answer the how and why questions of the research. In this case, a multiple case study of the language experts, educators and language users and custodians in the Karanga communities offered a multi-perspective analysis in which the researchers considered not just the voice perspective of one or two participants in a context, but also views of other relevant groups.

2.4.3. Population

The research population is a group of individuals, events or objects that share a common characteristic and represent the whole or some total of cases involved in a study^[43]. This research focused on the language experts, educators, users and custodians among the Karanga people of the Chivi District of Masvingo. This area was singled out because that is where some of the Karanga people are found.

2.4.4. Sampling Procedures

The research is within the qualitative approach, and this influenced the sampling procedure. Sampling is the process of selecting the objects to be examined and a sample size is a group of items taken from the population for examination purposes^[43]. In the research, two language experts who are research fellows, two educators, two language users (staff members of an examination body and curriculum specialist in languages) and two Shona language custodians (community elderly) were selected because such participants are well-informed of the challenges language speakers meet in migrating from Karanga speech to the unified Shona writing system. Such people really know how learners and general speakers of other dialects could be restricted from speaking Karanga or other dialects freely because of the standard Shona language writing requirements. The researcher interviewed the stakeholders on the discrepancies between Karanga speech and Shona writing. Most participants either lived, worked or were born in the area and were therefore aware of their language issues well. Purposive sampling targets richer sources of data with resembling characteristics of aspects or variables under investigation^[39]. Thus, purposive sampling suited the purpose of this article, that is, to target those participants involved in raising the status of indigenous languages as well as the user system.

2.4.5. Research Instruments

The research employed the interview and the document analysis in gathering the data among the Karanga speaking people of Chivi District in Masvingo. Nieuwenhuis^[42] defines a research instrument as a data-gathering device used in a research study. In the interviews, the researcher employed unstructured interviews and focus group discussions to discover the discrepancies between the speech and writing of Shona among the Karanga. According to Nieuwenhuis^[42], interviews allow the researcher to see the phenomenon through

the eyes of the participants themselves. The interviews were complemented by textual analysis of language policy documents, reports and texts to investigate what they advocate for in the use of language in comparison to the present situation of the Karanga speakers. The triangulation of the two assisted in giving a holistic picture of the discrepancy between the speech of the Karanga speakers in the Chivi District of Masvingo Province and Shona writing styles.

2.4.6. Interviews

This is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, experiences, views, opinions and behaviours of participants^[43]. The researcher held face-to-face interviews with ordinary people, elders and village heads. Using the face-to-face interviews, the research was able to observe some discrepancies between Karanga speech and Shona writing through the pronunciation of certain syllables, which are not found in Shona writing system. To further visualise the discrepancies between Karanga speech and Shona writing among the Karanga people of Chivi, the researcher asked the participants to read certain pieces of literature while tape recording how they pronounced certain syllables. To further expose discrepancies between Karanga speech and Shona writing, the researcher asked the people to summarise in writing what they would have read. The researcher proceeded by holding focus group discussions that focused on whether there were any discrepancies between Shona writing and the Karanga speech version. The participants were asked to give suggestions for harmonisation of Shona language written and spoken versions. Interviews allowed the participants to talk freely about their beliefs and experiences Strauss and Corbin^[44] and; therefore, relevant to the research topic that sought to explore the discrepancies between spoken Karanga and written version of the Shona as experienced by the Karanga people of Chivi in Masvingo Province. Interviews provided better opportunities for feedback to alleviate any misconceptions or apprehension over confidential issues that the respondents may have in responding to the interview questions^[42]. Interviews also encourage high participation by respondents. The presence of the researcher enhanced the likelihood of high participation in this study, as some people prefer direct communication and verbal sharing of experiences and insights into the language situation.

2.4.7. Open Ended or Unstructured Interviews

This type of interview was used to gather information from Karanga teachers and learners. Unstructured interviews can also be called life history interviews as they focus on one's experiences^[43]. In such interviews, people talked freely about their experiences with the use of both written Shona and spoken Karanga versions in their day-to-day business. The researcher guided the participants in the interaction through written excerpts that they read and summarised. The interviews were held in sessions with the second one being a validation procedure.

2.4.8. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Morgan and Sklar^[43] postulate that a focus group could be defined as a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator who uses the group and its interaction for a specific or focused issue. It normally consists of three or more people. The participants in this case study were language experts, educators, language users and custodians among the Karanga people. These were purposively selected for the focus group discussions. The researcher acted as a moderator during the online focus group discussions and presented the subject of discussions in the two sessions with the second one being for validation. The researcher controlled the discussions to avert digression into other issues. The researcher asked the focus group questions seeking clarity from the Karanga speaking participants about the discrepancies they observed between and within spoken and written versions of Shona. Further questions sought to find out how the Karanga speakers account for the discrepancies and the possibility of harmonising the two versions. This research instrument was therefore found most appropriate for the study as it facilitated the researcher to obtain a wide range of responses during one meeting. Furthermore, on the question of the possibility for harmonising the Karanga speech and written versions of Shona, the focus group discussion was the best way as it allowed participants to give diverse views.

2.4.9. Analysing Documents

Payne and Payne^[45] explain that “documentary techniques are used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents, whether in the private domain (personal papers) commercial records or state archives.” Analysis of

documents was of importance in the current study as it assisted to compare policy documents on language and the situation pertaining to the Karanga people. More so, document analysis in this study was not lost like a collection of primary data, but of paramount importance as it helped to see whether language policies and acts were implemented in respect of the usage of the mother language. Furthermore, document analysis was of importance to trace if there were any efforts to address the discrepancies between speech and writing in the previous studies.

2.4.10. Data Presentation and Analysis Procedures

The nature of the data outcome in this case study was qualitative. Qualitative data presentation was based on descriptions. The researcher presented the respondents' views on each and every question regarding discrepancies between Karanga speech and Shona writing styles. Analysis of the data was done based on each question. The interview schedule played a critical role in data analysis. Grounded theory served as both a method of coding and lenses for analysing data. The thematic web-like data analysis was employed in which questions formed sub-themes, themes that are combined into global themes and formed a story ready for reporting.

2.4.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered in this study. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants, and their anonymity was ensured through using pseudonyms. Voluntary participation was also ensured as participants were allowed to leave the research anytime they felt like without victimisation. Confidentiality was maintained by making verbal appeals that the information given would be used for educational purposes only.

3. Results

This section presents, analyses, discusses and interpret data gathered on the discrepancies of the Karanga Shona speech and written versions. The analysis of data resulted in themes on the discrepancies between the Karanga dialect speech and Shona writing styles. The section outlined the types, forms of discrepancies, causes of discrepancies and possible ways of harmonisation of speech and written.

3.1. Are There Any Discrepancies between the Karanga Speech and Standard Shona Writing Styles?

The language experts, educators, language users and custodians interviewed by the researcher all expressed that the way people speak Karanga differed from standard Shona writing. People indicated that standard Shona writing failed to fully represent the speech patterns of the Karanga people. Standard Shona writing made the Karanga people find it difficult to read as they tried to find appropriate words when reading texts. The researcher observed that the way Karanga people speak was different from writing. This was observed as people were reading articles. The pronunciation of the word |rori| they would say |rhor|]. When asked to write the spelling of the word |unozvihwa| they would write 'correctly' |unozvinzwa|. The interview and observation evidently clarified that the speech and writing styles of Karanga were different.

One of the respondents said:

Kutaura kwatinoita chokwadi kwakasiyana namanyorero atinoita Shona. Mukutaura kwedu sevaKaranga hatishandisi dya tinoshandisa rya, tichirya zvedu sadza nenyevhe. Mukutaura kwatinoita hatishandise rwa sokuti rwara tinoshandisa asi pakunyora hongu tinozoshandisa rwa nokuti ndizvo zvinotarisisigwa (Our speech style is way different from written style in Shona. In our speech as Karanga we do not use /idya/ we use /irya/ like in, as we eat sadza and nyevhe. In our speech we do not use /rwa/ as in /rwara/ instead we use /gwara/ but when it comes to writing we use /rwa/ since it is the acceptable way of written.

Another respondent added:

Pakutaura ndinoti ndohwa kuda kubwereketa, asi pakunyora ndinofanirwa kunyora kuti ndinonzwa kuda kutaura. Saka iyi ndeimwe yemisiyano inoita kuti tisanununguka pakunyora. (In speech I can say ndohwa kuda kubwereketa, but in writing I am supposed to write, ndinonzwa kuda kutaura. So, these are some of the differences that restrict us in the Shona writing system).

In the excerpts above, there are noticeable variations in

the syllables and words /-hwa/ to /-nzwa/ and /kubwereketa/ to /kutura/ which are evidence of the discrepancies between Karanga and Zezuru influenced Shona speech and writing styles.

Another respondent argued thus:

Pane misiyano yakawanda yemahwi kana zvidimbu zvemahwi zvinosiyana nepakubwereketa kana tave kunyora. Kana uchitaura pavanhu ndipo unonzva vanhu vachiseka wobva waziva kuti bhii randashandisa harisiro. (There are many differences to do with words or syllables that differentiate speech and writing system. If talking to other people, that's when I realise that they laugh at me and I realise that I have used the wrong word).

There are noticeable discrepancies in /-hwi/ to /-nzwi/, /zvemahwi/ to /zvemazwi/, and /patinobwereketa/ to /patinotaura/.

3.2. Types and Forms of Discrepancies between Karanga Speech and Standard Shona Writing Styles

After the respondents read the passage, the researcher deduced discrepancies between Karanga speech and standard Shona writing styles. The researcher came out with different discrepancies ranging from syllable, tonal to words and semantics as indicated below. The excerpt (a) represents the speech and (b) represents the standard Shona writing system. The writing system of Shona is skewed in favour of the Zezuru dialect. For a long time since Doke^[3], the Zezuru dialect, through a mono-dialect unification approach, has been the standard Shona writing system and was universalised at the expense of all the five dialects in the guise of unification of the Shona dialects. In this case, the Zezuru dialect colonised the Shona dialects even after the purported pronouncement of the unwritten liberalisation policy. The domination of the Zezuru dialect is still perpetuating and eclipsing other dialects and infringes on the educational rights of learners from other dialects. The pronouncement of liberalising Shona remains mere rhetoric until a multi-dialect unification orthography is designed for use. The discrepancies are indicated below

(a) Mwana **wange wechiti anogwara zvaka-**

hoonekwa kuti wanga wahwa nezvara apo wakavanga kundorya sadza pawakadamwa namai vakwe. Wakapedza kurya sadza wakaryazve mabagwe maviri wakamwa zvose neponda yamaxheu yanga yakazara. Pedzezvo wakavanga wakanotora gwai ranga rarobwa nemheni.

(b) Mwana **ange achiti ari kurwara aka-zoonekwa kuti akange anzwa nenzara apo akamhanya kunodya sadza paakadaidzwa namai vake. Akapedza kudya sadza akadya zvakare miguri miviri yechibage akanwa zvakare ponde yemaheu yaive izere. Achipedza izvozvo akamhanya akanotora hwai iyo yainge yarohwa nemheni.)**

From the above, the differences are not only at word level but also in constructions and meanings as indicated in **Table 1** below:

3.2.1. Syllables

The findings reveal syllable level discrepancy between Karanga speech and writing style of standard Shona. The Karanga pronounced |dya| as |rya| as in *kudya* they read as *kurya*. Another syllable discrepancy was of |rwa| they pronounce it as |gwa| as in |urwere| pronounced as |ugwere|. The researcher also noted that |nzwa| is pronounced as |hwa|. This can be observed in |ndazvinzwa| read as |ndazvihwa|. The researcher was surprised to note that when people were asked to write the spelling of /*kurya*, *twekuryira* and *kugwizi*/ they wrote the 'correct' Zezuru spellings of the words as /*kudya*, *twekudyira* and *kurwizi*/. Also, /*Kutya*/ was pronounced as /*kuhla*/ but when I gave them as spellings, they wrote it as /*kutya*/. The difference between Karanga speech and Shona writing based on syllables makes life very difficult for Karanga learners as they maybe penalised when they write, for example, *kuhla*, as this does not conform to the standard Shona writing of 1967. To buttress this view, Chimhundu (^[46], p. 86) says, "All those forms that do not conform to the rules set out in 1967 are discouraged".

3.2.2. Word Meaning

Similarly, findings reveal word level discrepancy between Karanga speech and standard Shona writing styles based on word meaning. The researcher noted with concern that certain words in the standard Shona had different mean-

Table 1. List of differences.

Karanga	Zezuru	Difference
wanga wechiti	ange achiti	concordial agreement /wa- we-/ > /a- a-/
Gwara	rwara	syllable /gwa>rwaw/
Ndahwa	ndanzwa	syllable /hwa>nzwa/
Kurya	kudya	syllable /rya>dya/
Mabagwe	chibage	word /mabagwe>chibage/
Maxheu	mahewu	word /maxheu>mahewu/
Gwai	hwai	word /gwai>hwai/
Robwa	rohwa	syllable /bwa>hwa/
Wakavanga	akamhanya	word /kuvanga>kumhanya/
Pedzezvo	Achipedza izvozvo	construction /pedzezvo/ > /achipedza izvozvo/
Zhara	nzara	syllable /zha>nza/

ings attached to them by the Karanga speakers. In Karanga, they have vocabulary such as /mushana/ (sun basking) which has no equivalence in all other dialects. The Karanga word /kuvanga/ (running) is /kumhanya/ in Zezuru, which is the ‘correct Shona’, and /kubwereketa/ talking is /kutura in Zezuru, which is again ‘correct Shona’. The researcher noted that differences in word meaning cause poor understanding of novels and various Shona literatures. One educationist said that it is rare for children from the area to achieve an ‘A’ at Ordinary level or Advanced level Shona.

3.2.3. Concordial Agreement

Findings reveal concordial agreement level discrepancy between Karanga speech and Shona writing style where Karanga uses /wa-/ and Zezuru /a-/ when referring to a person in the singular form as indicated in the table above.

3.2.4. Construction Level

Findings also reveal that there is discrepancy at construction level where a compound construction word in Karanga /pedzezvo/ is used as /achipedza izvozvo/ in Zezuru, which is ‘correct Shona’.

Having outlined the four different forms of discrepancies noticeable between Karanga speech and Shona writing style, it is worth to then attempt to account for the discrepancies and their implications to the Karanga infant learners’ academic achievement.

3.3. Causes of the Discrepancies between Karanga Speech and the Writing of Standard Shona

3.3.1. The Writing System of Standard Shona

The interviewees were of the view that the discrepancies between Karanga speech and the standard Shona writing styles were caused by the writing system that lacked consonants and syllables used by the Karanga. The argument is in sync with Magwa^[47] who argues that the writing system was not a representation of all the dialects of the Shona people. The writing system does not accommodate the Karanga learners and speakers well to enable them to write as they speak, for example, /tarya/ have eaten, is written in standard Shona as /tadya/. Chimhundu^[46] further supports the view that, when a standard writing system was established by Doke in 1931^[3], the Karanga dialect was partially represented. This explains the bigger variance between Karanga speech and Shona writing system. Where the Zezuru dialect uses /rwa/, the Karanga dialect uses /gwa/; where there is /nzwa/, the Karanga speakers say /hwa/; where there is /tya/, they put /hla/; and where the Zezuru dialect uses /dya/, the Karanga dialect uses /rya/. The writing system, therefore, does not allow the usage of these syllables.

An educationist participant had this to say:

... the writing system that is currently used by the nation does not give room for other syllables from other dialects. One is not allowed to write /kugwizi/ but /kurwizi/ or /ugwere/ but /urwere/. The writing system does not limit the Karanga only, even the Manyika dialect speakers are restricted to write /vana/ instead of /wana/ by the current writing system. The writing system lacked certain sound symbols or letters which are used in speech like in Karanga

/x/ and certain combinations such as /xh/ and /px/ as in the word spellings like /pxere/, /max-heu/.

3.3.2. Lack of Literature in Karanga

One interviewee also said the discrepancies between Karanga speech and the standard Shona writing style were exacerbated by literature used in schools which did not reflect the way the Karanga speak. Literature in schools did not bond the home and schools for the Karanga learners and speakers. Karanga learners therefore had two language versions: one for the school and the other one for home. The language for home was the one used in speech and that for the school was used for writing. In line with that view, Karanga dialect speech was relegated to Low (L) variety status spoken at home and in the community and had nothing to do with education and business. This means that the Zezuru dialect was the High (H) variety status dialect used in education and business. It is difficult to find a Shona literature text written in Karanga dialect that serves as a model for the dialect's writing system.

3.3.3. Domination of Other Languages over Karanga

The findings reveal that the discrepancies between Karanga dialect speech and the standard Shona writing style are partly a result of the domination of the Zezuru dialect. In education and many institutions, the economic, media, and health literature available is dominated by the Zezuru dialect. The dialect has raised its status and has been imposed on the Karanga and other dialects. Thus, the Zezuru dialect has been popularised in communicating with others, and it now represents the Shona language, which opens up the dialect to economic opportunities. The Karanga speakers are only forced by the situation to grasp the writing but their spoken language remains Karanga. This is the result of the exoglossic position that privileged a foreign dialect at the expense of the local one. In this case, the position is languaging education. The differences are also noticeable in the old bibles and hymn books that the missionaries from various provincial mission stations produced.

3.3.4. Need to Unite All the People

The respondents indicated that the discrepancy between Karanga speech and Shona writing style is caused by the need

to unite all the people of different dialects into one unified Shona orthography. Shona language was made as a way of providing a medium of communication for most of the people in Mashonaland. In making the Shona language, Doke did not greatly consider dialect variation, but aimed at ending dialect variation, and providing a writing system for the people in Mashonaland and Manicaland. Doke^[3] did not bother to critically analyse dialectical variation. This made the Karanga dialect differ in speech from standard Shona writing. The cost of printing different materials for each dialect made Doke^[3] to make a writing system divorced from the way people speak. The Shona writing system was therefore made at the expense of reducing expenditure.

3.4. Possibility of Harmonising Karanga Speech and Standard Shona Writing Styles

3.4.1. Unbundling Dialects and Make Karanga a Standalone Language

Respondents interviewed were of the view that Karanga should stand as a language on itself like Tonga, Kalanga, and Ndau. Harmonising Karanga with the writing style of other Shona dialects destroys the vocabulary dialects like */kuvanga/* and its proverbs and myth. The other interviewees were of the view that the Karanga language should be standardised and have its own literature. One educationist at Chibi Education Offices says that to raise the status of Karanga would make learners pass their examinations. The respondents felt that Karanga should also be made a language of media and that people ought to publish and promote Karanga literature. In addition, they expressed that Karanga with other dialects will not solve the problem of differences in speech and writing. Language is therefore generally regarded as the carrier of culture and identity of the native speakers.

3.4.2. Multi-Dialect Unification Approach School

Among the respondents interviewed, some were of the view that there is a need to revisit Doke's^[3] recommendations with a view to enrich these through applying a multi-dialect unification approach. They argued that some symbols ought to be added to fully represent not, only the Karanga dialect, but the sound systems of other dialects as well. They argued for a unification approach that is inclusive and that recognises

dialectal diversity and uniqueness in sound systems.

Overall, both bundling and unbundling have their own positives and challenges that the planners have to mind before making the decision. While bundling harmonises the dialects, strengthens oneness and national unity and is cost-cutting in terms of the production of instructional materials, it traps other dialects and makes them feel stifled. On the other side, the multi-dialect unification approach gives the speakers a sense of independence and being valued and respected. It is however costly to cater for each dialect in materials production.

4. Conclusions

This article is an exploration of the discrepancies between Karanga dialect speech and standard Shona writing styles. The research managed to expose a myriad of discrepancies between the Karanga dialect speech and the standard Shona writing ranging from syllables, words, word meanings and concordial agreement. These discrepancies make Karanga dialect speakers regard learning Shona feel like learning a foreign language. As a result, these discrepancies hinder the Karanga learners from successfully learning Shona.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this article, the following recommendations can be proffered:

- The government should formulate a clear education language policy as there are still gaps in the Education Act, amended 2020, with regards to the usage of dialects like Karanga.
- There is a need to have a common standard writing system based on a multi-dialect unification approach that is inclusive of all dialects.
- Karanga should be made a medium of instruction among the Karanga infant learners.
- Appropriate educational materials like books, novels, and guides should be made available to further the understanding of multi-dialect Shona languages and raise their status.
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should prioritise staff development of teachers in the use of multi-dialect Shona.

- There is also an immediate need for the establishment of institutional bodies and custodian organisations that promote the use of African indigenous dialects like Karanga.
- It is also recommended that the government should provide tax breaks and or incentivise institutions and organisations that promote the elevation of indigenous languages.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the declaration of Helsinki, and approved by institutional Review Board, University of South Africa Ethics Committee.

Informed Consent Statement

The consent was obtained from the Ministry. Some data was obtained from reviewing documents.

Data Availability Statement

The data is protected for ethical reasons.

Conflict of Interest

I, Beatrice Taringa, the sole and correspondent author hereby declare that I have no conflict of interest.

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