

The Analysis of Curriculum Ideologies in LGCSE Sesotho Syllabus

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Abstract

A curriculum is a prearranged design for teaching negotiated by ability in the light of their skilled knowledge and the context of societal prospects and students' needs. This paper aims to analyze the curriculum ideologies available in the Sesotho, Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) syllabus and whether Sesotho literature develops the students holistically to fit in society. The paper use document analysis where the LGCSE syllabus aims will be analyzed. The paper has found that the dominating ideology is learner-centered, and social reconstruction does not appear in all aims. Social efficiency and scholarly academic appear in three and two aims, respectively. The aim and the purpose of education are to help learners to change society not only to be academicians, but it seems like this curriculum helps students to develop as individuals instead of developing society as a whole.

Keywords: curriculum ideologies, language education, LGCSE, Sesotho

Introduction

Sesotho is a first language for the majority of Basotho people as well as is a medium of instruction at lower grades- Grades 1 to 3 and as a subject taught from Grade 4 to Grade 11. The Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) Sesotho syllabus was initially intended to build on the three-year junior secondary syllabus. However, after the curriculum moved from Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) to LGCSE, which began in 2017, it began being offered from Grade 9 to Grade 11. This move was necessitated by the belief that education is a provider of enlightenment (Moea, 2022b) and that education in Lesotho needed to be contextualized to serve the needs of the Basotho learners. Therefore, the study of Sesotho develops an understanding of the structure of the Sesotho language. It also offers pleasure and appreciation of the Sesotho language in a variety of forms (National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) & Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL), 2019).

Additionally, the Sesotho language stimulates wider reading and promotes a reading culture necessary for lifelong learning. Blended within the Sesotho language syllabus is the Sesotho literature, which is intended to develop the ability to infer deeper meaning from text. In this light, Sesotho literature enables learners to express facts, speculations, deductions, opinions and feelings that extend their communication skills (NCDC & ECOL, 2019).

The LGCSE Sesotho syllabus is intended to provide a basis for further education and to provide job opportunities for learners studying Sesotho. According to Moea (2022a), the 2009 curriculum and assessment policy is designed a change from being unbalanced and examination-oriented. From Basotho education to colonial education eras, on to attaining independence in 1966, there was an imperative for Lesotho to transform its education, making it applicable and appropriate to its nationwide needs (Moea, 2022b). In this move, teachers were to embrace teaching tactics that inspire and mold learner-centredness (MOET, 2009) for this style of teaching and learning was estimated to make learners conceptualize the world as an expansive grid of multiple networks and sub-networks of associations amongst teaching and learning

activities and the roles they play to preserve the intricate networks (Chere-Masopha et al., 2021). Therefore, the policy did away with the subject-specific curriculum in favor of an integrated curriculum (Moea, 2022b).

The subject is composed of three genres: Sesotho grammar, modern literature, and traditional literature. Modern literature refers to prescribed textbooks, while traditional literature refers to cultural beliefs and practices. Three separate examination papers are set on these genres. These papers are segmented such that paper 1 comprises both creative and directed writing, paper 2 comprises reading comprehension passages and grammar and the last paper deals with traditional and modern literature. The Sesotho content is organized into four sections, sequentially reflecting the following core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with the first two skills being carried on from the Basic Education level (Raselimo & Thamae, 2018). More importantly, the content of the LGCSE Sesotho syllabus includes the Sesotho culture, which the previous syllabus ignored (NCDC & ECOL, 2019).

The trend towards knowledge production and problem-solving is interdisciplinary, seeing life as an integrated whole with no distinctive compartments as reflected by various disciplines of knowledge. This approach recognizes that the learner is part of a community and that learning should consider learners' everyday experiences. School life should thus be integrated with the individual learner's community life. This perspective does not negate or undermine the contribution of academic subjects in providing knowledge but rather advocates flexible use of knowledge beyond a superficial understanding of isolated events. Thus, curriculum integration organizes education to a more manageable and relevant approach. Two major strategies have been identified as best practices that may be adopted to produce the desired results: curriculum aspects and learning areas. Curriculum aspects highlight the life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of society. Learning areas indicate the body of knowledge necessary to equip the learners with the competencies necessary to address their life challenges.

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With respect to 'Linguistic and Literary,' in which Sesotho is embedded, the policy states that the curriculum should be able to, among other key areas, set the foundations of language and its usage (MOET, 2009). It states that language is a medium through which all learning areas can be adequately and effectively delivered because it promotes effective communication in all its forms. The policy states that the language and literary curriculum should develop the acquisition and understanding of linguistic skills necessary for effective communication in different contexts and application of linguistic, creative and other skills in promoting literary works for socioeconomic development because, while education should address national aspirations, globalization exerts tremendous pressure on curriculum systems. This aligns with the existence of literature in the Sesotho syllabus. Education systems should therefore take on the challenge of balancing national needs and globalization.

However, with all said, the glaring issue is that Sesotho teachers are not aware of the ideologies entailed in their subject syllabus. This is evidenced by Moea (2022b) that the dearth of knowledge of the curriculum ideologies that exist in teachers makes them unfit to teach the literary content of the syllabus effectively and thus makes it a failing component of the syllabus. This becomes the point of departure for this study; to find the dominant ideology in the context of the Sesotho syllabus- the modern literature component. This is because the literature component aims to become a trench from which teachers' pedagogical practices draw and are benchmarked.

Review of the Related Literature

The curriculum is beheld as an amalgamated whole comprising the learner, the teacher, teaching and learning methods, projected and unanticipated experiences, outputs and outcomes within a learning institution (Moea, 2022b). Teachers are the foremost curriculum implementers. Curriculum implementation refers to working out the plans and propositions constructed by curriculum experts and subject connoisseurs in a classroom or school setting (Obilo & Sangoleye, 2015). It refers to how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum. Curriculum designs generally provide instructional suggestions, scripts, lesson plans, and assessment options related to a set of objectives. The effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the learning process depend on numerous support services. These services should be designed based on the requirements of the learning process. One of the key issues involved in curriculum implementation is the knowledge of curriculum ideologies. As the main curriculum implementers, teachers should have and portray knowledge of curriculum ideologies.

Moea (2022b) defines curriculum ideology as beliefs about what schools should teach, for what ends and for what purposes. He adds that a curriculum ideology should also replicate several epistemological departments vis-à-vis schooling, teaching and learning, childhood, knowledge, evaluation and education in general. According to Schiro (2013), any approach to the school curriculum derives from a curriculum ideology that functions as a podium or prism from which the understanding and interpretation of the education title role can be contrasted. As declared by Schiro (2013, 2008), there are four curriculum ideologies; the learner-centered ideology, the social reconstruction ideology, the scholar-academic and the social efficiency. According to Mnguni (2021), these ideologies are also known as student-centered, citizenship-centered, discipline-centered, and service-centered, respectively. It is paramount to note that these ideologies can be articulated by school organizations, institutions, and individual teachers (Moea, 2022b). Therefore, knowledge of these ideologies is an integral illumination of the accomplishment of any transformative movement. Furthermore, this classification permits us to describe the purpose of a specific curriculum brand and divulges what, for more than a century, has been a concentration of conflict amid those who preserve numerous curricular policies for the education system. Therefore, this classification is considered to be appropriate for this study as it examines the LGCSE Sesotho language syllabus in depth for the dominant ideology in its teaching and learning.

The Scholar Academic ideology proposes that, over the centuries, our culture has accumulated important knowledge organized into academic disciplines. Therefore, the purpose of education is for students to learn that valuable knowledge. According to this ideology, teachers should be mini-scholars with a deep knowledge of the discipline to be transmitted to the students. This ideology is utilitarian; it is primarily aimed at 'getting a job' and 'earning a living,' and there is also a focus on useful information and basic skills to prepare them for the academic world.

The Learner-Centered ideology, on the other hand, focuses on the needs and interests of individuals. Thus, schools should be pleasant spaces where students develop naturally according to their innate nature. The purpose of education is the growth of individuals in harmony with their unique personal attributes (Schiro, 2013). The focus is on personal development or bringing maturity to the individual student (Moea, 2022b). Using academic subjects as a medium for developing skills, attitudes and learning styles that will help them become autonomous individuals is key to this ideology (Bustin, 2018).

The Social Reconstructionist ideology advocates awareness of social problems and injustices (Mnguni, 2018). It assumes that the purpose of education is to facilitate the construction of a more just society; therefore, the curriculum is seen from a perspective of social transformation and education is seen as the social process through which society can be improved (Moea, 2022b). Education is viewed as an agent for changing society in this ideology. As a result, an emphasis is placed on encouraging learners to challenge existing knowledge and approaches. There is less interest in academic disciplines; more focus is on issues and socially critical pedagogy (Bustin, 2018).

In contrast, the Social Efficiency ideology states that education's purpose is to meet society's needs effectively (Bustin, 2018). Through education, young people become mature, constructive members of society; they achieve a good education when they learn to perform the functions necessary for social productivity (Schiro, 2013). Restoring traditional areas of knowledge and skills (cultural heritage) is emphasized in social efficiency ideology. Providing students with a set package of knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfill well-defined roles in society and the workplace is paramount in this ideology (Mnguni, 2013).

The paper uses document analysis to analyze the LGCSE Sesotho aims, and no other approaches will be engaged. Document analysis is one of the instruments used in qualitative data analysis, which (Bowen, 2009) defines as the arranged process for reviewing or assessing printed and electronic documents; therefore, this paper analyses the printed document – printed LGCSE Sesotho syllabus. The paper unpacks the aims and finds whether they satisfy the four curriculum ideologies – social reconstruction, social efficiency, scholar academic and learner-centered. Adosi, 2020 and Owen, 2014 remark that accessing information from document analysis is not easy. The documents will be analyzed to find whether the syllabus helps the learners grow as individuals, as members of the society who fits well in it and also the members of the society who can change it.

Analysis

The first assessment objective reads thus: show detailed knowledge of the content of literary texts in the three forms (drama, poetry, and prose) (NCDC & ECoL, 2019). This objective only prepares learners to converse with literary works' content. This knowledge will help them to become acquainted with the subject taught. Therefore this satisfies curriculum ideology scholar academic; Scholar academic says learners are prepared for the academic world. They are given enough information and knowledge to help them fit well in the academic world. This aim does not prepare learners to be part of society, face challenges, or change anything in society. It does not develop learners individually. In alignment with knowledge of the content of the literary texts, they are prepared to be complete school as conversant learners who aspire to be teachers and academicians in literary studies. The scholarly academic tenet emphasizes that the ideology's main goal is to inaugurate the learner into an academic

discipline, hoping that such a learner will be in a position to think along the same lines as a litterateur in that discipline.

The second objective reads to assess candidates' ability to comprehend the meanings of literary texts and their contexts and reconnoiter texts beyond shallow meanings to show deeper awareness of ideas and attitudes (NCDC & ECoL, 2019). This aim prepares students to read and be able to identify both the superficial and the underlying messages conveyed by literary texts. They should also have a broad understanding of ideas and attitudes conveyed by the texts. This aim satisfies the learner-centered ideology because it enhances the growth of a learner as an individual. It also improves the attitudes of a learner. The aim builds the learner holistically: by improving their attitudes. The focus is on personal development or bringing maturity to the individual student (Moea, 2022b). The main purpose of educational subjects is to help learners to grow mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially. The aim also gratifies the ideology of social efficiency, which demands that individuals be part of society. This aim prepares learners (through their attitudes) to be effective members of society. Education is thought of as the knowledge needed to help the learner become a prolific member of society by imparting practical and advantageous knowledge learned in the classroom (UKEssays, 2018). With this aim, learners can be productive members of society with good morals.

Aim three assesses learners' ability to examine how writers use language, structure, and form to make and shape meaning and effects (NCDC & ECoL, 2019). The aim prepares the learners to think critically. If learners lack critical thinking, they cannot analyze texts. This aim requires learners to critically analyze the language used by the writers. This critical analysis will also develop their language. This aim satisfies curriculum ideology scholar academic, which tells the scholar academic ideology curriculum has a set of core objectives for each discipline that a student requires competency in (UKEssay, 2018). This ideology demands that learners be prepared for the academic world and fully informed about the subject learned. In this ideology, the essence of a person is their capacity to think and give a reason. This objective makes learners competent in literature because it allows them to go deeper into literature. It also satisfies learner-centered ideology. Learner-centered ideology specifies that learners obtain understanding and knowledge through experience (UKEssay, 2018). Learner-centered ideology uses academic subjects to develop learners' skills, attitudes and moral values. With this aim, learners can be creative and be able to express themselves. If they can examine the texts properly, then the experience they have gained will help them develop academically.

The fourth aim indicates that candidates are assessed on their capability to communicate a sensitive and informed personal response to literary texts (NCDC & ECoL, 2019). This aim trains learners to identify sensitive issues in a literary text. It makes learners aware of hurt, sad, and happy characters. It also helps them deal with sensitive issues in their day-to-day lives. It satisfies the ideology of social efficiency, which says education should prepare the individual to lead a meaningful adult life in society. The learner can fit well in society if he knows things that are acceptable and unacceptable in society, which hurt other people and things that can make people happy. This aim builds the individualistic character in a child. It also satisfies ideology learner-centered because this ideology requires that learners must be the driving force that objectifies the change (UKEssay (2018). As individuals, learners can change society with the knowledge they have gathered from literary texts. The knowledge of how to hold sensitive issues can change society. As the key leaders in developing learners' minds, teachers should encourage them to apply what they have learned at school in their society.

The fifth aim says candidates are assessed on the capability to read extensively and understand how reading contributes to personal growth (NCDC & ECoL, 2019). The aim prepares the learners to practice different reading genres intensively and find information for themselves. Embarking on intensive reading and research equips one with the knowledge that adds more to their classroom knowledge. This makes them academicians and researchers as well as experts in the field they are studying. Different skills are developed through literary reading works.

Through reading, learners can learn how to interact with others, develop as individuals, and develop society. The message conveyed by the genres will develop a child into an acceptable member of society. This aim is to gratify the ideology of social efficiency, which says social ideologists describe learning as an adjustment in behavior that leads to a change in performance (UKEssay (2018). If the learner's behavior changes for the better, their performance will change. Change of behavior influenced by the reading genre can develop the learner as an individual and a member of society. It also satisfies the learner-centered ideology because it develops the learners individually to fit well in society. The focus is on personal development or bringing maturity to the individual learner (Moea, 2022b). This develops individual learners, which will eventually develop the whole society.

The sixth aim aims to assess students' ability to relish the experience of reading Sesotho literature (NCDC & ECoL, 2019). This aim requires learners to have the habit of reading both traditional and modern literature and enjoy it. Enjoying it makes them understand it; thus, understanding it will help them change their behavior and performance. Sesotho literature (modern and traditional) helps the learners how relationships with others in society. Learner-centered ideology requires students to be independent. So this aim fits well with a learner-centered ideology that trains students to be independent. Learner-centered ideology advocates that students are encouraged to be artistic and develop new ideas, and self-expression and self-worth are appreciated (UKEssays, 2018). Reading intensively can boost students' creativity, and reading can help them come up with new philosophies. In addition, reading can help them to develop their confidence through the skills they will acquire from reading.

Conclusion

The syllabus prepares students to be independent and individualistic. A learner is prepared for society in order to be an acceptable member of society. Education has to add value to the life of students so that they become acceptable members of society. The Sesotho assessment syllabus of LGCSE does not groom students to change their unacceptable behavior in society. This is evidenced by the dominance of learner-centered ideology in the syllabus, which only develops or grooms learners as individuals, not considering the people around them. In the six assessment aims, learner-centered ideology appears in five aims, followed by social efficiency which appears in three aims, scholar academic in two aims, whereas social reconstruction does not prevail. The results show that the syllabus trains learners to be individualists, not communalistic which is against Sesotho culture. This is against African society's practices because Africans do things collectively. The syllabus shows a clash between the syllabus and Basotho culture. What makes a society is what they share, such as culture and collective practices. That is why in Sesotho, there is an idiom that says *letsoele le beta poho* which means collectively if there is a problem in the society, the problem can be solved collectively. This syllabus does not help the students to solve the political, social, religious, and economic problems that might arise in society. It only helps students to be part of society as an individual but does not prepare them to correct societal injustices as social reconstruction requires. Little is said about scholar academic ideology. That is to say, this syllabus trains students to have the basic knowledge. This paper recommends that Ecol and NCDC revise the assessment aims so that the syllabus develops the learner holistically. The four ideologies should be catered for in the syllabus. African societies will always be sick because of the education offered by the responsible bodies.

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