



## Chapter 10

# Decolonising Curriculum Practices: An Analysis of Student Perspectives at a South African University

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### Abstract

This chapter describes student experiences of the delivery of a newly introduced university language-acquisition course as part of the institution's curriculum decolonisation agenda. The key research question to be answered is: To what extent are students satisfied with the first-year isiZulu First Additional Language (FAL) course newly introduced as part of curriculum decolonisation in the university? Guided by the lived curriculum theory, the study employs a survey methodology. A questionnaire including both closed-ended belief statements as well as open-ended statements was administered to 20 participants who were purposefully selected for the study. Qualitative data was independently analysed by the researchers; results emerging from the data reveal that students generally find the course informative and worthwhile, as it develops their communicative competence in isiZulu; however, they perceive the administration

of the course as suboptimal. This finding points to the need for further investigation regarding student learning satisfaction with courses introduced as part of curriculum decolonisation, and particularly regarding the planning that precedes the delivery of newly introduced courses in HEIs. Recommendations to improve student learning satisfaction include course coordinator capacity development to enhance core competencies in course administration, helping students to develop accurate expectations of language-competence courses, facilitating teaching quality that matches students' preferred thinking styles, and assisting students to develop positive attitudes.

**Keywords:** *curriculum decolonisation, curriculum transformation, planned curriculum, lived curriculum, student experiences, student learning satisfaction*

### Introduction

Initiatives related to decolonising the curriculum in South Africa and other contexts have seen HEIs reform their curricula and introduce new courses in response to changes in society as well as preparing students for the future. Winberg and Winberg (2017) state that vast amounts of research on decolonising education and curriculum have been conducted in the arts, humanities and social sciences fields. However, they indicate the importance of including informants from these disciplines in the research to give them a more explicit voice (Winberg & Winberg, 2017). In this study the informants are first-year Bachelor of Arts General Degree students. There is a dearth of literature that reviews students' satisfaction with language-acquisition courses introduced as part of HEIs' initiatives to decolonise the curriculum. In South African HEIs the student voices on newly introduced courses may not be heard clearly enough.

Changing how you teach something is as much a part of transforming the curriculum as what you teach (Webbstock, 2017). Jansen (2017) points out that in the process of decolonising the curriculum, the curriculum in itself is dead

until it is brought to life in the teaching process. By tracing the connection between curriculum decolonisation and student learning satisfaction, this chapter analyses satisfiers and dissatisfiers that are particularly relevant to an undergraduate isiZulu language-competence course. The chapter further recommends and discusses implications for teaching and learning of the undergraduate course, based on the literature.

## **Background and Context**

The institution's Language Policy, approved in 2014 with the aim of giving practical impetus to the University's transformation agenda through the promotion of diversity in the institution provides a clear pathway for enhancing the academic status of African languages. In the Linguistics and African Languages Department, isiZulu and Sesotho are earmarked as languages of teaching and learning parallel to English. Certain courses in the department are now taught in isiZulu and Sesotho, while others are still being taught in English. In 2019 the Faculty of Humanities Language Requirement Rule was implemented, allowing the Department of African Languages to draw from a large pool of students across the Faculty of Humanities for first-year enrolment in language-acquisition courses in isiZulu and Sesotho. These language courses use a student-centred, communicative approach to enable studying, writing and speaking in isiZulu and Sesotho within a certain field of study, including academic language. It is at the course level that the current study seeks to understand the level of satisfaction from a first-year student's perspective, as the course is targeted at them and they are best positioned to discuss the extent to which they are satisfied or dissatisfied with it.

Elliott and Shin (2002) present student learning satisfaction from the perspective of the business world and emphasise the importance of incorporating student voices into research that endeavours to understand their level of satisfaction within the education domain. Student learning satisfaction is important, because it is directly correlated

with student academic performance (Dhaqane & Afrah, 2016), retention and continuous learning. An all-encompassing understanding of student learning satisfaction implies that students need to be part of the process; student learning satisfaction cannot be explicitly understood unless it is approached in terms that students themselves can relate to.

Carter (2014) proposes three models to describe undergraduate student learning satisfaction: customer service, investment and happy-productive. The happy-productive model likens students to employees who, if they are satisfied with their working conditions, will be loyal to the company, produce better work and change employers less frequently. The investment model (Hatcher *et al.*, 1992) posits that students view their time and effort in the same way that investors do their money - in other words, they seek a return on what they expend. The customer service model considers lecturer-student interactions to be a transactional or a service-oriented encounter (Athiyaman, 1997). These models are based in the business world and hence, in addressing the way student learning satisfaction is constructed, may not perfectly fit the education domain in general, nor an isiZulu language-acquisition course specifically; however, they do offer contemporary guidelines that foreground student learning satisfaction and indicate that further research is necessary.

Educational satisfaction research is conducted at three levels: the course, the programme and the institutional levels (Green *et al.*, 2015). Course-level research is defined as investigating the individual classes that students take; institution-level research asks about the students' entire experience of being at the institution, including aspects teachers have little to no control over, such as costs, facilities and administrative staff performance. Programme-level research, however, is the level at which lecturers can have the most influence and includes the drivers of student learning satisfaction such as teaching quality, academic support and perceptions of programme value. The current study takes the form of a course-level investigation that seeks to ascertain

student perceptions of the value of the isiZulu language-competence course.

The key research question to be answered is: To what extent are students satisfied with the first-year isiZulu language-competence course newly introduced as part of curriculum decolonisation in the university? The objectives are to establish first-year isiZulu students' views of the language-competence they acquired in the newly introduced course and to establish whether students are satisfied with the course.

### **What are the characteristics of a curriculum?**

An enquiry into student views on curriculum practices requires a definition of the term 'curriculum'. According to Sacristán, Subirats, Sebarroja, Rodríguez, Álvarez-Méndez & Adell, (2018), a curriculum is a set of objectives and related content that students are expected to know at the completion of a certain educational level. A complete curriculum stipulates the entire course outline and provides fine details on the academic content, the structure of the lessons to be taught, teaching and learning resource materials to be used, and the structure and format of the assessment activities to be administered to check whether the learning outcomes have been achieved (Fomunyan & Khoza, 2021). A broader definition describes the curriculum in terms of the following four spheres: a plan or vision which guides students into acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge; an education institution's official document which defines the institution's purpose and its entire learning programme; an expression of the intended learning outcomes for the students providing a clear plan of how the skills and knowledge will be acquired; and a carefully planned learning experience intended to achieve the learning outcomes (Webbstock, 2017).

The definitions highlight the necessity of preplanning what should be taught in an educational institution: learning objectives, outcomes, teaching and learning activities (and resources), as well as a clearly outlined assessment plan. The definitions do not, however, state who the informants

of the curriculum are, nor do they indicate the education stakeholders (local or external) involved directly or indirectly in the planning of the courses to be offered in the education institutions. This is a cause for concern as it implies that the students, for whom the curriculum is designed, may be passive participants in the implementation of the curriculum.

### **What are the characteristics of a decolonised curriculum?**

An enquiry into an HEI's curriculum decolonisation agenda requires a clear understanding of the nature of a 'decolonised curriculum'. Le Grange (2016) identifies the following as elements of decolonisation: deconstruction and reconstruction, self-determination and social justice, ethics, language, internationalisation of indigenous experiences, history and critique. This chapter highlights two of these elements: language, and the internationalisation of indigenous experiences. Language in this context concerns the importance of teaching and learning in indigenous languages as part of the decolonisation process. Internationalisation of indigenous experiences relates to students with diverse linguistic profiles sharing common experiences and appreciating the diversity of indigenous languages and culture. In Canada and New Zealand there are universities that started acknowledging the need to adopt approaches that are more inclusive of indigenous content. However, as in many other universities, such transformations remain challenging (Cupples & Glynn, 2014). These examples emphasise that there is much more involved in decolonising a curriculum than just introducing new content.

Kronenberg (2015) describes the Cuban curriculum transformation process as focusing on literacy, teacher education, and access to all services and facilities for a sound education. The Cuban literacy model campaign has been adopted in South Africa's basic education as a way of addressing the country's levels of illiteracy. Pett (2015) presents seven points that are vital to decolonising

curricula, including 'reteaching' teachers. In this chapter the reteaching of teachers implies the need for the capacity development of lecturers and tutors tasked with presenting newly introduced courses as part of the decolonisation agenda. By extrapolation, the reteaching implies the need for the capacity development of course coordinators responsible for course administration. Motsa (2017) argues that curriculum transformation is not achieved by merely Africanising some aspects of the curriculum. Curriculum decolonisation goes way beyond introducing more African languages into the teaching programme of a public urban university. One of the ways of developing the newly introduced courses is to raise the quality of content and presentation of the new courses to be parallel and comparable to the rest of the courses on offer, and also making student voices an integral part of the curriculum transformation process.

### **Theoretical Framing: The Lived Curriculum: Aoki (1993)**

Aoki (1993) posited the twofold nature of curriculum: the planned and the lived curriculum. Instead of narrowly viewing the curriculum as a set of guidelines and activities to be strictly adhered to (the planned curriculum), the lived curriculum is foregrounded by the interactions between the lecturer and students (Martín-Alonso *et al.*, 2021). With the teaching and learning process requiring interactions within a context and a complex system of predispositions that prepare students for future actions (Biesta, 2017), the lived curriculum is described as the construction and reconstruction of lecturers' and students' experiences. The lived curriculum places great emphasis on the experiences lived through by both lecturers and students, including what they perceive as important, meaningful, relevant and problematic for them during the teaching and learning process. The lived curriculum is therefore what lecturers and students experience as they interact with each other within the learning context (Fomunyam & Khoza, 2021). While the planned and lived curricula may appear on the face of it to be alternatives, they

are not mutually exclusive. The lived curriculum is a scenario where the two curricula worlds are considered to meet the needs of both (Olson, 2000). By enacting the guidelines stipulated in the planned curriculum, the lived curriculum provides opportunities for the planned curriculum to unfold, hence the view of the lived curriculum as the platform where the two curricula intersect.

Curriculum decolonisation implies that the actualisation of the lived curriculum may require disrupting the prevailing systems and norms (Maxwell & Roofe, 2020) that both lecturers and students may be accustomed to. The development of a decolonised curriculum needs to foreground and acknowledge student perspectives with respect to both the administrative and, to a certain extent, the pedagogical aspects of newly introduced courses.

### **Methodologies**

Information about perceptions that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques can easily be collected through the use of surveys. A survey methodology was selected for this particular study, mainly because it allows the retrieval of information on variables that can be studied from a population sample, which allows for making generalisations (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

### **Research Context**

This study investigates how first-year students at a university in South Africa perceive the teaching and learning of isiZulu FAL courses. The research site was the Faculty of Humanities at a South African public urban university that is strategically located in a historically advantaged community in one of South Africa's economic hubs in Gauteng province. The university's language policy recognises English as its main language of learning and teaching, while isiZulu, Sesotho and South African Sign Language are the only three African indigenous languages taught at FAL level.

## Sampling

The investigation targeted first time first-year students in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of African Languages enrolled in 2019. The university's language policy implementation model entailed introducing an African language as a compulsory requirement for all degree courses, as recommended by the White Paper on post-secondary education and training (DHET, 2013), and targeted first-year students. This particular sample was chosen mainly because they were the first cohort to take an African language as part of the requirements for the BA General Degree, and the cohort was used for a pilot study to inform the roll-out of the model across all faculties, making these students' perceptions of the pilot phase a critical component of the implementation model.

## Participant Demographic Information

Participants were 90% ( $n=18$ ) female and 10% ( $n=2$ ) male students. Half (50%) of the students were taking the isiZulu language-competence course as a free elective; 10% ( $n=2$ ) were taking the language as a major; 10% ( $n=2$ ) were taking the course as a requirement for other degree purposes; and 30% ( $n=6$ ) were uncertain of why they had to take the course. Participants' home languages spanned the eight South African indigenous languages. The majority 35% ( $n=7$ ) of the participants were Setswana home-language speakers, 20% ( $n=4$ ) of the participants were isiZulu home-language speakers. They intended to take the language as one of their majors for the BA General Degree; 15% ( $n=3$ ) of the participants were English home-language speakers and there were equal numbers recorded for isiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho and Siswati speakers at 5% ( $n=3$ ).

## Procedure: Questionnaire Schedule

To respond to the study's research question, a questionnaire was used to collect data in the second semester of 2019; the questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-

ended items to achieve coverage as well as to achieve depth by making allowance for detailed responses. Twenty questionnaires consisting of five questions were distributed to first-year isiZulu FAL students:

- a. Was the isiZulu language-competence course worthwhile?
- b. Overall, how do you rate your experience in the course?
- c. What did you like best about how the course was taught?
- d. What did you like least about how the course was taught?
- e. What changes would you recommend for improving the course?

The first two questions were closed-ended with open-ended sections for writing comments. The last three questions were open-ended. According to Babbie (2016), validity indicates whether the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis was used to investigate the internal consistency of the measures, since it is the most reliable test of inter-item consistency reliability for Likert-scaled or rating-scaled measures, as used in this questionnaire (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Primary data was generated on the university premises through the administration of the questionnaires to first-year isiZulu FAL students and the instructions were clearly explained to students by the researchers. The 20 students (coded S68 to S88), were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaires. Qualitative data from comments in the open-ended sections of the questionnaire was analysed by the individual researchers, using thematic analysis. Quotations exemplifying the identified themes were extracted from the questionnaire responses.

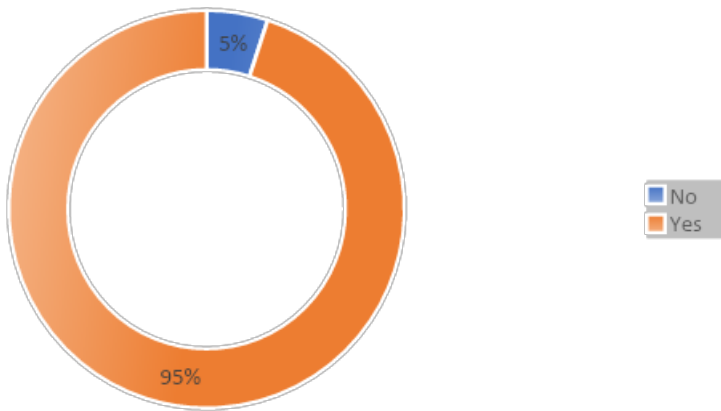
### **Findings**

Student satisfaction is important for universities as it forms part of course evaluation (Green *et al.*, 2015). The key finding of this study is that first-year students generally find the

first-year isiZulu language-competence course satisfactory. The students find the course informative and worthwhile, as it develops their communicative competence in isiZulu; however, they perceive the general administration of the course as suboptimal.

### Student Perceptions on Course Value

The first question, which sought to elicit responses on whether students found the course worthwhile or not, had two ratings: *Yes* and *No* as illustrated in Figure 10-1 below.



**Figure 10.1:** Student Perspectives on isiZulu Language-Competence Course Value

The majority 95% ( $n=19$ ) of the students described the course as valuable and worthwhile, while 5% ( $n=1$ ) described the course as not worthwhile. Those who found the course worthwhile reported improved reading skills, writing skills, fluency in speaking the language, and an improvement in sentence construction; thus, students linked the course value to their academic performance.

*S68: I have performed extremely well in the duration of the course. I was gradually able to interact with other students.*

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*S70: The course really helped with my reading skills; I did not know how to read isiZulu. My writing skills have really improved because of the course. Nouns and verbs, I had a problem of understanding them before.*

*S71: I can now fluently read a text written in isiZulu; I can speak isiZulu with a proper accent.*

*S74: It was a worthwhile course and a very fun module. My reading and writing skills have greatly improved. Sentence construction is also improving because in the beginning of the year my sentence construction was sometimes incorrect.*

*S86: I have become better in my reading and writing skills because of this module.*

*S87: I can now write well, speak fluently and understand properly.*

One of the students who found the course not worthwhile indicated that the course did not help to improve communication skills. S78 registered dissatisfaction mainly because they felt the pace of the course was too fast for them to develop fluency in the language.

*S73: My skills in this language have improved but I still struggle to communicate. By the end of the course most people can read very well but my understanding is still quite limited.*

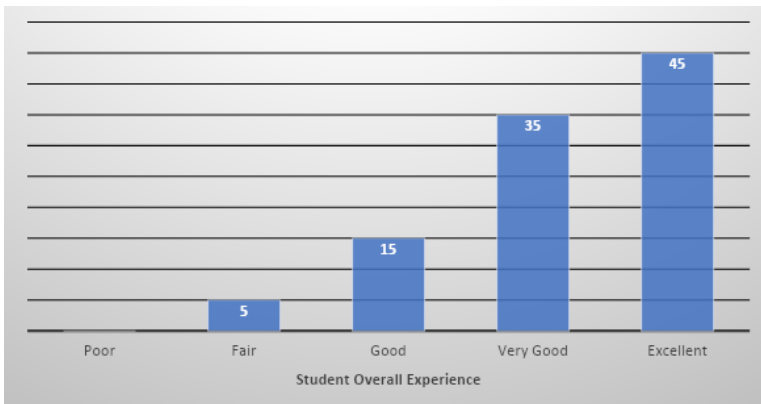
*S78: Just a year of fast-paced learning of a new language is not going to have me fluent, but I can greet and show respect.*

While a few students expressed dissatisfaction, it is worth noting that students developed some appreciation for the language as they learnt to greet and show respect to the language speakers. The majority of students linked their experiences regarding course value to their academic performance in the course. The findings suggest that most of the language skills were addressed by the isiZulu Language-

Competence Course, except for the communication skills aspect of the course, which it was felt was not adequately addressed. Student experiences in the lived curriculum context were somewhat related to the planned curriculum, which addressed their personal needs (improvement in reading and writing skills) as well as their social needs (the ability to interact in a different language).

### Students' Perceptions of Overall Experience

The second question, which sought to identify student perceptions of their experiences of the course, contained five ratings: Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good and Excellent. Students' ratings of their overall experience are illustrated in Figure 10.2 below.



**Figure 10.2:** First-year Students' Overall Experience of the isiZulu Language-Competence Course

The majority of the students ( $n=16$ ) rated their overall experience of the course as Excellent or Very Good. This was followed by 15% ( $n=3$ ) who rated the course as Good, and only 5% ( $n=1$ ) who rated the course as Fair. None of the students rated the course as Poor, which indicates therefore that overall, the students are satisfied with the course. Students' ratings of the course are supported by their descriptions of their experiences as detailed below:

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**S68:** *It was honestly amazing engaging within the course as we were able to construct paragraphs. There are words which I was not aware of which existed in isiZulu, which expanded my vocabulary. Students were also able to interact with one another through different rules.*

**S69:** *I had a good experience learning other language other than English & my home language. IsiZulu is one of the interesting languages to learn.*

**S70:** *Before this course I didn't enjoy isiZulu but now I do. I will definitely recommend it to a friend.*

**S73:** *This course will help me communicate with people in the future. The course was very interesting.*

**S76:** *The course not only encouraged us to speak isiZulu, but to improve our Zulu-speaking skills. It also allowed us to interact with those of different cultural backgrounds in the diversity classes. My writing skills have definitely improved.*

**S77:** *Studying for the course was a great experience.*

**S87:** *The experience was fun, I have learnt a lot, I have an interest in majoring in isiZulu.*

As expected, those who considered the course not worthwhile indicated a negative experience, while still expressing an appreciation of the language and its culture:

**S78:** *Course was difficult and too fast paced. It is nice to learn and respect African languages and culture.*

Determining learning satisfaction as a predictor of academic performance is common in the field of education (Dhaqane & Afrah, 2016). In describing their satisfaction, some of the students referred to the skills they gained on the course (improved paragraph writing and speaking skills) as justification for their positive rating of the course: good, great, fun, enjoyable, amazing. Based on the students' positive

ratings, they found the acquired skills to be important, meaningful and relevant; all of which are elements of the lived curriculum (Fomunyam & Khoza, 2021). Thus, a focus on just the planned curriculum would miss the value of documenting the students' experiences in the teaching and learning process. Such documentation could be an important resource for further developing a course whose key purpose is to contribute towards decolonising the curriculum.

### **Students' Perceptions of Positive and Negative Experiences**

Questions 3 and 4 sought to elicit the students' positive and negative experiences respectively. Samples of participant responses are presented in **Table 10.1**.

The participants who indicated having positive experiences indicated the following points: learning new vocabulary; the interactive nature of the lectures, which was mainly highlighted by the use of videos and songs; participating in group activities; and making individual and group oral presentations, which provided opportunities for speech production and further developing fluency in the language. Such experiences are an indication of a satisfactory classroom environment, as described by Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015). S78 sums up the positive experiences best by metaphorically equating their experience of learning the new language to '*popping the English-speaking privilege bubble ...*'

The participants who indicated having negative experiences were mainly concerned about the unavailability of a course outline; an administrative issue. The unavailability of a course outline is further implied by S73's comment on being assessed on vocabulary that had not been taught yet. While repetitive activities are an integral part of language acquisition, there is a possibility that the repetitiveness of the sessions as experienced by the students could have emanated from a lack of a clearly defined course outline. The use of informal assessment to inform succeeding lectures could have

allowed presenters to identify levels of content mastery and avoid repetition. This finding further reiterates that eliciting student experiences based on the lived curriculum is crucial in reviewing the planned curriculum. The unavailability of a course outline and the relevant formative assessment activities are areas to be addressed in drawing up the planned curriculum.

**Table 10.1:** Students’ Positive and Negative Experiences regarding an isiZulu Language Competency Course

<p>Positive experiences</p>	<p><b>S68:</b> <i>There were videos and movies which students watched which were part of analysing different spectrums within the course</i></p> <p><b>S69:</b> <i>The fact that I got to speak in a different language other than English, the ability to freely engage in class</i></p> <p><b>S72:</b> <i>I really liked how the course emphasized oral presentations, I liked how the course motivated us to read and write isiZulu, I liked that it was highly conducted in isiZulu, which encouraged us to speak it</i></p> <p><b>S73:</b> <i>We learnt new vocabulary in every lesson, we interacted with each other in class, we learned about the culture through the songs and movies</i></p> <p><b>S74:</b> <i>I liked presentations, as I was able to increase my isiZulu vocabulary. My pronunciation of certain Zulu words became much better</i></p> <p><b>S75:</b> <i>I like the fact that we worked in groups, we were sometimes taught in English to better understand the course, and also the Wednesday, diversity classes, were much fun.</i></p> <p><b>S78:</b> <i>Learning a new culture, popping my English-speaking privilege bubble for a while</i></p> <p><b>S82:</b> <i>It was very inclusive and interactive</i></p>
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Negative Experiences	<p><b>S69:</b> <i>The fact that we did not have the course outline available</i></p> <p><b>S73:</b> <i>Sometimes very little English is used which makes the lesson difficult to understand. We were tested on vocabulary we were not taught. It is not always taken into consideration that some students don't understand the language at all</i></p> <p><b>S75:</b> <i>The diversity classes were short, I did not like translating Zulu songs</i></p> <p><b>S76:</b> <i>Repeatedly doing one thing for a long time (learning how to greet for 2-3 months)</i></p> <p><b>S77:</b> <i>We often took too long to move from one concept to the next. Repetition was present and a concerning factor</i></p> <p><b>S78:</b> <i>The fast-paced learning, the fact that Zulu speakers were in my class, destroying confidence</i></p> <p><b>S82:</b> <i>There are a lot of repetitive sections in the course so at times we would do the same thing over and over</i></p> <p><b>S85:</b> <i>To some degree, the repetition of work, even though we understand it</i></p>
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Although some students cited repetition as a negative experience, one of the students found the course to be too fast paced. Some participants indicated the use of English to explain misunderstood concepts as a positive experience, while others indicated the same phenomenon as a negative experience. S73 is of the opinion that fewer instances of using English in the isiZulu lecture made the course more difficult. These examples of contrasting experiences may be an indication that the course presentation may not have been differentiated enough to accommodate different student performance levels – another gap in the planned curriculum surfacing through coming to understand students' lived experiences.

## Student Recommendations

The fifth question sought to flip the perspective and capture students' recommendations for the implementation of the isiZulu language-competence course. The participant recommendations were to a large extent aligned with their negative experiences and included both administration and pedagogy-related comments. The recommendations included: provision of student course outlines on time, provision of lecturer-student consultation times outside the normal lecture or tutorial times; making use of the learning management system (SAKAI) to provide additional resources; making the course content more challenging by expanding the vocabulary practised; providing more frequent assessments; and making the course more writing-intensive. In general, the administration-related and pedagogy-related comments highlighted aspects omitted from the planned curriculum, yet students' lived experiences expressed the need to have them included. Samples of student recommendations include:

**S69:** *Make course outline available for all students, make use of SAKAI, no resources were posted.*

**S72:** *I would recommend that lecturers allocate consultation times for students.*

**S73:** *Students should be provided with more glossaries to improve their vocabulary. Lessons on language and language rules should be more structured. Students should get more detailed notes on language rules.*

**S74:** *More writing intensive, more presentations to improve speech.*

**S75:** *Increase the duration of the diversity classes, have a test after every two weeks for practice, have more class work and oral exercises.*

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**S76:** *Issue out course packs from the beginning of the year, include more diversity classes.*

**S78:** *Stream classes to boost confidence, people who speak Zulu shouldn't be with those who can't. Teach more in-depth, and much slower.*

**S83:** *A vocabulary list at the end of each class to keep track of new words learnt, because it is easy to forget.*

**S86:** *Give more challenging work to help us better our understanding of the course*

**S87:** *It [the isiZulu FAL course] should be taken seriously by the institution, it is one of the diversity improvers, it should be attended almost every day.*

Demographic data indicated that 20% of the participants are isiZulu home-language speakers; this suggests that these may have been wrongly placed in a language-competence class. Although some of these students may be intending to take isiZulu as a major, there is a need to further differentiate the course content based on students' prior exposure to the language. S87's recommendation proposes institutional support by suggesting that the isiZulu language competence course should be considered as one of the courses that could promote diversity within the institution. Jansen (2017) emphasises that curriculum is much more than content. Therefore, student recommendations should be one of the aspects incorporated into the implementation phase of the course at the university: the mere act of incorporating student perspectives into curriculum development contributes to the actualisation of the lived curriculum as well as curriculum transformation. As expected, HEIs may find it difficult to implement such measures because the actualisation of the lived curriculum usually requires disrupting the systems and norms of the institution (Maxwell & Roofe, 2020).

## Discussion

The public urban university that introduced isiZulu as part of its curriculum decolonisation agenda is commended for the great leaps it has taken to promote diversity within the institution. However, student learning satisfaction as part of curriculum decolonisation still calls for further investigation in HEIs. A holistic approach to curriculum decolonisation should consider student satisfiers and dissatisfiers in the new courses offered as part of the decolonisation process.

The key finding of the chapter points to the need for further investigation of student learning satisfaction on courses introduced as part of HEIs' curriculum decolonisation processes. Student comments in course evaluations are an expression of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the course. By extrapolation, student voices need to be heard in discussions that focus on decolonising the university curriculum. Decolonising curriculum practices implies that HEIs have a responsibility to 'listen' to student voices, while it is the students' responsibility to 'speak up'. As students 'speak up' and HEIs 'listen', they will both be contributing to the actualisation of the lived curriculum. While the lived curriculum mainly highlights the 'lecturers' and 'students' participation, the HEIs 'listening' role (though not part of the classroom experience) needs to be accommodated in the lived curriculum. The planned and lived curricula should be viewed as dialectic in nature, with both lecturer and student experiences from the teaching and learning activities purposefully fed back into the periodic reviews of the planned curriculum.

Jansen (2017) poses the question: Who will teach the decolonised curriculum? Who will re-teach the teachers (Pett, 2015) in preparation for presenting a decolonised curriculum? Introducing new courses as part of curriculum decolonisation implies that HEIs need to reconsider whether the lecturers and tutors presenting the new courses are adequately prepared to deliver quality courses and whether course administrators coordinating the courses are prepared.

Further research is needed in this regard for holistic curriculum decolonisation.

## **Conclusion**

The objectives of this chapter were to critically review student satisfaction by analysing 20 first-year students' individual learning experiences of an isiZulu language-competence university course, and to ascertain whether students are satisfied with the course. This qualitative study collected data through a questionnaire-based survey and was guided by the lived curriculum theory. The survey was used to assess students' positive and negative experiences of the isiZulu language-competence course. This chapter concludes by briefly discussing the implications of the research findings for teaching and learning.

### ***Enhancing Course Coordinators' Administration Competencies on Newly Introduced Courses***

While course coordinator roles vary from one department to another, some core responsibilities in the administration of individual courses within a department include: general course management; assessment and feedback; advising and supporting students on course-related matters; monitoring and reviewing courses; and approving minor course changes (University of Edinburgh, 2022). Participants in this study suggested administration-related recommendations such as timely distribution of course outlines and effective use of the Learning Management System to distribute teaching and learning materials. Such recommendations are an indication that general course administration was suboptimal. There is therefore a need for course administrator capacity building. Furthermore, the capacity building needs to be supported by a competency-based recruitment approach. The use of students' administration-related comments to inform the actual course administration processes exemplifies the planned curriculum as informed by the lived curriculum.

***Ensuring More Realistic Student Expectations of Language-Competence Courses Aimed at Decolonising the Curriculum***

Earlier sections of this chapter addressed factors that influence students' learning satisfaction. Higher levels of student learning satisfaction are achieved when student expectations are met or exceeded. Ensuring that students develop more realistic expectations of language-competence courses should in turn raise student learning satisfaction levels. According to Hermann *et al.* (2010), when a lecturer clarifies course expectations and facilitates student-student and student-lecturer interactions, significantly higher levels of satisfaction in end-of-term evaluations are achieved. Although the students rated peer interaction highly, they requested student-lecturer consultation times outside the prescribed lecture presentations, perhaps an indication that student-lecturer interactions may have been inadequate. It is therefore of paramount importance to cultivate a culture of realistic expectations by meeting or exceeding students' course expectations and student-lecturer interactions.

***Facilitating Teaching Quality That Matches Students' Preferred Thinking Styles***

According to Green *et al.* (2015), in student learning satisfaction reviews, the quality of teaching is regarded as more significant than planning and institutional support. In the current study, high-quality teaching, clear assessment standards and criteria, and assessment fairness were identified as important aspects of participants' learning satisfaction. These factors are evident in student recommendations for the inclusion of more challenging content, exposure to expanded vocabulary, frequent assessments, and a writing-intensive isiZulu language-competence course. Therefore, it is imperative to target teaching quality to improve learning satisfaction.

***Developing Positive Student Attitudes***

The current investigation identified students' perceived positive and negative experiences of how the isiZulu language-

competence course was taught. Based on the analysis of the positive and negative student experiences, it is recommended that the African Languages Department at the institution should pay specific attention to the positive experiences that can be further improved, as well as addressing the negative experiences affecting the students; both aspects require attention. For instance, the use of songs and videos in lesson presentations is a positive experience that should be targeted for further development, if there is room for improvement in this regard. On the contrary, negative experiences such as excessive repetition of course content should be targeted for improvement only if it is found to be misaligned with the teaching strategies for language–competence courses.

Introducing a language–acquisition course at university level is a rigorous process that involves different stages and a regimen of activities and competencies across interconnected interdisciplinary domains (Makhachashvili & Semenist, 2021).

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