Suggesting an Education Strategy to Reduce Cultural Conflict in Diverse Learner Populated Schools

Daniel Madzanire, Great Zimbabwe University, School of Education and Culture

dmadzanire@gzu.ac.zw

Cultural conflict is rampant in diverse societies and in schools, particularly. It manifests in both subtle and overt ways, permeating the whole school environment. The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature and extent of conflict in schools administered by mines in Zimbabwe, so as to suggest a suitable education strategy. The qualitative research approach of the study was executed anddocument analysis, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions as well as classroom observation were used to collect data. Three school administrators, three School Development Committee (SDC) members, two company managers, three Grade 2 teachers and thirty Grade 6 learners were purposively selected to participate in the study. It emerged from the study that conflict was attributable to teachers with no command of language(s) spoken by the school-going population and who also lacked training and aptitude for the task of dealing with language and cultural diversity in the classroom. It was also found that cultural conflict as described above could be reduced by establishing well-resourced language learning centres that fostervalues such as respect, tolerance and dialogue.

Keywords: *Cultural conflict: diverse learner population; education strategy; language diversity; diverse-specific language centre*

Introduction

Challenges in life have forced people to resettle in other areas. Following the establishment of mining towns such as Hwange, Shabani and Bindura in colonial Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, people from both within Zimbabwe and beyond the borders migrated to these mining towns to seek employment. The Rhodesia and Nyasaland Federation period exemplifies a time when ethnic groups were thrown together in mining towns. The Federal era was a colonial period from 1953 to 1963 marked by a loose union of three countries: Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) (Mavuru&Nyanhanda-Ratsauka, 2012). As a result of the internal and transnational migration, Zimbabwe has today, many mining centres that are characterised by ethnic tensions propelled by cultural differences (Madzanire, 2015). Mazrui (2004), notes that "while the greatest friend of African nationalism is race-consciousness, the greatest enemy of African nationhood is

ethnic-consciousness". Thus, accentuated ethnicity causes ethnic tensions where different ethnic groups come together, with the result that nationhood becomes an unlikely prospect.

Radical differences in language, ethnicity, class, gender, religion and socio-economic status can degenerate into conflict. Conflict is defined as "a difference that matters" (LeBaron, 2003:11). The question is, why does it matter? In a multicultural community such as a mining town, cultural conflict is most likely, and its occurrence could jeopardise education. Culture, therefore, takes centre stage in such instances. LeBaron (2003:4) refers to culture as "a life source that both animates and heals conflict". Thus, like a two-edged sword, culture can either cause conflict if it is not handled competently, or it can reduce conflict if it is properly handled, provided that handlers have the training and aptitude required to resolve conflict.

Cultural conflict at mining town schools may manifest via the 'whole school environment' which Ballantine (2003:221) refers to as "the educational climate", which includes: architectural features such as layout or spatial organisation, type of classroom, ability and age grouping, hidden curriculum and school culture (Ballantine, 2003:203; Ornstein, Levine &Gutek, 2011:298). In this sense, the educational climate encompasses everything that shapes the school environment. According to Ornstein et al. (2011) the whole school environment also includes language, diversity, instructional materials, assessment tools, performing arts, rituals of school assemblies, athletic events and graduation ceremonies, all of which can contribute to cultural conflict.

Cultural conflict at ethnically diverse mining town schools could be linked to language.In Zimbabwe, the language of instruction is clearly documented. The Nziramasanga Commission (1999) emphasised the use of the child's first language as a medium of instruction at ECD level. The second language would be introduced later on, as an additional language.Zimbabwean language-in-education-policy has it that first languages are now official media of instruction at ECD level (Education Amendment Act, 2006) depending on the area where such first languages are spoken. However, in mining-town schools across Zimbabwe, learners, whose mother tongue is either Tonga, Ndebele, Shona or Chewa, among others, are thrown together in the same classroom. Tonga originates in both Zimbabwe and Zambia,

Ndebele has its roots in South Africa, Shona is largely a Zimbabwean language and Chewa can be traced to Malawi. Mining-town school populations in Zimbabwe represent at least three ethnic groups at one point. Ethnictension could be lubricated at such schools as more than two languages of instruction abide, in addition to the official one. Such a scenario calls for an educational strategy that could reduce intercultural conflict possibly through equitable implementation of policies (Shaw, 2016).

Schoolplays performed at mining-town schools serve as a vehicle for the dominant ethnic group to lord it over supposedly 'lesser' groups (Madzanire, 2015). Performing arts which include music, traditional dance, drama and poetry (Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture (MoESAC), 2004), all seek to preserve and perpetuate culture. Berry et al. (2002),however, question the criterion for selecting the ethnic group culture that should be enshrined in the performing arts. For instance, choral set pieces usually appear in English, Shona or Ndebele, thus excluding Chewa, Kalanga, Tonga, Nambya, Sotho and Nyanja. MoESAC (2004) has since drafted a cultural policy that recognises the diversity of cultures. As with language, the operative question is about which group to prioritise in performances. MoESAC (2004) together with the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ)(2006) encourage the promotion of performing arts in schools. However, in the mine schools this could encourage conflict in the performing arts domain. This could be as a result of prioritising ethnic groups selectively, which could inevitably lead to some groups feeling wronged and left out when overlooked, and consequently resorting to blaming other groups for their perceivedslighting (Madzanire, 2015).

Teacher's competencies, with particular reference to coping with diverse school populations, are another major concern at mining-town schools. Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk (2012:26) contend that, "If we do not make an effort to understand the cultures of people that are different from our own, conflict is inevitable". Ndamba and Madzanire (2010), report that one Ndebele-speaking, primary school teacher in Chiredzi South, prioritised that language at the expense of Shona, Shangani and Venda with negative consequences. Teachers impel cultural conflict by prioritising the languages of certain ethnic groups at the expense of others. Teachers' verbal communication with learners may influence their learners' self-image positively or negatively.

This calls for the effort to reduce ethnic dissonance in schools, targeting teachers' interaction with students of different ethnicities.

Given that ethnic tension at mining-town schools in Zimbabwe is an endemic corollary of ethnic diversity (Indabawa&Mpofu, 2006), the following research question was therefore addressed: What language-based conflicts obtain at mining-town schools and whatstrategiescould be suggested to reducesuch forms of culturalconflict?

Theoretical framework

The study was shaped by LeBaron's (2003) cultural fluency model which discusses ways in which ethnic tension can be minimised in a diverse population. Cultural fluency is essentially an internalised familiarity with the workings of culture, within ourselves, others, and in the dynamic relationships of which we are part (LeBaron, 2003). Her argument is that ethnic groups are likely to fall into conflict inducing cultural traps (LeBaron, 2003)if they are not aware of them. For instance, there is automatic ethnocentricity, which refers to a situation where a particular group takes its perspective as the correct one. Dominant groups tend to push others aside and stereotype everything by casting it in the mould of their own particular language and culture. True to this pattern, therefore, those who differ from the majority in mining-town schools might typically be marginalised, thus causing resentment and conflict (LeBaron, 2003).

Another difficulty is the complexity trap, which takes the form of balking at the apparent impossibility of intercultural communication. This is in contrast to children who automatically pick up each other's languages and mannerisms without even thinking about it because they have not been told that they should find it difficult. It is their elders, the grown-up who may wish to lumber them with all their outdated mental baggage (LeBaron, 2003; Berns, 2010; Gellman, 2007, Rwodzi, 2011). Berns (2010) observes that multilingualism is indispensable as a social lubricant in multicultural towns.However, the matter of the pecking order is bound to supervene.

The other cause of cultural conflict is separation. Put simply, you need to be open to the world to be known and recognised as part of it. People should avoid seeing the differences with a blind eye to commonalities. The taxonomy trap connotes the belief that all culture can be categorised. There is also universalism which refers to a situation where an individual sees commonalities with a blind eye to differences. LeBaron's cultural fluency model emphasises that an individual canstimulate real communication and dialogue by drawing upon many different cultural lenses as the context requires. Thus, people become culturally fluent by familiarising themselves with the cultural traps in order to avoid them and thereby minimise cultural conflict.

Literature review

Several strategies to reduce cultural conflict in diverse learner populated schools have been suggested by various scholars operating in the realm of multicultural education. Gay (2002) postulates that cultural conflict in diversity could be reduced by implementing culturally responsive teaching. This strategy involves making learning personally meaningful by connecting knowledge about cultural diversity to teaching and learning. A report by the Metropolitan Centre (2008) which elaborates on how schools could connect diverse cultures to pedagogy advises teachers operating in ethnically diverse mining-town schools to get to know diverse learners' backgrounds by forming study groups to read and collect culturally responsive literature. In addition, the above mentioned report suggests that home visits could be conducted so as to consult with parents and community members on diverse cultural repositories in mining-town school communities. Gay's (2002) conflict reducing strategy hinges on the fact that ethnically diverse learners make sense of classroom knowledge that is built upon their lived experiences. The fact that those ethnically diverse learners' lived experiences are culturally coded leaves teachers without an option but to decode the diverse cultural codes that are usually embedded in the system of communication (Gay, 2002:110). In this sense, a culturally responsive teacher accommodates learners' diverse communication styles (Gay, 2013) to break conflict inducing communication barriers. Thus, culturally responsive teachers use diverse cultures to build bridges across cultural differences.

In another article, Gay (2013:56) expounds two key mandates of culturally responsive teaching, especially, "resisting any opposition to culturally responsive teaching and accessing the capabilities within marginalised learners and communities." The idea here is that teachers should not only anticipate opposition to culturally responsive teaching as a result of their long established perceptions about cultural diversity. Rather, they should (Gay, 2013) resist any form of resistance to it until positive attitudes about cultural diversity are inculcated in schools and communities. As regards the capabilities and talents within the marginalised groups, Gay (2013:56) encourages teachers to "direct diverse learners' potentialities towards their educational attainment." The idea is to trigger the untapped strength that lies idle in diverse cultures, linking it to diverse learners' pedagogy. Any connection between schools and their immediate communities requires proximate school-parent collaboration.

Parental involvement in school affairs has immeasurable potential to reduce cultural conflict in mining-town schools. Research data gathered in Ontario by the Ministry of Education (2007) in a guide to preventing and resolving conflict regarding programmes and services for learners with special needs, document solutions to conflicts that emanate from diversity. The salient solution suggested appertains maintaining regular interaction between schools and families achievable by involving parents in school activities and meetings. School administrators should observe the communication protocol where parents are officially invited ahead of school functions and meetings with home-school communication translated into diverse languages where possible (Lemmer et al., 2012). The potential of parental involvement to resolve conflict in diversity is supported by Terry and Irving (2010) who found that cultural conflict in diverse communities was significantly reduced when home-school mismatch was eliminated by involving families in the education of their children. In the same vein, Espelege, Anderman, Brown, Jones, Lane, McMahon, Reddy and Reynolds (2013) report that a guaranteed feeling of safety and security among diverse learners and staff is brought about by involving parents in the education of their children. The Ministry of Education in Ontario (2007) and also Duckenfield and Reynolds (2013) suggest that parents and school authorities could easily tackle learning disruptions and reduce conflict if they worked together. UNESCO (2016) acknowledges that the multifaceted causes of conflict in diverse schools could be tackled by engaging members of the school community.

The above strategies tended to emphasise parental and community involvement in education as fundamental strategies that could be implemented to reduce ethnic tension in diverse schools.However, the school climate as an entity should be organised to minimise cultural conflict. Cadillo (2013) suggests that school administration could be structured to groom learners as co-leaders by engaging them in addressing equity issues and celebrating diversity in schools. In essence, learners should be accorded opportunities to develop conflict reducing skills such as empathy, compassion and conflict resolution, all of which develop as learners engage with their colleagues in various capacities as leaders and co-leaders. It should be noted that learners become co-leaders if the teacher-learner relationship is enabling. Research has shown that learners learn leadership skills and moral values from adults they hold in high esteem (Barker, 2006; Rim-Kaufman &Hamre, 2010). Trumbull and Pacheco (2005) use the term 'learning as apprenticeship' to refer to a situation in which learners learn leadership skills and acceptable moral behaviour alongside adult experts. This conflict reducing strategy (Weissboard, Bourffard& Jones, 2013) can be implemented by diverse schools in different ways. Some schools assign all learners an advisor, usually a teacher or a counsellor who meets the learners regularly to discuss issues of concern whether academic or not. Other schools employ relationships mapping in which school administrators and other staff members collaborate to spot learners who do not have relationships with one or more adults. Such learners will be connected to adults with the help of the school staff. The idea is that diverse oriented schools need to encourage learners to practise leadership responsibilities, thus, grooming them to become peace-loving, morally upright citizens.

In a study on changing climates of conflict through network experiment, Paluck, Shepherd and Aronow (2016) demonstrate that it is possible to reduce conflict through a learner-driven intervention. The social network experiment which the three researchers carried out, involved highly connected students called the social referent seeds that were tasked to take a public stance against typical forms of conflict at their school. It emerged from the network experiment that social referent seeds were more influential at shifting school-wide conflict than non-referent seed learners. The intervention which relied upon peer-to-peer influence to spread new anti-conflict norms through the social network succeeded in reducing conflict in diverse

learner populated schools. This study found that the victim of conflict who is mainly a diverse learner in this case, could be effective in campaigning against cultural conflict in their schools.

Schools also need to manage anxiety that may impel cultural conflict in schools. In his cogent analysis of anxiety and learning, Cowden (2011) found that learners from diverse families bring a variety of anxiety-inducing problems to school. Research has proven that learners with anxiety are afraid to speak or interact within educational settings (Cowden, 2009; Younger, Shneider&Guirguis, 2008). Sze (2006) suggests that teachers in diverse learner populated schools could reduce conflict manifest as anxiety by breaking up tasks into smaller accomplishable chucks and also by reducing assignment length so that learners focus on quality rather than quantity. Teachers should notify parents and collaborate with them as soon as they detect an over-anxious learner. A study by Chansky (2004) revealed that diversity-charged anxiety in schools is reduced in schools where parents and teachers co-operate.

Researches reviewed so far have suggested conflict reduction strategies that centre on either the parents or learners. However, a study by The Foundation Coalition (2016) which derives a conflict reduction strategy from the nature of conflict and people's reaction to it deserves mention. The research suggests that people either opt to get away from conflict or to confront it whenever it arises. In doing so, people choose from the following five conflict response modes, which in themselves are equally good strategies to reduce cultural conflict in diversity (Prause&Mujtaba, 2015; The Foundation Coalition, 2016). First, people may choose to compete to resolve conflict by standing their ground. In diverse schools, diversity concerns may be opposed but as Gay (2013) advises, there may be need to resist opposition by standing one's ground. Where competition is futile, it may be judicious for an administrator to switch to another conflict response mode. Second, there is avoiding, which has to do with leaving matters unresolved. While it sounds imprudent to leave strenuous issues pending, some situations may demand total withdrawal from the situation. This is the case with conflict involving economic and political refugees. Third, people may opt to accommodate others and their issues. In linguistically diverse schools, the marginalised languages can be accommodated to pacify language-based conflict. Fourth, there is collaborating which advocates for co-operation between and among conflicting parties. Fifth, there is

compromising, which, according to The Foundation Coalition (2016:2) involves giving up more than one wants in order to amicably resolve cultural conflict. It is thoughtful to minimise cultural conflict in diversity by reflecting on one's conflict mode.

There are studies that have established circumstances where cultural conflict in diversity can be perpetrated without knowing. Ross (2008:1) draws attention to unconscious bias which implies hidden bias. Ndamba and Madzanire (2010) found that certain teachers operating in ethnically diverse schools were biased in favour of their own culture. Many studies have blamed biased people and imbalanced researches about ethnic tension without sensibly recognising that biases could happen unconsciously. Those operating in diverse settings should become aware of what Ross (2013:39) terms their bubbles (cultural barriers or biases) and break out of them through quality diversity training, opening one's mind to notice subtle thoughts rooted in diverse cultures or reading challenging literature on diversity. The matter is that teachers should strive to reduce cultural conflict by recognising their unconscious biases which they must work to eliminate. In circumstances where conflict due to unconscious biases occurs, Kotite (2012) and Tebbe (2006) advise diverse schools to build peace after such conflict by analysing the root causes of conflict in collaboration with the community. Obura (2004) identified exclusion of certain groups or their cultures as an example of bias that characterises diverse communities and found that tension festered where education systems that are exclusionary and biased exist.

Methodology

This study used the qualitative approach. It was a bounded multi-site case study (Creswell, 2013) where collection of data pertaining to the reduction of cultural conflict in mining-town schools was conducted at three sites (three mining-town primary schools). The population for this study comprised eighteen operational mining towns, eighteen managers of mining companies, twenty-five primary schools from which one hundred and twenty-five SDC members, fifty Grade 2 teachers and two thousand Grade 6 learners were brought into the study as subjects, but with due consent. Multi-phase sampling was used in this study. The term simply

means that the sample was selected in phases (Cohen et al., 2011).In phase one, three mining towns that host at least three ethnic groups were purposively selected in the same way: three primary schools were chosen, one from each of the three chosen mining towns. The total sample comprised forty-two (1.85%) participants. Three of these were school administrators (principals), three were SDC members, three were company managers (but the third one opted out), three were Grade 2 teachers and thirty were Grade 6 learners. Three data collection methods were used to gather data concerning language-based conflict in the study. These includeddocument analysis, interviews and classroom observation.

Data presentation

Data for this study were presented in tabular form.

The table below summarises recommendations related to the reduction oflanguage-based cultural conflict in diverse learner populated schools as deduced from perusing the minutes of a parents' meeting.

Table 1: Suggested recommendations on how to reduce cultural conflict in schools administered

by mines

School A	School B	School C
• An appeal for the exercise of freedom of expression in parental meetings • Translating minutes and memos into a variety of languages according to need	• Organising trips • Special days like consultation and prize giving days	• Organising trips

The table below summarises suggested recommendations that were derived from the school policy.

Table 2: Suggestions pertaining to the reduction of cultural conflict in schools with diverse learner populations

School A	School B	School C

• Ensuring a balanced ethnic profile for prefects.
 	
    Ndebele   - 14
    Shona   - 12
    Chewa   - 6
    Tonga   - 2
    Total   - 34
• Striving for excellence
• Co-operation
• Self-discipline
	• Ensuringa balanced ethnic profile for prefects.
	
	    Shona - 16
	    Chewa - 2
	    Ndebele - 2
	    Total - 20
	• Implementing a diverse-accommodative curriculum
	• Providing adequate resources
	• Stakeholder participation
	• Liaison with parents
	• Being child friendly
		• Ensuring a balanced ethnic profile for prefects.
		
		    Shona - 39
		    Chewa - 7
		    Total - 46
		• Diverse-oriented curriculum
		• Willingness to excel
		• Conducive learning atmosphere
		• Providing adequate resources
		• Attaining a good pass rate
		• Upholding the spirit of ubuntu/ unhu

Data in tables 3-7 were deduced from interviews.

Table 3: School administrators' recommendations to reduce ethnic strife in schools

School administrator school A	School administrator school B	School administrator school C
• Ensuring a balanced staff-learner ethnic match • Fostering tolerance • Accommodating diverse languages	• Ensuring a balanced staff-learner ethnic match • Fostering tolerance • Teaching different languages to staff and learners • Engaging resource persons • Creating a friendly atmosphere • Promoting dialogue	• Ensuring a balanced staff-learner ethnic match • Tolerating diverse cultures • Accommodating diverse languages • Engaging resource persons in order to bridge the skills gap • Continual training of teachers how to handle diverse learners

• Lubricating intercultural communication	

Table 4: Company managers' suggestions to reduce cultural conflict in schools

Company manager: school A	Company manager: school C
• Establishing a language centre	• Giving diverse cultural groups an opportunity to show case their cultures

Table 5: SDC members' suggestions for reducing cultural conflict among multi-ethnic school populations

SDC Member school A	SDC Member school B	SDC Member school C
• Learning about other cultures	• Speaking other languages	• Setting up social clubs

Table 6: Learners' suggestions to reduce cultural conflict

Grade 6 learners school A	Grade 6 learners school B	Grade 6 learners school C
• Learning languages L3SA • Obeying rules L1SA • Respectingoneanother L10SA	• Obeying school rules L6SB	• Learning / knowing all languages L2SC, L8SC • Obeying rules L6SC • Making friends L9SC

Key: L1SA --Learners 1 of school A L1SB -- Learner 1 of school B L1SC --Learner 1 of school C

Table 7: Grade 2 teachers' suggestions to avert cultural conflict at multi-ethnic schools

Grade 2 teacher school A	Grade 2 teacher school B	Grade 2 teacher school C
• Learning cultures in the school and the community - code switching to adapt to what learners receive and benefit from to best advantage	• Teacher to be sensitive to the diverse needs of learners	• Learning cultures and accommodating them in the school and the community

Discussion

Four categories relating to the reduction of conflict in mining-town schools were identified and discussed.

Accommodating other languages

It emerged from both interviews and observations that some teachers, who spoke their own language, struggled to accommodate learners' different languages in the schools.The responses of the participants suggest that teachers could reduce cultural conflict among learners by accommodating diverse languages. Chewa, Tonga and Shangani languages need to be accommodated in mining-town schools. Some schools, however, do not have the modus operandi to includethe diverse languages in their catchment areas. Shaw (2008), in his account of how schools are effectively run suggests that everyone operating in diverse schools must be held accountable to ensure that policies on diversity are equitably implemented.It may imply that school administrators should closely supervise teachers to check if all languages are rewarded in classroom teaching.

It emerged in an informative study conducted by Ross (2013) that teachers behave strangely, for example, when they do not accommodate other languages due to unconscious biases that manifest subtly in their teaching. Teachers are advised to reduce conflict by breaking out of their biases. Such a breakthrough is achieved by taking steps to realise what biases we wield through quality training and exposure to challenging literature.

Learning other languages

Learners suggested in the interviews that cultural conflict could be reduced if teachers learnt all languages spoken in class. The idea is that teachers should try and learn the languages spoken by their learners. The diverse nature of mining-town schools may compel teachers to learn a second indigenous language where possible. Studies have confirmed that the hidden biases we have about other languages could possibly clear as we learn other languages. Ross (2013) confirms that we become aware of other cultures or languages through an encounter with them.

Building cultural knowledge banks

Participants, particularly those interviewed, felt that effective learning happened when teachers drew examples from diverse learners' cultures. This finding dovetails with two key studies on culture, diversity on learning. The first relates to Gay (2013) who reported that cultural conflict could be minimised if teaching was made to be culturally responsive by aligning it to learners' culture. In other words, teaching should be related to learners' homes. The second acknowledges that homes have funds of knowledge (important cultural materials) that if collected and utilised can propel teaching. Bennett, (2011) reported that culturally competent teachers gather funds of knowledge.

Given the substance of home-school connection in teaching, teachers ought to build cultural knowledge banks using various strategies. They can assign learners to bring to school cultural artefacts that symbolise their culture. Metropolitan Centre for Education (2008) suggests that teachers could conduct home visits to gather cultural materials and initiate relationships with learners' families. Field trips could be organised to create opportunities for learners to appreciate other cultures and in the process gather cultural knowledge banks. Teachers do not just gather cultural materials for ornamental reasons. Rather, they should use them to enhance their teaching, making it meaningful to diverse learners. It is also hoped that cultural knowledge banks create a favourable school climate that minimises cultural conflict.Cardillo (2013) revealed that a peaceful climate is enhanced when both learners and their culture are incorporated.

Language Centre

Parents', administrators', and learners' exhortation to teachers to accommodate all languages and particularly the company Manager's suggestion that a language centre could go a long way in reducing conflict prompted the researcher to build a conflict reducing strategy based on diverse-specific language centres as discussed below.

Suggested strategy

An education strategy that derives from the recommendations is the diverse-specific language centre for teaching and preserving indigenous Zimbabwean languages. The language centre is diverse-specific in the sense that it is devised to reduce and possibly eliminate cultural conflict in a linguistically diverse community. It is hoped that the said centrecould go a long way in orienting and equipping the teachers and the community with incomparable cultural competence. With the funds permitting and with the mines and the government dedicated to reducing cultural conflict in schools, the envisaged diverse-specific language centrecould be pertinent. The mooted language centrewould serve three conflict-reducing purposes. It would operate a programme to teach and train specialists who are proficient in the indigenous languages spoken in the community concerned,endeavour to preserve local cultures by amassing resources and artefacts for the benefit of the school, the community and visitors, and coordinate research and development (R&D) programmes in the area.

The said language specialists would serve as coaches to help teachers and community members to familiarise themselves with languages spoken by other members of their community. Indigenous languages such as Chewa, Tonga, Shangani, Shona and Ndebele wouldthus be taughtin these mining environments. If a teacher speaks Shona, then with the centre's assistance he/she might acquire a reasonable competence (i.e. a working knowledge) of an additional language and a familiarity with the other languages of the area that enables communication across cultural boundaries. As suggested in the study's findings, the benefit to the teachers would be an increased ability to interact with a variety of cultures within the classroom, without causing friction or frustration. This would be in line with Grade 2 teachers' desire to have teachers who can code-switch to other languages during their teaching and confidently draw examples from the different cultural resource basesavailable. In this regard, Bennett (2011) found that diverse cultures have funds of knowledge or strategic cultural practices that the teachers could use in the classroom as teaching aids. Besides teachers, other community members could also benefit from the centre's services to familiarise themselves with relevant languages of the area for the same purpose of cross-cultural communication and understanding, but of course not to the same depth as the more academically orientated training offered to teachers (Rwodzi, 2011).

To overcome possible disinterest from the community's side the local leadership (chiefs, councilors and village heads) would be petitioned and enlisted to launch an awareness campaign.The community would be informed about the value associated with the diversity orientated language centre and the general benefits of learning other languagesand being multilingual. In essence, multilingualism instils a sense of tolerance among diverse cultural groups and encourages a diverse community to be amenable to dialogue (UNDP, 2009). The idea of multilingualism resonates with the concerns of most participants of this study. Thus, the community mightcompromise and accept the language centre since theymay realise its value. Sensitisation of the community will be utilised to gain acceptance of the idea that the centre could promote harmonious multicultural coexistence.

The proposed diverse-specific language centre would not only teach the languages of the area but would also train the resource persons who have the expertise in diverse cultures. In schools that are administered by mines, experts in Tonga, Shangani, Chewa, Shona and Ndebele could be trained at the centre for the purpose of teaching and promoting the otherwise excluded cultures, both in the schools and in the community. In the case of school A, where there are nine Shona-speaking and two Ndebele-speaking teachers, resource persons from the centre could be brought in to help teach Tonga, Chewa and Ndebele. This approach could balance tuitionproportionally according to the various language needs of the school populations speaking the relevant languages. If two experts are attached to a school to teach Chewa, they might competently man all the Chewa lessons and return to the language centre for other duties. This measure would ensure that learners do not lose their mother languages. The experts could also help translate the minutes of meetings, schools notices and memos into home languages as desired by participants of the parents' meeting. Cultural conflict due to language deficiencies and teachers' incapacity to cope with multi-ethnic classrooms, respectively, could be reduced as parents and learners are addressed in their own indigenous languages. The training of experts in diverse languages could go a long way in assisting the diverse-oriented schools attain a balanced staff-learner ethnic match which was insinuated in the school policy documents. Staff members who service the 'sidelined' (i.e. relatively neglected) languages can be groomed to attain a competitive level of professional effectiveness with the assistance of the centre.

Apart from teaching and training, the language centre could preserve the diverse cultures including those that experience continuous exclusion. The preservation of cultures could be done through the expertise of the resource persons groomed at the language centre. These experts couldcollect relevant artefacts from the indigenous cultures for preservation.Centresmay mount mini-museums and libraries at their premises in order to keep cultural heritages alive. The library could store locally codified indigenous languages dictionaries to assist people to learn indigenous languages. Besides, resource persons would promote community dance and music groups and provide similar services where schools' cultural activities are concerned. They may also ensure that the schools' cultural activities reflect diverse cultures. Madzanire and Ndamba (2015) found that ethnic biases that trigger cultural conflict manifest through the schools' cultural activities such as drama, traditional dance, assembly songs, and National Anthem and choral set pieces. To reduce cultural conflicts of this nature, mining-town schools could organise local competitions where the songs are sung in diverse languages. The cultural groups in the community could be given room to showcase their cultural activities. Culture days that involve the school and the community could be organised to allow various cultural groups to express their cultures.

The diverse-specific language centre should be mandated to carry out research and co-ordinate programmes and activities for the diverse community. As a research hub, the language centre would continually search for answers to the persistent language-related problems. Research could be carried out to establish the interaction patterns of a diverse learner population, the performance of diverse learners who are taught by teachers who speak languages other than theirs as well as the effectiveness of a diverse-specific language centre. Research experts at the centre wouldadvise the schools on how to handle a diverse learner population.

Preferably, the diverse-specific language centre would be placed strategically to co-ordinate community projects and programmes. In addition, the language centre should be registered with the government through the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, a government arm that controls cultural centres. The community leaders, mine management, chiefs, councillors and influential local business persons should also be co-opted to lobby for a diverse-specific language centre. It is envisaged that the success of the centre would hinge on resource

mobilisation as well as the support of both the local and the national leadership. Once the government approves the centre, the funds permitting and with the support of the local leadership, the non-governmental organisations and donors who wish to help culturally diverse mining communities could successfully implement their activities by channelling them through the centre. The multilingual experts at the language centre coulduse their expertise to enhance the smooth running of thecommunity projects and programmes. In doing so, the language centre could win the confidence of the community and operate smoothly. The diagram below envisages the operation of the diverse-specific language centre.

Figure1: The diverse-specific language centre modus operandi
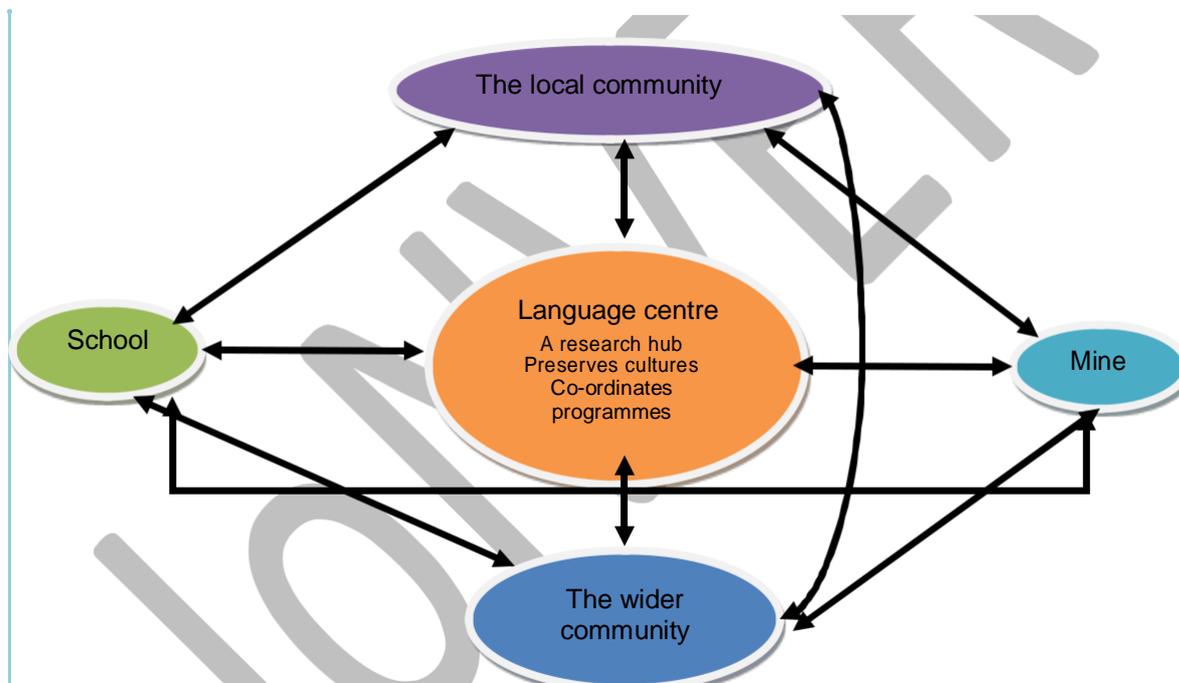
It can be inferred from the above figure that the diverse-specific language centre would be at the centre of a diverse community, mitigating cultural conflict and linking all the key institutions for the benefit of the community.

Conclusion

A conflict reducing education strategy that has been suggested in this research is a diverse-specific language centre that could be located in a diverse community such as a mining community. The centre could be funded by a mine, the government or any other source. The centre would be easier to establish in mining towns as they already have adequate

infrastructure. The envisaged diverse-specific language centre would have as its mandate, teaching and training of the teachers to speak and appreciate all other languagesused in the community. The language centre would have the role of preserving the diverse cultures and carrying out research in the realm of cultural conflict. The centre would also be obliged to co-ordinate community programmes. If instituted, with the resources permitting, the proposed education strategy (a diverse-specific language centre) might tremendously reduce cultural conflict due to language diversity and teachers' incapacity to cope with diverse learner populations.

References

Baker, J.A. (2006). Contribution of teacher-child relationships to positive schools adjustment during elementary school. *Journal of School Psychology*,44(3), 211-229.

Ballantine, J.H. (2003). *The sociology of education: A systematic analysis.* London: Prentice-Hall.

Bennett, C.I. (2011). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice.* Boston: Pearson Education.

Berns, R.M. (2010). *Child, Family, school, community: Socialization and support.* 7[th]edition. Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth.

Berry, J.W., Poortinga. Y.P.C., Segall, M.H.&Dasen, P.R. (2002). *Cross cultural psychology: Research and application.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Cadillo, R. (2013). Schools climate and youth development. In T. Dary, T. Pickeral (Eds). *Schools climate for implantations and sustainability. A school's climate practice brief*, 1,22-29. Available at: http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/practice-briefs.php. (Accessed 10 April 2016).

Chansky, T. (2004). *Freeing your child from anxiety*. New York: Broadway Books.

Cohen, L. Manion, L.& Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge   Taylor and Francis Group.

Cowden, P. (2011). Communication and conflict: anxiety and learning. *Research in Higher Education Journal,* 1(1), 1-9.

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative inquiry and research designs: Choosing among five approaches.* London: Sage Publications.

Denscombe, M. (2010). *The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects.* New York: McGraw Hill Open University Press.

Duckenfield, M.& Reynolds, B. (2013). Schools climate and dropout prevention. In T. Dary, T.   Pickeral (eds). *Schools climate for implantations and sustainability. A school's climate   practice brief*,1:22-29. Available at:http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/practice-   briefs.php. (Accessed10 April 2016).

Education Amendment Act (No. 2) 2006. Harare: Government Printers.

Espelege, D., Anderman, E.M. Brown, E.V., Jones, A., Lane, K.L., McMahon, D.S., Reddy, L.A.& Reynolds, C.R. (2013). Understanding and presenting violence directed againstteachers.

Recommendations for a national research practice and policy agenda. *American Psychologist*, 68(2): 75-87.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2): 106-116. Available at http://www.ite.sagepub.com. (Accessed 15 April 2016).

Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of University of Toronto Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1):49-70.

Gellman, I.M. (2007). Powerful cultures: Indigenous and western conflict resolution processes in Cambodian peace building. *Journal of Peace Conflict & Development*. Available at http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk. *(Accessed* 11 May 2012).

Gray, D.E. (2011). *Doing research in the real world.* California: SAGE Publications.

Haralambos, M.& Holborn, M. (2013). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives*. London: Harper Collins Publishers.

Indabawa, S.&Mpofu, S. (2006). *The social context of adult learning: African   perspective in   adult learning.* Gaborone: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Kotite, P. (2012). *Education for conflict prevention and peace building: Meeting the global challenge of the 21st Century*. Paris: UNESCO.

LeBaron, M. (2003). *Bridging cultural conflicts: A new approach for a changing world.*   San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lemmer, E.M., Meier, C.& Van Wyk, J.N. (2012). *Multicultural education: A manual for the South African teacher.* 2nd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Madzanire, D. (2015). An education strategy to reduce cultural conflict in schools administered by   mines in Zimbabwe. Pretoria: UNISA.

Madzanire, D.&Ndamba, G.T. (2015). Cultural diversity manifest in cultural activities: A case study of three primary schools in Sengwearea of Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe. *Dzimbabwe Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* 1,63-4.

Mavuru, S.& Nyanhanda-Ratsauka, K.(2012). *Stepahead history.* Harare: Longman.

Mazrui, A.A. (2004). *Power, politics and the African condition.* Asmara: African World Press, inc.

Metropolitan Centre for Education (2008). *Culturally responsive classroommanagement strategies*. New York: New York University.

Ministry of Education (2007). *Shared solutions: A guide to preventing and resolving conflicts regarding programmes services for students with special needs.*Ontario: Queens Printers. Available at www.edu.gov.on.co. (Accessed 15 April 2016).

MOESAC (2004). *Culture policy of Zimbabwe.* Harare: Curriculum Development Unit.

National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (2006). *Zimbabwe arts directory.* Harare: Copy World.

Ndamba, G.T.&Madzanire, D. (2010). Ethnic diversity and the dilemma of adopting the local language for instruction in Sengwe Primary Schools, Zimbabwe. *Zimbabwe International Journal of Languages and Culture,* 1,65-76.

Ndamba. G.T. (2013). *A critical review of policy on language-in-education in Africa: A case of Zimbabwe*. Doctor of Education Thesis. Pretoria: UNISA.

Nziramasanga, C.T. (1999). *Zimbabwe report of the presidential commission of inquiry   into education and training*. Harare: Government Printers.

Obura, A.P. (2004). 'Building Africa building peace: What education can do'. *Association for theDevelopment of Education in Africa (ADEA) Newsletter*, 16(4): 16-31.

Ornstein, A.C., Levine, D.U.&Gutek, D.E. (2011). *Foundations of education.* Belmont: Wadsworth CENGAGE learning.

Paluck, E.L., Sherpherd, H.&Aronow, M.R. (2016).   Changing climates of conflict: Asocial network experiment in 56 schools. *PNAS*,113(3): 566-57. Berkely CA: University of California. Available at: www.pnas.org/cogi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1514483113. (Accessed 10   April 2016).

Prause, D.&Mujtaba, B.G. (2015). Conflict management practices for diverse work places. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly,* 6(3) ,13-22.

Rimm-Kaufman, S.E.&Hamre, B.K. (2010). The role of psychological and developmental science in effort to improve teacher quality. *Teachers'College Record*,   112,2988-3023.

Ross, R. (2013). School climate and equity. In T. Dary, T. Pickeral (Eds.). Schools climate for implantations and sustainability. *A Schools Climate Practice Brief*,1:22-29. Available at: http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/practice- briefs.php. (Accessed10 April 2016).

Rwodzi, C.(2011). Linguistic challenges faced by migrant workers and informal traders in Gauteng. Doctor of Literature and Philosophy Thesis. Pretoria: University ofSouth Africa.

Shaw, G. (2008). Peace education in central and eastern Africa conference report. 2-3 December, Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi.

Tebber, K. (2006). Peace building methods for the post conflict education system. A Dissertation Submitted to the School of International Service of AmericanUniversity in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Peace and Conflict Resolutions.

Terry, N.P.& Irving, A.M. (2010). Cultural and linguistic diversity issues: Factors influencing the achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In R.P. Calarusso& C.M O'Rourke (eds) *Special Education for all Teachers*. Available at www.kentalhunt.com/colurusso. (Accessed 15 April 2016).

The Foundation Coalition (2016). Understanding conflict and conflict management. Available at:http://www.foundationcoalition.org/team. (Accessed 10 April 2016).

UNDP (2009). Why dialogue matters for conflict prevention and peace building. Available at: http://www.undp.org/cps/we/we_do/buildingconsensus.html. (Accessed 31 October 2014).

UNESCO (2016). *Stopping violence in schools: A guide for teachers.*Paris:UNESCO. Available at http://www.unesco.org/education.(Accessed April 2018).

Weissbourd, R., Bouffard, S.M.& Jones, M.S.(2013).   School climate and moral and social

    a *Schools Climate Practice Brief*, 1:22-29. Available at:

    http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/practice-briefs.php. (Accessed 10 April

2018).

Younger, A., Shneider, B.&Guirguis-Younger, M. (2008). How children describe their

    shy withdrawn peers. *Infant and Child Development*, 17(5), 447-456.