

# **The Impact of Language in Public Service Delivery: The Case of Thulamela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province**

by

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## Declaration

I, MALEHU GETRUDE MALULEKE (11514271), hereby declare that this dissertation for a Master's Degree in African Studies at the University of Venda, has not previously been submitted at any other university. In addition, I proclaim that it is my own work in design and execution and that all reference material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature.....Date.....

## Dedication

I dedicate this research first to the Sovereign Lord, God Almighty, for having provided me with relevant, loving and understanding people who played a very significant role in this study from beginning to completion. I thank HIM also for having given me the wisdom and insight I needed to see this study through to completion.

I also dedicate this study to my mom who has always believed in me and encouraged me to complete my study, even though she, herself, had not reached that level of education. Mom, you have always been a pillar of support, and I am very delighted that the study is completed when you still have strength to be able to witness the fruits of your labour. *Ke a leboga mma wa ka, Montedi.*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of language in public services in terms of service delivery. The study was steered by the fundamental question that required the researcher to assess the extent to which language impacts on service delivery.

Previous research focused much on the challenges in service delivery that culminated in riots and demonstrations by communities. Complaints ranged from poor service delivery, lack of effective service delivery, to corruption, all of which affected quality service delivery. On the contrary, this study seeks to broaden the horizon by bringing in a new dimension that looks into the interrelation between service delivery and language, and the impact thereof. The study intends to provide a better understanding of the significance of language in the public service sector.

The nature of the study is both exploratory and descriptive. The study is underpinned by two theoretical frameworks, namely, the Critical Theory and the Social Identity Theory; which were used as the lenses through which interactions between the municipality and communities were perceived. The analysis of both interviews and document study analysis outlined the importance of dissecting information through various modes of communication: in this case, orally and also in a written form. The language of the communities was also adopted in order to address the challenges of service delivery.

The study elicited the importance of language in the partnership between municipalities, as the local governing structure, and its communities. This study recommends that Thulamela Municipality should, in its organisational structure, incorporate a language service (like a language desk) which would handle all issues related to language - for instance, translation and interpreting - to ensure effective communication with its communities. In addition, the study also recommends that the Thulamela Municipality should adhere to the laws and legislation of South Africa, in terms of language use in its jurisdiction.

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABET	–	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	–	African National Congress
BCM	–	Black Conscious Movement
DBE	–	Department of Basic Education
DPSA	-	Department of Public Service and Administration
HSRC	–	Human Science Research Council
IDP	–	Integrated Development Plan
NEUM	–	Non-European Unity Movement
PAC	-	Pan African Congress
PanSALB	–	Pan South African Language Board
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SALGA	-	South African Local Government Association
SDIP	-	Service Delivery Improvement Plan
SWAPO	–	South West Africa People’s Organisation
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations
WHO	–	World Health Organisation
WTPSD	–	White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery

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# Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

## 1.1. Introduction

The dawn of the 21st century dispensation in South Africa has witnessed a wave of service delivery strikes throughout the country. Prior to the advent of democracy in South Africa, the socio-political discourse on service delivery was remote, from local-indigenous communities, in terms of both its understanding and practice. There was a high level of disjointedness in understanding what the government planned and the expectations of local communities. This disparity between expectations and intentions had to do with how information was communicated. The apartheid government determined fundamental components - such as education, health, distribution of resources, among other issues - for local-indigenous communities without involving them. Alexander (2005: 3) identified two fundamental sources from which any language derives its power: the first is the ability of the individuals or groups to realise their intention by means of language; and, secondly, the ability of individuals or groups to impose their agenda on others (Ibid). Both sources alluded to by Alexander (2005) best explain the situation of the black communities in South Africa. Furthermore, the apartheid regime used language to build the economic and social structures of the society: in a skewed manner given the plethora of inequalities that the current regime is grappling with.

Language and society are closely related (Romaine, 2000), and, as such, society or the community can never be separated from its language. Language can thus be defined as an important tool through which every human being, consciously or subconsciously, communicates its thoughts, ideas and emotions in a more understandable way. In other words, it is prudent to argue that language is the instrument of thought. In this case, language plays a significant role in shaping and dictating the direction that has to be taken in every sphere of human undertaking.

## 1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the history of South Africa, the two languages, namely Afrikaans and English, not only enjoyed official status, but were used as languages of instruction in both primary and higher education curricula. Also of importance to note is the fact that these two languages were

used as mediums of instruction to convey intent of any policy formulation, and this resulted in the suffocation of local indigenous languages. Indigenous languages did not feature anywhere in the development of policies, as indigenous communities were coerced to use the two languages which assumed more power than their own languages. African communities were subjugated and their languages relegated to a powerless state; with the source of power being to subjugate black communities. African languages were side-lined in terms of development and were solely used as languages of communication by homogenous communities in their homes and also in their gatherings.

The elevation of English and Afrikaans languages resulted in their being afforded a hegemonic status, as evidenced by them being used in communications in almost all official settings, such as, in: education, broadcasting, and documentation; whilst African languages were downgraded to an inferior position. The languages preferred were foreign to African communities, but somewhat imposed on them as they were considered to be the languages of power. Suffice to say that not every South African was literate, and, as a result not everyone one could access and/or understand the languages used. Taylor (1992) argues that the question whether we understand our fellow communicators is usually treated as a sort of non-serious question. He goes further to say, "If we cannot understand what others say or write, and if they cannot understand us, it seems natural to conclude that each of us is a little more than a psychological island." (Ibid)

Orman (2008) argued that African languages were allocated the inferior status as a result of the elevation of European languages, and, consequently, referred to as home or community languages as they were used only to secure identity. According to Jacobs (1992), one of the qualities that count for effectiveness is good communication and good morale. The languages spoken by black communities were relegated to the languages of subservience, which, according to Naomi in Prah (2003), were good for poetry, singing and some kind of conversation; but unsuitable for scientific work. Indigenous communities were not afforded equal opportunities with those Afrikaners and English communities. These languages were excluded from, to cite a few: political, economic and social spaces, which affected the development of the country.

The speakers of indigenous languages were denied the privilege and opportunity for engaging in matters/issues that affected them, such as service delivery. They were, as a result, disadvantaged and marginalised because their languages did not enjoy the same grading as the two languages alluded to above. Not only did the exclusion hamper

constructive and effective interactions with the majority of the citizens of South Africa, that is, African communities; but it also impacted negatively on the development of indigenous communities as well as on the distribution of resources. If communities are not afforded the platform on which to communicate their thoughts in their own language; they are disempowered. Suffice to say that the previous government used language as a powerful tool to oppress indigenous communities. Indigenous communities were disengaged not only from international affairs but also from all internal affairs, which affected them directly and indirectly.

The distribution of resources was unequal and mostly channelled through the two languages and their speakers. Official and non-official documents were written mostly in Afrikaans and to a limited extent in English, which became a challenge for most indigenous communities. To interpret and make sense of the messages conveyed through these documents was a mammoth task. Even though there have been attempts to bring about a linguistic shift from the usage of the two official languages, to eleven (11) South African languages by the democratic government, there are, however, still observations of preference or rather gravitation towards one language, namely English.

Twenty two years after democracy and the adoption of the constitutions, English still maintains its previous status and has become the dominant and the most preferred language, compared to African languages, as most government documents (like Acts, policies, bills) are only written in English.

The challenges encountered before the new dispensation are still persistent today. The notion that all languages of South Africa are official languages and that they are all afforded equal status is still far from being a reality. Alberts (2008) contends that this attitude of preferring colonial languages over indigenous languages leads to the death of these languages and thereby the deprivation of linguistic heritage. This anomaly widened a gap, which was already created in terms of service delivery. Hence, there are continuous cries and demonstrations by most communities throughout South Africa, from those displeased about how the delivery of services is still being conducted. The issue at stake may not only be about service delivery per se; but also how the municipalities communicate the plan of how the delivery of services will be conducted as well as their implementation strategy.



### 1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Lack of service delivery is a contentious challenge confronting successive local governments in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. This is evidenced by a series of protests and violent rioting of communities published in the various sections of the media, both locally and internationally. Complaints revolve around, among other things: the shortage of water, poor infrastructure, and lack of proper communication by responsible municipalities. Of concern also are reports on corruption in terms of poor service delivery by various communities, which are invading the space in the press on a regular basis. Other allegations by the general populace in South Africa is that most of the office bearers in local government administration; and municipalities are not qualified to do the tasks that they are deployed to execute.

Against the above raised concerns, this study brings in a more nuanced dimension by exploring how language impacts on service delivery. The question is, do the end users and the service providers understand each other in terms of language and communication? More so, what is the medium of communication in terms of municipal conduct? Is the preferred language well understood by the end users of various services? The issue of language is very pertinent in view of the fact that indigenous languages in South Africa have been long relegated to second class languages. The need to evaluate the importance of language in service delivery is therefore of paramount importance. This study gives primacy to language, based on the assumption that service delivery cannot occur in a vacuum, but rather through a relevant language; either as a mother tongue of the communities or as relevant jargon shared by the community. Fundamentally, this study, therefore, endeavours to examine the connection between the language and service delivery in the public service.

The delivery of services can be impacted by, amongst others: the methods used; the instruments utilised; and/or the language the municipalities employ to serve and service the communities under their jurisdiction. Service delivery cannot occur in isolation or in a vacuum. Fredal (2001) argues that delivery is subordinate to language or to verbal discourse. This implies that one cannot talk about effective service delivery without making use of language. Language is, as a result, fundamental to the success of the efficient delivery of services. Effective service delivery calls for proper linguistic interaction between every municipality and the people it serves.

People have the right to access information in a language they are able to understand as enshrined in section 32 (1) (a) of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa. Violation of this right renders people defenceless and powerless because access to information equips people with knowledge. Having legislation that recognises the right to use the main languages of a country may be an important and necessary step into the right direction, (Coleman, 2011); the challenge is the implementation or practice thereof. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of every municipality to convey the message/information to its communities in a more simplified and comprehensible way; as well as in the language that even an ordinary member of the community will be able to understand. Failure to do so usually results in a communication breakdown, which may further ensue into chaos. It is against this background that the study intends to investigate how language impacts on service delivery.

#### **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The subject of service delivery has received wide scholarly attention with some scholars focusing on governance, politics, corruption, and distribution of resources, health, justice and more. While acknowledging these insightful contributions, this study brings in a more nuanced dimension of the role of language in the public service in terms of service delivery. Very little has been researched and documented about what the impact of language is on the public service for the delivery of services, especially in the rural context. This study, albeit exploratory, it's also descriptive in nature in that it attempts to establish the link between language and service delivery in local municipalities. The literature available, for the most part, focused on, amongst others, challenges faced by different municipalities in various provinces: in terms of service delivery, the impact of language on service delivery, and in the health fraternity.

The emphasis on political speeches is on meeting the needs of indigenous communities by focusing on the delivery of services, which, for decades, the colonial and the apartheid hegemony have not paid attention to, with the aim of creating a balance between black communities and white communities, and also to close the service delivery gap which had already been widened during the apartheid regime. This study therefore intends to provide a better understanding of the connection between the language and service delivery in public services. The significant focus of this study was to ascertain whether the use of

language in the public service sector context has an impact on the services delivered to the communities. This study therefore intends to provide a better understanding of the association of language, on the one hand, and service delivery on the other.

## **1.5. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to explore how language impacts public service in terms of service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.

## **1.6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study were formulated as follows:

- To investigate the methods and the language/s that the municipality uses to communicate with its communities about the service delivery plans;
- To explore the effectiveness of the processes used by the Thulamela Municipality in ensuring that the information distributed to the community members also reaches people at grassroots level;
- To identify the effects of language (linguistic and non-linguistic) in communication between the municipality and its communities;
- To determine how language impacts on the service delivery of Thulamela Municipality.

## **1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was aimed at answering one fundamental question which has evolved into various sub-questions. The main research question guiding the study was formulated as follows:

- **To what extent does language impact on service delivery?**

The main question gave rise to the following subsidiary questions:

- Which methods and language/s does the municipality use to communicate with its communities about the services delivery plan?

- What are the processes used by the Thulamela Municipality to ensure that the information distributed to community members reaches every person including people at grassroots?
- What are the effects of language (linguistic and non-linguistic) in communication between the municipality and its communities?
- How does language impact on the service delivery of Thulamela Municipality?

## **1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Grant and Osanloo (2014) regards theoretical framework as the blueprint of the research inquiry, in that it serves as a guide that builds and supports the study undertaken. Sinclair (2007) shares the same opinion, though he equates theoretical framework to a map or a travel plan that guides a traveller to the designed destiny. Before a person travels to an unknown destination, one has to first make a travel plan or to search for a map which will provide the detailed information of how to find a way to the destination (ibid). Like any journey well-travelled, so is research a journey towards an aspired endpoint. In terms of research, the theoretical framework guides the researcher as to how to navigate the research in order to arrive at a probable outcome. It is usually informed by a literature review. In this chapter, some theories, which underpin the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be researched, have been accentuated. Some of the theories examined in this study include, *inter alia*, Social Identity Theory and Critical Theory.

### **1.8.1. Social Identity Theory**

Lauring (2008) opposes the view presented by most studies that assert that there is a linear link between language and social identity. He, however, argues that the relation between language and the Social Identity Theory is negotiated in people's interactions (ibid). Language provides the opportunity for engaging in social interaction and serves as the main agent of an individual's integration into a cultural and social group (Lauring, 2008: 347).

Mueller in Lauring (2008) asserts that symbolic expressions which are articulated through language are a means of socialisation. Such expressions create an imagined and actualised social bond between the individuals and groups (ibid). Furthermore, Lauring (2008) regards language as a facilitator between communication and relationship building. The relationship between humans is built upon communication, which in turn is submerged in a language.

Consequently, without language, there can never be any communication. However, Jansens et al in Luring (2008) argues that language can also be a hindrance of communication between subsidiaries. This may result from, either: the usage of a foreign language to both interlocutors, who each comes from a different linguistic background; or the usage of a jargon, which is specific to the particular field, which is foreign to a person who is not from the same field. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller in Luring (2008) assert that the use of language is tied to the social context, and that the social practice of identifying is enacted in part through the language.

### **1.8.2. Critical Theory**

Critical Theory emerged out of the Marxist tradition and it was developed by a group of sociologists at the University of Frankfurt in Germany who referred to themselves as 'The Frankfurt School' (Crossmann, 2017). It is a school of thought that is oriented not only towards critiquing the status quo in terms of social interactions, but also at affecting or bringing about change in the society. Critical Theory is concerned with the critical meaning of experiences as they relate to all kinds of social oppression, including linguistic oppression (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Clark and van der Westhuizen, 2009). Linguistic oppression, as referred to in the preceding sentence, is, from my perspective, a point of concern for every society as it disempowers the society and renders the affected community dependent.

Critical Theory is a way of activating social change by providing knowledge of the forces of social inequality. If the language one speaks is degraded to a 'low class', this is, according to the critical theorists, a recipe for disaster in the social context and thus warrants social intervention programmes. Social intervention programmes are deemed activities by government, social agencies and volunteers and they are designed to change and improve the social status of individuals, groups and community, strengthen social bonds and encourage the internalisation of social control. In this study, the local government is the one which should ensure that communities under its care are empowered through language that is 'user friendly' to everyone, especially an ordinary citizen whose level of education is below the level of Adult Based Education and Training (ABET) ([sociologyindex.com/social\\_intervention\\_programs.htm](http://sociologyindex.com/social_intervention_programs.htm)).

Mark Horkheimer (n.d) is concerned with the transformation of the society as a whole. In order to achieve this, people should, according to Horkheimer, be able to reclaim their power. This explains the situation and the status of black communities in South Africa who were previously disempowered and whose languages were marginalised. According to this theory, there is a need to engage with the social conditions under which people lived, and based on that context, the formation of their concepts and actions. Service delivery is no exclusion to these social conditions.

The Critical Theory should, according to Mark Horkheimer, be understood on the basis of meeting three criteria, namely, it must be: explanatory; practical; and normative. If it is explanatory that means it must explain what is wrong with the current social reality. Interrogating the status quo of the delivery of services in the Thulamela Municipality, with regard to the language in use in public service, requires: firstly, an understanding of the legal documents that are statutory (like Acts and bills) and non-statutory (like policies etcetera), which set forth rules and regulations that should govern a particular activity; and, secondly, the adherence to the requirement of those documents.

The criteria according to which it must be practical requires us to use realistic, corrective and practical methods and procedures to address the irregularities that impacted negatively on social reality. According to the critical theorists, this theory should be applied to the practical world; that is, it should provide practical solutions that will result in a change to the society. The Constitution of South Africa, as the supreme law of the country, afforded eleven languages spoken in South Africa, including the previously marginalised languages, official status. Accordingly, all languages, according to the constitution, should be treated equally by all institutions in South Africa, including government departments. The theory written on paper must also relate to what happens in practical life.

## **1.9. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used a qualitative method and the case study design to comprehend the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be explored within its context. This study, which is exploratory as well as descriptive in nature, attempts to establish whether there is a link between language and service delivery in the public sector. The research methodology selected will assist to reveal the life histories and experiences of the Thulamela Municipality employees and council concerning their views about the connection between language and

service delivery. In addition, the methodology will assist to investigate how the Thulamela Municipality makes decisions in terms of the planning and implementation of services distributed to the communities. The study was exploratory in nature and non-probability sampling was used to select the participants of the study. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and municipal documents were analysed.

## **1.10. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

There was a need for the researcher to define the following concepts used throughout the study.

### **1.10.1. Language**

Language is a system of communication using sounds or symbols that enables us to express our feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences (Goldstein, 2008). Locke in Taylor describes language as being the 'great conduit', whereby men convey their discoveries, reasoning, and knowledge, from one to another (Taylor, 1992). Knowledge can be shared or transferred through the medium of language. According to Geary (2013), language is used to transmit the fundamental cultural, social and political values of people. Used as a means of transmitting information, Adler (1984: 11) contends that it is an essential ingredient in the development and utilisation of educational skills and a vehicle of social acceptance or non-acceptance as people react to each other based on the way they speak. Spender, on the other hand, defines language as a means of classifying and ordering the world: the means of manipulating reality. Cameron (2003) in Talbot, Atkinson, and Atkinson, associates language with the society. He states that language is not a phenomenon that is independent or disconnected from society; it is rather a social institution that is deeply implicated in culture, in society, in political relations at every level (Ibid).

Talbot, Atkinson, and Atkinson (2003) affirm that language plays a vital role in constituting what people perceive as reality. For the purpose of this study, the word 'language' will be understood in terms of what has been outlined in Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 section 6 (1); which states that the official languages of the Republic are: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. These languages are to be used as the languages of power and influence in the respective municipalities where they are predominantly spoken.



### **1.10.2. Municipality**

A municipality may be defined as a city or town that has its own government to deal with local problems, or rather a group of people who run such a government; an urban district having corporate status and powers of self-government (Merriam Webster Dictionary). The term 'municipality', as an administrative entity, is composed of a clearly defined territory and its population denotes a city, town, or village, or a small grouping of them. BusinessDictionary.com defines the word 'municipality' as an elected local government body having corporate status and limited self-governance rights, and serving a specific political unit such as a town or city.

For the purpose of this study, the word 'municipality' will be viewed and defined in line with what a municipality is in the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 as laid down in Section 155 (6) of the Constitution of South Africa. The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 further defined an organ of state within the local sphere of government consisting of political structures, office bearers and administration of the municipality in the South African context. Local government is comprised of varying municipalities, which are further subdivided into various categories in terms of their distinctive features and the role they play in governance.

According to the Act, a municipality is an organ of state within the local sphere of government, exercising legislative and executive authority within an area determined in terms of the Local Government Act. For the purpose of this study, the word 'municipality' should be understood in terms of section 155 (6) of the Constitution as referred to in the Local Municipal Structure Act, No 117 of 1998 and Regulation. Thulamela Municipality, which is chosen as a case in this study, is one of the municipalities falling under the jurisdiction of Vhembe district, which had been chosen in accordance with the stipulations of both Acts.

### **1.10.3. Service delivery**

Having understood what a municipality is; how it relates to local government; what its role is in terms of governance; makes it paramount to have knowledge and a clear understanding of the concept service delivery. Service delivery, in simple terms, refers to services which are been delivered to people who are in need of them. In the South African context, service delivery is the process whereby services are made available, accessible and affordable to



community members in specific localities. Equally important, is that such services should be planned and designed by community members themselves.

#### **1.10.4. Community**

The word 'community' has been defined differently by various scholars. One of the definitions concerns a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common; the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests. Rifkin et al in Brieger (2006) defines the word 'community' as a group of people living in the same defined area, sharing the same basic values, organisation and interest. White in Brieger (2006) defines the word 'community' as an informally organised social entity characterised by a sense of identity (Ibid). The word can further be defined as a population which is geographically focused but which also exists as a discreet social entity, with a local collective identity and corporate purpose. All the definitions can be categorised as expressing the view that the community is a group of people who: identify with each other; are viewed as the social entity; and are geographically located or reside in the same vicinity; have similar characteristics (in that they share the same interests and values). All the attributes referred to in the above definition clearly define the Thulamela community that has been chosen as a case for this study.

According to Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi and Herremans (2010: 302); the term 'community' is normally defined in terms of geography, interaction, and identity. Geographically speaking, people living in the same geographic location or region are said to be a community regardless of the absence of interaction. Regular interaction may, however, be used as the only attribute to define 'a community'. In terms of identity, the term 'community' can also refer to groups of people, whether they are stakeholders, interest groups or citizen groups with shared beliefs, experiences, and values. Thus 'community' can refer to a community of place, a community of practice or a community of affiliation or identity (Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi & Herremans, 2010: 302). Chiplin (1996) also reminds us that the notion of community in the context of South Africa has become associated with a variety of other referents such as class, race and ethnicity.

#### **1.10.5. Barriers to communication**

Anything that hinders the process of communication is regarded as a barrier to communication. Barriers to communication can be defined as the aspects or conditions that interfere with the effective exchange of ideas or thoughts. Barriers to communication can

also be seen as obstacles in a workplace that can prevent the effective exchange of ideas or thoughts (Stagg, 1991). Such barriers include, *inter alia*, status differences, language differences, gender differences, cultural differences and prejudices (Ibid).

Many organisations develop difficulties due to communication issues. Five key barriers that can occur within a company or an organisation are as follows: language, cultural diversity, gender differences, status differences and physical separation (Stagg, 1991). These barriers to communication are specific items that can distort or prevent communication within an organisation and the organisational environment (Ibid). Amongst the barriers identified above, this study focused not only on whether the language the municipality uses to communicate with its communities is user friendly, but also on semantic connotation, that is: does the lingo or the jargon used by the municipality not create message distortion as it is passed from one level to another; can it be comprehended by every community member, even by those whose level of education is low? Jureddi and Brahmaiah (2016) opine that the terminology used in a message may act as a barrier if it is not fully understood by the receiver(s). The reason why the researcher had chosen language amongst all identified barriers is because this study investigates the complexities of language in the public service for the delivery of service.

Nel in Shaidi (2013) defines local government as the sphere of a state that aims to identify the needs of local communities and promote the general welfare by developing the environment in such a manner as to meet such community needs.

### **1.11. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study is confined to the municipality documents: such as posters, reports, seculars, speeches, as well as interviews of both communities serviced by the municipality, and the public service employees of the Thulamela Municipality.

## 1.12. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

- **CHAPTER ONE** provides an introductory chapter that gives an overview of the research by providing the introduction and the background of the study. The chapter also outlines the research problem, the significance of the study, the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, as well as delimitations of the study. The chapter also presents a definition of key concepts and theoretical framework that guides the study.
- **CHAPTER TWO** presents the review of literature as well as government documents which provide information required for this study.
- **CHAPTER THREE** details the methodology that this study employs to collect and to analyse data.
- **CHAPTER FOUR** deals with analysis of the data collected in the preceding chapter.
- **CHAPTER FIVE** presents the findings, recommendations and the conclusion of the study.

## 1.13. CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter was a point of departure of the entire discussion of the study, which focused on language and service delivery in the Thulamela Municipality, and the impact thereof. The chapter highlighted amongst others, the statement of the problem, aims, objectives, as well as the significance of the study. The research questions essential for the study were also presented.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents literature on the impact of language on service delivery in the public service domain. However, as already alluded to in the limitations of the study, there were challenges in terms of accessing adequate literature relevant to the topic under investigation. The types of literature that dealt specifically with the topic under investigation was minimal, simply because most the focus was on a different perspective, like rioting over poor services, lack of accountability, complaints about corruption in the allocation of tenders that were meant to address the problems of service delivery, etcetera. As a result of these challenges, the researcher had, in some instances, depended upon the legal government documents on public service in order to better understand the intersection or the interconnectedness of language and service delivery and the impact thereof.

### 2.2. LANGUAGE AND PERCEPTIONS GLOBALLY

The word 'language' has been defined by a plethora of linguists, amongst them, Sapir, who, in his definition, refers to language as purely human and a non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols (Sapir, 1921). These symbols are, in the first instance, auditory and produced by the so-called 'organs of speech' (Ibid). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), a language is humankind's principle tool used for interactions, and for expressing, amongst others, ideas, emotions and knowledge. Used as a tool or a method for human interactions, language could thus be perceived as playing a role in shaping the way people think, the way they talk to one another and also how they perceive the world around them. Language is therefore a set of systems that humans use to communicate their ideas to each other and/or to interact with one another in a more rational way.

Beyond its role of transmitting, amongst others, cultural knowledge it is also an important means through which people gain access to the content of others' minds (Ibid). Prof Sbu Ndebele, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town (cited in Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006) has expressed in the preface of the book, *Academic Literacy and the*

*Languages of Change*, that language is a fundamental component of the society, in that it carries the society's perception, its attitudes and goals. Wen (2014) supports the expression stated above by intensifying that human beings rely on language to express themselves, communicate with others and know the world. The view is further echoed by Armstrong and Ferguson (2011) who states that language is not only meant to convey information but that it also maintains social relationships. Language pervades social life (Kraus and Chiu, 1998). This implies that language is the medium through which people are not only able to transmit information, but are also able to socialise with one another.

According to Lai (2015), Hong Kong (one of the cities of China), during the colonial period, was under the rule of Britain. Before China assumed the sovereignty of Hong Kong, the two dominant languages spoken in the area were English and Cantonese (Ibid). Cantonese was a Chinese dialect that was spoken in Southern China, while English was the language of the colonial government (Ibid). Like in most African countries, English became a language that was used for high official functions with Cantonese occupying a subservient role as a common language used by the local people for daily life purposes. English was beheld as a prestigious working language mainly for the formal institutions of government, and was used by the majority of the population as their usual language for informal daily communication (ibid).

There was a change in the language arrangement of the state. China established a mandatory mother tongue policy that enhanced the status of a local language, namely Cantonese, as a medium of instruction (Lai, 2012). English temporarily acquired its rightful status, which was previously occupied by the Cantonese language, that of literally being perceived as a foreign language. It was taught as one of the language subjects in schools but no longer used as a medium of instruction. However, according to Lai (2012), though it was no longer perceived as the medium of instruction, it still played a very prominent role because it was still used as a compulsory subject for all school levels in Hong Kong. In addition, a pass in English was a requirement for university entrance. This means the two languages both acquired official status. However, Pennington & Pierson in Lai (2012) relegated the Cantonese (Chinese) language to a status of sovereignty, whilst English, they maintained, was afforded the status of the language of power.

In his book, *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* resonates, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) stated:

*Everyone in the world has a language, either the language of his or her parents or one adopted at birth or at a later stage in life.*

After having evaluated the status of African languages in Africa and the extent of their usage as a mother tongue in instruction, in various sectors of governance, he echoed the above sentiments. When he observed the proportion at which English was developing globally, at the expense of mother tongue languages, he was propelled to raise the question of whether English should be regarded as the language of the world (ibid). Apparently, what prompted him to pose this question was the way in which he observed the spreading of English in third world countries, the scope it occupies in African countries and the role it plays in affecting the African communities' world view.

### **2.3. THE FIGURATIVE MEANING OF LANGUAGE**

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), a metaphor is not merely a property of language, that is, a linguistic phenomenon, but rather a property of thought, that is, a cognitive phenomenon. The word 'cognitive' here relates to cognition, which, in turn, explains the issues of thought, be it the process of knowing or understanding. What Lakoff and Johnson (2003) alluded to in the statement given above is that metaphors could be understood from two perspectives, namely, the linguistic and the conceptual point of view. There are two types of metaphors, linguistic and conceptual metaphors.

Downes (1998) asserts that we can use the term 'language' analogically, as a metaphor, which Ayling (2002) views as a quality of utterances, which enables us to operate as a palimpsest of resonances which are either interpreted or dismissed by the hearer, according to manifold factors (such as, among a plethora of others, context and the interpreter's imaginative, and linguistic faculties). Stern in Ayling (2002) points out that metaphors often coexist with literal meaning. Downes (1998) further marks metaphors as conceptual or cognitive, which are seen in language in our everyday use. Quite often, a plethora of literature uses conceptual metaphors in discourse analysis (Prah, 2006; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1993; Downes, 1998).

A conceptual metaphor is not limited to similarity-based meanings extending individual words or ideas, but rather involves the reconceptualisation of a whole area of experience in terms of another. Thus, metaphor always involves two concepts or conceptual domains: the

target (also called 'topic' or 'tenor' in linguistics literature), and the source (also called 'vehicle'). Conceptual metaphors do not only shape our communication, but they also influence the way we think and act. The conceptual metaphor, as used by Prah (2006), equates language with human interaction in that it simply describes dealings or communication that exist between individuals, groups, or countries. It is through language that humans are able to communicate and interact. The preceding account emphasises the fact that for human beings to communicate with each other in a more understandable way, they need a language which both interlocutors will be able to comprehend with ease simultaneously.

On the other hand, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) likens human language to a mirror. He affirms that 'language is a mirror'. The semantic connotation of this metaphorical expression is that language is a means through which people can view themselves. In this instance, language is metaphorically likened to a mirror through which people can see and observe their physical looks. Like mirrors, which are a reflection of our own images, language reflects our traits, like our self-image and self-identity as a community. Allot (2003) echoes the same metaphorical outlook as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) by further stating in his article 'Language as a mirror of the world: Reconciling picture theory and language games', that language does not only mirror reality, but it also mirrors the world. The limit of our language means the limits of our world (Wittgenstein in Kim and Mattila, 2011). Consequently, language influences how one thinks, as well as how one perceives the world, hence for one to think, one needs language.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) was not against learning and knowing English, but only became concerned when it looked like English was going to be used as a replacement of the languages of African communities. What unsettled him more was the way in which he witnessed people being lured into relinquishing their languages and cultures, in favour of English, though indirectly. He pondered over the conditions that brought English (and other European languages, like French and Portuguese), to the third world as a language of the oppressor which was entrenched on the oppressed nations, that is, in this case, African black communities. He saw language as playing the role of holding captive the cultures, values and minds of black communities. Imberti (2007) affirms Ngugi wa Thiong'o's view by asserting that an individual's mind is shaped by the language that he/she speaks, particularly one's mother tongue.



Viewed as mirrors of our identities, our languages therefore have a fundamental role to play in reflecting who African indigenous communities are, in terms of their identities, values, knowledge as well as their culture. Banerjee (2012) shares the same viewpoint as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) and Allot (2003), on the notion of language mirroring or reflecting the individual's self-image, since it is true that, through language, one is able to do a discovery of self, be aware of self and also be conscious of self. Banerjee (2012) elaborates further by stating that 'the person you are, your experiences, your identity, your personality are all the effects of language'. Our languages reflect our personalities. It is through language that we are able to venture into interactions with each other and also with the world: to express our views, our emotions, our values and our cultures.

Banerjee (2012) points out that we can only express our experiences to ourselves and to others by using the concepts that are embedded in our language. If the speakers of a said language or a particular community are, either consciously or subconsciously, lured by circumstances to abandon their own language in favour of a foreign language - as their medium of instruction or as the language in education - then the speakers of those languages are being coerced into forsaking their own life experiences that make them who they are and start viewing themselves through the lens of the 'other' language/s. This coercion impacts negatively on the identity of the people who are at the receiving end. In this regard, they will be viewed as people without culture and identity since they adopted an identity that is not theirs. Changing one's language means changing the way one views the world, and also one's identity.

The three languages alluded to by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) earlier, occupy the central stage in that they are used as official languages of instruction, in administration, commerce, trade, foreign communication, etcetera in predominantly African states. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) further cites the situation of the Scandinavians who learned English for the sake of knowing it as a language, not for it to become a substitute of their mother tongue. There was no intension of making English a communication substitute for their own language in their own country. To the Scandinavians, English was in no way a medium of communication, but they learnt it so that it would be easier for them to interact with the speakers of English.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) assigns two aspects to every language; the first aspect concerns its role as a catalyst of communication in the struggle for survival, the second regards its function as a carrier of the history and culture of the societies. On the other hand, Imberti (2007) describes language at two levels, namely: the sociological and the cultural. On a



sociological level, language is explained or understood as the human vehicle that communicates perceptions. There is a connection between language, culture, socio-economic conditions and other human life (Ibid).

## 2.4. LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

According to a plethora of literature, language is a marker of identity (Geary, 2013; Kind and Carson; Warschauer, 2000). Imberti in Kim and Mattila (2011) supports the statement in literature that language is more than a communication tool in that it is a key to a person's self-identity. Accordingly, Warschauer (2000) adds to the discussion of language and identity by arguing that language is not only a means through which people communicate, but also plays a role in the formation and expression of identity. Language associates an individual to his/her own identity. Identity, in Norton's words, refers to how people understand their relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for their futures (1997: 411).

According to Alexander (1997), various political organisations - amongst others, the African National Congress (ANC), the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), and, lastly, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) - considered the fact that all language communities are valid sub-national identities. People are not only identified through their nationalities. Over and above national identities, people are identified in terms of ethnicity, which is based on commonalities, like the language they speak and the culture they share.

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) define the word 'identity' as how a person understands his or her relationship with the world. Identity highlights how language constructs and is constructed by a variety of relationships. McKay (2013) supports the assertion by Geary (2013) that language and identity merge: a merging that results in some identities being affirmed while others are compromised, minimised or even held in question (Ibid). Language shapes the identity of a person. This is in line with the assertion by Imberti (2007) that language is a key to a person's identity. It is a mediator through which people are able to relate and understand each other (Ibid). A person is either identified (e.g. as '*Motsonga*', '*Motswana*' etcetera) because of the language she/he speaks.

The knowledge of language is fundamental to a person's identity. A person's identity is mirrored in the language and the culture they have inherited from their forefathers (Policy

document - The language policy for schools in Namibia – discussion document, 2003). An individual is able to identify self through the language s/he knows and understands well. This language can't be any language besides one's mother tongue, or, as the Department of Basic Education (DBE) calls it one's 'home language'. Mashele (2016) expressed his discontent concerning how indigenous African languages are viewed by their speakers in his article 'Speaking English is not a Mark of Intelligence', published in The Sowetan (5<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2016). He made this statement after he had observed the rate at which English was intensifying, more than 20 years into democracy, *vis-à-vis* at the cost of indigenous languages; and how English still poses a threat to the previously marginalised indigenous languages. This was a threat that stemmed from the Eurocentric mentality that some indigenous communities have embraced.

Mashele (2016) was disheartened by the popularity the English language was getting at the expense of the indigenous African languages in predominantly 100% indigenous people gatherings like churches, funerals, etcetera in South Africa. Mashele (2016) made reference to one funeral he attended in a predominantly 100% Xitsonga speaking village where no single white person was in attendance; however the entire proceedings were administered in English. This was, according to him, a point of concern as indigenous folks viewed the knowledge of English as a sign of intelligence rather than as a negative impact not only on the identity of the African languages, but also on their identity as well. According to Mashele (2016), some African indigenous people still view their own languages through the lens of English. They are unable even to read and/or to pronounce their own African languages correctly, claiming mastery of English which they did not know well.

## **2.5. THE STATUS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN AFRICA**

The inequalities and injustices in Africa were not only grounded upon race exclusively, but also upon linguistic variants. This is supported by Makoni (2003: 84) who argues that the indigenous linguistic forms were typically referred to as 'vernaculars' or 'dialects' rather than languages compared to European linguistic forms. Though the technical definition of the word refers to a language in a particular locality, within African countries, the term is often stigmatised to denote linguistic forms that are considered to be less than a language (Ibid). If languages of Africa struggled to maintain their initial status as languages of power before

colonialism, what more about the thought of including delivery of the needs of African people by the ruling powers of the ages?

Throughout colonialism, almost all African countries under colonial rule were coerced into adopting colonial languages - such as, English, Dutch, French, etcetera - as the languages of power in every governance sphere. The languages of the oppressors were the principal languages in most sectors: be it education, business etcetera. This has ultimately led to what Imberti (2007) refers to as 'primary language erosion' in some African countries. Primary language erosion is explained as the loss of one's mother tongue. Skutnabb-Kangass, in Imberti (2007), states that one is more oneself in one's mother tongue. The status quo remained in South Africa up until apartheid era when the Afrikaners, who took over the British government, enforced Afrikaans as a replacement of English. This resulted in massive resistance by indigenous African people and ultimately led to the 1976 uprising, which marked the turning point in the history of South Africa.

Consequently, Prah (1995: 27) in his analysis declared, "Colonialism has imposed a totally different approach to the use of languages in African education and the conduct of official affairs." What concerned Prah was the fact that the sovereignty of indigenous languages was gradually being swallowed by the European languages in Africa (Ibid). Indigenous languages, mother tongues to indigenous communities in Africa, politically ceased to become the language of power they used to be prior to the advent of colonisation, which was later followed by apartheid in South Africa. It is noteworthy that European languages in Africa were closely related to the countries and cultures from which they originated (Spolky, 1986). What this implies is that Eurocentrism in African communities became the order of the day because indigenous languages, cultures and the value system of the African people underwent enormous transformation which is still prevalent even today, decades after colonialism.

Indigenous languages, under duress, adopted a subservient rank, since, according to Prah (1995), there was an African elite that was created. The concept 'elite', which Prah (1995) makes reference to, Makoni (2003) calls 'knowers'. They are 'knowers' in the sense that they were able to speak the languages of power: English, French and Portuguese, respectively. African languages became local languages, which were only used in the indigenous people's homes. The elite or 'knowers', alluded to by Prah (1995) and Makoni (2003), and consequently supported by Mashele (2016); embraced and beheld Western culture at the expense of their own. The established elite was increasingly gravitating

towards what Prah refers to as the 'neo-colonial cultural and linguistic dirt-track', which directly leads to the extinction of indigenous languages. The challenges facing indigenous communities and their languages made Prah (1995) ponder over not only the sovereignty of African languages, but also their future as they were increasingly becoming non-influential languages.

According to Makoni (2003), African languages were used subsequently for the first few school years of schooling as medium of instruction in most African countries. This happened as a result of the intervention by the UNESCO policy on mother tongue education. The message transmitted by this encounter is that African languages cannot be used as languages of teaching and learning (LoTL), but can only be used as introductory languages that expose children to the world of intellectuals. This implies that African languages were not counted amongst the languages of the intellectuals but rather as languages which were only meant to introduce the speakers to the world of intellectuals.

In the article, 'Language and Literacy Issues in Africa', Bamgbose (1991) substantiates that languages which are marginalised in Africa, particularly in terms of education, are largely indigenous to each country (Bamgbose, 1991). To date, many African countries, mainly former French colonial territories, have adopted policies that allow the use of French as a medium of instruction for the African child from an early age (Bamgbose, 1991). On the contrary, former British colonies tried to camouflage this by introducing African languages only at the level of lower classes (Ibid) as alluded to by Makoni (2003) in the preceding paragraph. One can certainly not say that they are entirely excluded from this deviation. This accounts for the lack of development of African languages during colonial rule.

Bamgbose, in Alexander, opines that factors, which are peculiar to Africa, are that the development of indigenous languages, are at the lowest level. This situation can be explained and understood better by drawing from the historical background of languages of the African society's prior democracy. The impact on indigenous languages was huge and had a negative bearing on the language in education of most African countries. According to Bamgbose (1991), this meant the expansion of vocabulary so that it could be used in a wider range of domains.

Following policy brief of the HSRC (Human Scientific Research Council), since 1950, the development of African indigenous languages has lagged, compared to other indigenous languages of the continent (HSRC, 2012). Nevhutalu (2004) believed that, in the near future,

globalisation will have a negative impact on the African continent and its cultures. He alludes to the importance of developing centers and institutions of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), which can assist in preserving African cultures, African indigenous languages included. One could say that Nevhutalu's fear was rationalised as it is marked by the affirmation of the current status of African languages in Africa.

- In her article, entitled, 'World's Languages are Fast Disappearing', Tuhus-Dubrow (2002) had perceived that, in some years to come, some of the languages of the world will face extinction. She likened some of the languages to a dodo bird. The dodo bird was, according to Tuhus-Dubrow, a living creature which had very low noticeable intelligence (Ibid). Metaphorically, with regard to languages, this denotes that some of the languages, not only of South Africa, but of the world at large, had been denigrated to a very low status. They cannot compare with the so-called 'prestigious' languages that play a role in every sphere of life: business, education, etcetera. In her own words, she declared, "Hundreds of languages have gone the way of the dodo bird, and thousands more are in the precarious position of the spotted owl." (Ibid) Many more cannot even be mourned, since, like countless species, they have evolved and vanished without leaving any record of their existence (ibid). The survival of the language largely depends upon its usage by mother tongue speakers as the means of communication.

Comparatively speaking, to date, indigenous languages in the African continent are grappling to acquire the equal status afforded to them alongside European languages as languages of power. South Africa, like Namibia, had used both English and Afrikaans as official languages during apartheid times. This stems from the fact that Namibia was not only colonised by Germany but also by the South African government. Initially Namibia was called South West Africa during colonisation. Unlike South Africa, who resisted the dominance of Afrikaans in 1976, in Namibia; prior the independence of 1980, Afrikaans was promoted as a language that was widely used.

The situation took a turn after the independence where the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which became the first democratically elected ruling party, chose the English language to be the official language for the Independence of Namibia (Spolsky, 1986). They did so in order to replace Afrikaans, which was already the dominant *lingua franca* in Namibia and also the medium of education and all governmental affairs. The same could be said about South Africa where the choice of English was prompted by the fact that

it was perceived as the language of liberation as opposed to Afrikaans, which was contended to be the language of oppression (Ibid). One of the criteria for the language policy for schools in Namibia relates to the equality of all national languages, regardless of the number of speakers or the level of development of that particular language.

In an attempt to reverse the status quo, which enforced Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, SWAPO decided that, though English was declared as the official language, mother tongues will be used as media of instruction for lower primary level education. De Klerk (2002) supports the idea of SWAPO by stating that mother tongue use is the basic human right. She further argues that the promotion of one's mother tongue is an essential goal in redressing the injustices and inequalities associated with the hegemony of the past (Ibid). As a result, indigenous languages were adopted as languages to be used in teaching learners who were still in lower education.

## **2.6. LANGUAGE PERCEPTIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

### **2.6.1. The Historical Background of African Languages in South Africa**

South Africa was no exclusion of the bitter encounters experienced by its African counterpart in the African continent in terms of the language issue. Prior to colonialism, subsequently apartheid in South Africa, indigenous languages were held with high esteem by the indigenous speakers and used as languages of power in every sphere of life. Although both eras impacted negatively on the development of African languages, the speakers took pride in their languages as they were the importers of their culture. Prah (2016) stated that language and literacy are crucial for societal development.

Prah (2016) maintained that, white dominance and repression has submerged the African character of the society of Africans in South Africa. Alexander (1997: 84) expanded on the interpretation of Prah by further stating that language and colour (or race) coincided to a large extent due to the peculiar historical development of the labour market. Kamwangamalu (2012) states that, during the apartheid government, language was used as an instrument of social and political control and domination of the majority of black South Africans. Most African societies, moreover, those who were unable to speak Afrikaans were perceived as



uncivilised/uncultured, since there were unable to speak the language of the elite. The knowledge of Afrikaans language was associated with being educated or learned.

The labour market was predominantly white and the languages that could provide easy access into the job market were in accordance with the language policy of the National Party (NP) Government of the apartheid era, which only recognised two official languages, English and Afrikaans. The pressure was enormous for black communities and weighed heavily on their languages, as, alongside the mastery of their own languages, they were obliged to contend with adopting and learning an extra two languages foreign to them.

Indigenous communities were expected to have a high command of the two languages in order for them to compete for the prestigious career options (Alexander, 1997). The language policy of the time did not give room for the development of indigenous languages, but instead the Bantu Education Act in 1974, through the Afrikaans Medium Decree, proposed a new paradigm shift of the language in education. In 1976, Afrikaans was imposed on black learners in all black schools as a teaching medium parallel to English. This implies that Afrikaans was no longer taught as a language subject, but that other content subjects - like the then social sciences, general science, etcetera - were also supposed to be taught through the medium of Afrikaans. This resulted in a serious retaliation by black students.

With the dawn of democracy, the African National Congress (ANC) Government in South Africa, through its constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, tried to resolve the crisis of what Alexander refers to as 'the language question' by adopting a new multilingual policy, which ensured that all the eleven languages spoken in South Africa were afforded official recognition. This made the nine previously marginalised African languages of South Africa to be afforded the adjacent status with the two continuously official languages, English and Afrikaans. The word 'continuously' had been used on purpose for the reason that, in terms of status, the two languages to date had never ceased to become official languages. This is attested to by Prah (2006) who argues that language policies in South Africa and elsewhere should move from just being pious articles of faith, which are enshrined in the constitution policy document by inconsequential ruling elites.

One is therefore tempted to pose a question: what is official about African languages if the same languages could not be used as influential languages in governmental spheres? According to Fasold (1984), as cited in du Plessis and Pretorius (1999), and further cited by

Desai (2001), for a language to be regarded as an official language, it should, or needs to, function, in some or all of the following capacities:

- It should be the spoken language of government officials in the exercise of official duties at the national level;
- It should be the language of written communication between and within government agencies at the national level;
- It should be the language in which government records are kept at the national level;
- It should be the language in which laws and regulations governing the nation as a whole are originally written;
- It should be the language in which forms, such as tax forms and various applications related to the national government, are published.

When one evaluates the official languages of South Africa, in terms of Fasold's (1985) capacities, alluded to above, one arrives at these conclusions, the current status of the Indigenous languages leaves so much to be desired; Afrikaans still enjoys prestigious status – though, to a minimal extent as compared to English. To a larger extent, English is the language that qualifies to be labeled the official language since it portrays all the qualities of an official language, as described by Fasold (1985). Indigenous African languages of South Africa, more than a decade after democracy, are still found wanting, as they do not even satisfy one of these capacities.

### **2.6.2. Language Planning and Language Policy**

The new language policy, as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, features 11 official languages as already alluded to, in the preceding paragraphs. The Constitution further requires that the 11 official languages be treated equally. For this reason, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was established to ensure that the mandate of the government of promoting and developing all official languages, including those that were previously marginalised, is carried out effectively without failure. Section 6 (3b) requires municipalities to take into account the language preferences of the residents in all their communications. This means for municipalities to carry out its responsibilities with ease it should be through the medium which will be understood by every member of the community.



According to Baldauf, Richard, Kaplan, and Robert, (2005); there are four major types of language policy and planning, namely: status planning, corpus planning, prestige planning and language in education planning. Status planning deals with the status of the social standing of the language, whether the language is used as the medium of communication in every social sphere. Cooper (1996) asserts that language planning cannot be understood without its social context. Noss in Bamgbose (1991: 111) points out that policies exist at three levels: namely, official, educational and general level. Official policy has to do with the governmental decision as to which language/s should be used at governmental level, whilst educational policy explains the language/s that have been chosen/selected to be used in education, and, lastly, the general policy refers to the language/s that should be used in mass communication, in business, etcetera.

### **2.6.3. The interrelationship between language and culture**

Makoni (2003: 86) states that, “Language is often associated with thought and culture.” Likewise, Imberti (2007: 71) also argues that the mind of an individual is shaped by the language which that person speaks. The culture of an individual is conveyed through the language she/he speaks. Kramsch (2003) adds, “Language is the principal means through which we conduct our social lives.” Goodenough, as cited by Fitzgerald (2003), describes culture as consisting of whatever it is that one has to know, professes to believe in order to operate in a manner that is acceptable to its members in every role that the accept for anyone of themselves. Culture is according to Loveday in Fitzgerald adaptive, creative and changing (Ibid).

Culture and language are interwoven; they are inseparable. One cannot talk about culture and leave language behind, and vice versa, as they are what one could refer to as ‘Siamese twins’, that is one twin is dependent on another twin. As a matter of fact, language and culture can be viewed as associates that depend upon each other. Without language, there can be no culture. According to Kramsch (2003), when language is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. Prah (2006) regards language as a register of culture. Language unveils culture, to put it the other way round, culture is expressed through language. Language can therefore be viewed as a vehicle through which culture is imparted from one generation to the next. Prah (2006) attests to this view by stating that culture is transmitted, interpreted and also configured through language.

Languages are vehicles of our cultures, collective memory and values (UNESCO). They are essential components of our identities, and a building block of our diversity and living heritage. Tuhus-Dubrow (2002) further expands on the assertion of UNESCO by stating that, Language does not merely represent a culture, but is its own contribution to that culture. Vocabulary, greetings, oral traditions, poetry, and humour are the substance of culture, not just vessels of communication. Although any culture can be expressed in any language in some way, but the native language is most efficient in transporting the cultures of African communities. Language embodies the spectrum of human vision, and its varieties provide unparalleled insights into the diversity of human experience and perception, while the consistencies expose the unchanging kernel across cultures. Language and cultures are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality.

#### **2.6.4. Towards an understanding of multilingualism in South Africa**

Prior the advent of democracy South Africa was politically a bilingual state. Only two rival languages, English and Afrikaans, were considered official, and thereby used both as mediums of instruction in all government interactions, *inter alia*, in parliament as well as in business fraternities. The word 'rival' had been selected to best explain the rivalries and conflicts that existed between the two colonial power speakers who were both not of African descent. The clashes were so heated that they ultimately led to two 'white men's wars' namely, the first and the second Anglo-Boer wars, which took place between the years 1880 - 1881, and 1899 – 1902, respectively.

Although there were so many factors that fuelled the war: the conflicting theories of imperialism and republicanism as well as language ideology were big contributory factors, among others. As a plethora of literature rightfully places it, 'language is power' (Carter). Talbot, Atkinson and Atkinson (2003) assert that language is crucial in articulating, maintaining and subverting existing relations of power in society, be it on a local or national level. The choice of language as a medium of instruction renders one more powerful and another/others less. Thus, language supremacy subjugates those who are less fortunate - as marked by what transpired in Soweto in 1976 when the black students took to the streets in protest of the Bantu Education Act, which enforced Afrikaans as the medium of instruction.

The 1976 Soweto uprising, was a clear indication that people were not happy with the South African Bantu Education Act; they were aware of the intention of the strategy of the apartheid

government. The strategy was perceived as a means to divest indigenous communities of power, which was embedded in their language and culture and thereby rendering them powerless through the legal enforcement of Afrikaans as the language of power in all public and private affairs, including education. According to Spolky(1986), the policy was deliberately accepted to promote ethno-linguistic fragmentation which was one of the instruments enforcing apartheid. It is worth noting that though racism created a bone of contention in the Indigenous people, what stimulated the uprising was what one could label as 'linguistic rights'.

Section 6(2) of the Constitution of South Africa has stipulated, according to Kamwangamalu (2000: 51), that all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated as such. Though all national languages according to the language policy of South Africa are considered to be equal, as a matter of fact it is clear that the substantiation of English as an official language in the Constitution of South Africa is seen as an endorsement or validation of its continuity of its previous status prior to democracy. The English language still retains its former primary status quo; it supersedes all other languages. While the language of Afrikaans in South Africa never reached to the status it enjoyed in Namibia, it is nonetheless still used mostly in the business sector. In almost all Government documents, legal documents, educational documents, business documents (to cite only a few), communication is still captured in the two languages with only a few written in Indigenous African Languages.

The post-apartheid democratic government led by the ANC opted for multilingualism that considered almost all indigenous languages spoken in the country official languages, alongside English and Afrikaans. Although the democratic government through its constitution on language policy has good intentions, according to Kamwangamalu (2000), the language practices in almost all the country's institutions point to a different reality. Old practices have, to a large extent, remained unaffected (Ibid). The situation is aggravated by the fact that the Constitution is not specific about which languages to be used in which province or by the national government (Kamwangamalu, 2000). This dilemma is even worsened by the government, which, according to Kamwangamalu (2000), opted for English in almost all governmental interactions. Phillipson had written that there is no language in the world that is poor or primitive such that it cannot play the role which other language could play.

Basically, the recognition of indigenous languages as official languages was only on paper as most of the sectors, *inter alia*, the education sector does not reflect the multilingual nature as enshrined in the Constitution; almost all subjects at schools, from the lowest level up to tertiary education, are still taught in English. The plight of indigenous languages is far from ending in various sectors; moreover in the education sector Indigenous languages are only used as media of instruction to teach mother tongue instruction subjects at: home language, first additional language and second additional language levels and nothing more. Although the language situation in South Africa, at face value, sounds appealing, it can be argued that the battle for linguistic rights and parity of indigenous languages with their counterpart is still to be realised.

## **2.7. THE PURPOSE OF LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATION**

Like the word 'language, the word 'communication' is defined in most literature as a means of communication (Kramsch, 2003; Downes, 1998; Kim and Mattila, 2011; Prah, 1995). Language and communication can never be separated. Language as a means of communication requires both the presence of: the one conveying the message, that is, the communicator, and the recipient of that message. Prah (1995) further asserts that language is the principal means of establishing and sustaining social relations. Prah (1995) explains communication as an exchange and exact replication of thought, feeling, facts, beliefs and ideas between and amongst the individual through a common systems of symbol to cause some actions or changes in behaviour.

Effective and sustainable service delivery depends on communication; which, in turn works within the ambit of language and communication, and cannot be operative without language, whether written or spoken. Language can, therefore, according to Imberti (2007: 71) be defined as a functional tool for communication. It is a channel through which communication is grounded. Language can further be perceived as a system of communication between individuals and a social phenomenon (Hickey, 2012). As a system of communication, it follows a particular order. That order is based upon sound that forms words, which ultimately develop into a sentence.

Sharma and Patterson (1999) view communication as the single most powerful determinant of relationship commitment. Following the above statement, one can add that communication is thus the key to healthy relationships between municipalities and their

communities. Clark (1992); Steward (1992) and Headley (1992) in Sharma and Patterson (1999) remark that communication is the most important ingredient for achieving high perceived service quality. Language is the most powerful means of interaction, and communication is the outcome. Communication becomes interactive because there is language.

A constructive and viable interrelation between every municipality and its citizens is of utmost importance for any local government to function effectively. To achieve its perceived goals, municipalities, as organs of state need to first ensure that the relationship with their communities is healthy. For it to be healthy, regular interactions are conducted in the form of meetings, workshops, etcetera, whereby both the citizens and the municipality engage regularly about the types of services to be provided. Albeit municipalities are the ones responsible for offering these services, they should not, single-handedly, decide on the services to be delivered to the communities without involving them in a series of consultations.

Consultations are of utmost importance. During consultations there are two factors that the municipality, as the initiator, should take into cognisance; firstly, the language that will be used during the process of consultation; will the language be understood by all members of the community? The second factor concerns the jargon used during consultations. In this case, the question the municipality should attempt to answer is whether the jargon used during consultations is clear to both literate and illiterate individuals. Will it be comprehended by an ordinary citizen and lay man? Hernandez-Chaves in Imberti (2007) states that language is the most powerful means of interactions and communication, and that it is, through language, that an individual or a group seeks and attains participation in society. This implies that healthy communication cannot exist without a common language for both the municipal employees and the communities, that is, a language understood by all who are involved.

## 2.8. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEXT IN COMMUNICATION

Communication is a day-to-day activity, without which humans would not interact or relate to one another. In a communication set-up, one is either a conveyer or a recipient. Context plays a very significant role in communication, that is, in the delivery of messages. It sets the tone of how the message communicated by the speaker/s will be comprehended by the recipients. It makes one understand or not the meaning of the conversation. What is mostly needed, appropriate and workable always depend heavily on the context (Kemp and Parto, 2005). Messages should always be put into context. Context, according to a plethora of literature, includes numerous elements like, language, culture, environment, time, etcetera (Bowie, nd; Bracken, 2007). In addition, Bowie (n.d) categorises context into two, namely the context of the speaker as well as that of the audience. The message that is delivered in one context and is received in another context may result in miscommunication. It is important for the interlocutors to both have knowledge and understanding of the context in which communication is taking place in order to prevent communication breakdown.

According to Bracken's point of view, even if people use similar language or share a common cultural background, they may have different understandings of the situation (Bracken, 2007). This is strengthened by the assessment advocated by Fitzgerald (2003) that communication process is more complex. Fitzgerald further expounded that the meanings exchanged by speaking are not given in words alone but are also constructed partly out of what the listener interprets them to mean (Ibid). Fitzgerald (2003) goes further to say quite often the interacters make judgements and inferences, interpreting both what has been said and thereby generating expectations about what is going to come. Whether or not the message conveyed by the speaker in the communication set up had served the purpose or its intended goal depends largely upon the context. It is therefore important that the information that should be communicated to the audiences be contextualised.

The question that arises is how does context affect the meaning of the message conveyed by speech/sentences? For communication to be effective, it depends upon the shared knowledge between the people who are engaged in communication. One of the most significant factors of context, amongst others, is the understanding that there are many different ways of designing and strengthening various foundations and practices of

governance to respect the principle of sustainability (Kemp and Parto, 2005). The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* (WTPSD) indicates that there must be a fundamental shift of culture when dealing with service delivery improvement programme. Public servants should not see themselves as doing a favour for the citizens, but they should rather see themselves first and foremost as servants of the citizens of South Africa. Patterson and Sharma (1999) have alluded to the importance of a high degree of interaction and interpersonal communication between the clients and service professionals. There must be an undertaking by the public service sector to put people first in all its interactions and endeavours with them. This can only be realised if the public servants have a high regard of the value of context in their communications with the public under their service.

## **2.9. THE OVERALL VIEW OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.9.1. The Government and Sustainable Service Delivery**

Kemp and Parto (2005) distinguish between two terminologies, namely governance and governing. Governance as a noun can be understood as a mode of social coordination; whilst the word 'governing', as a present participle verb refers to an act and actions that follow, a purposeful perpetual effort to steer, guide, control and manage society. Dzaga (2004) contends that governance begins in the communities. Without communities, there can be no government. The slogan, 'nothing about us without us' best explains the type of relationship that must be there between the government and the communities under their jurisdiction.

The government cannot decide single-handedly the needs of its communities without involving them through consultations. Communities must have a say in prioritising services; how the government delivers services; and which services need to be delivered first. Kemp and Parto (2005) argue that sustainability is best viewed as a socially instituted process of adaptive change in which innovation is a necessary element. Latif (2006) argues that seamless services to citizens are necessary to enable a real interagency cooperation, which



allows services and information sharing. The cooperation deals with the usage of a common standard language, which allows organisational and semantic inter-operability.

## **2.9.2. Government Documents on Language and Service Delivery**

Amongst other things, Governance entails the advancement of what is thought to be the welfare of the group, community, society and/or even the state itself.

### **2.9.2.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) on Language**

The democratic government of the Republic of South Africa has, through its Constitution, recognised a multilingual language policy that afforded all 11 languages spoken in its jurisdiction official status, including the Khoi, Nama and San and sign languages. The languages the Constitution makes reference to are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. It is worth mentioning that prior to the advent of democracy, only two languages, namely Afrikaans and English, were the only esteemed languages with official status; and thereby languages in which an African child was not only taught, but encouraged to think in. This gave rise to the notion of Eurocentrism, which Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), in *Decolonising the Mind*, and Mazrui (1997), in his article 'The World Bank, the Language Question and the Future of African Education' made reference to, which the Constitution of South Africa is attempting to address.

The government through its Constitution has embarked on employing measures which are practical and positive and which are aimed at elevating the status of the languages which were historically official languages. This is in line with what Prah's (2006) sentiments, which expanded knowledge production and reproduction in societies, could only be possible when the languages of the social majorities have been centrally placed. To achieve the goal stated in the Constitution, as well as address the concerns of Prah (2006), provision was made for the establishment of a board that beholds the promotion as well as the development of all African languages. This is true for the previously marginalised indigenous African languages since this provided them with the opportunity for growth and development.

A Pan-South African Language Board (PanSALB), established by the national legislation through the Act of parliament (59 of 1995), amended by Act 10 of 1999, was earmarked to promote multilingualism by creating conditions that would guarantee the development and



the use of all official languages, including the Khoi, Nama and San languages as well as sign language. This was done by the democratic government of South Africa through parliament, as alluded to above, to avoid replicating oppressive apartheid laws (which saw black students in Soweto and all over South Africa) protesting against the enforcement of the Afrikaans language as the language of education in all subjects, except the indigenous African languages subjects. Interestingly enough, the rejection of Afrikaans was not based on the argument that Indigenous African Languages were marginalised and should therefore be used as the languages of education, but instead as an assertion that English was the most preferred language as it was viewed as better than Afrikaans. This, according to Prah (2006), gave English a boost as it was elevated to the status not only superior to Afrikaans but also superior to African languages, as is still the case.

The Constitution of South Africa has further stated in the Bill of Rights (section 30) that: “Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.” This, according to Prah (2006: 11), has been a right that historically was in force for the white minority since the 1920s and was denied to the African majority up until 1994. The democratic Constitution of South Africa has managed to redress the anomalies and the imbalances of the past by officialising all languages without exclusion: a noteworthy point. However, whether the redress is a reality or an irony more than 20 years into democracy is still a point to reflect on. The experiences to date are still exclusions of the languages of the majority in education. English is still dominant in almost all spheres of life. Whether or not that which was intended to be is a reality or not is still a question.

#### **2.9.2.2. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa on Service Delivery**

According to the SA Constitution Municipalities as local governments are responsible to provide information to their communities in the languages mostly preferred by the communities. Section 32 (1) (a) of the Bill of Rights, requires every South African to have access to information held by the state (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This is the right that cannot be denied as it is legislated and enshrined in the Constitution. Denial of this right may compel the citizens affected to seek the ruling of the Constitutional Court and/or even the intervention of the Public Protector. This explains why the former Public Protector of South Africa, Thuli Madonsela, was requested by some communities to make some investigations about service delivery. In her report she asserted that there are instances wherein the Independent Development Plan (IDP) has been done,

but, during the time of implementation, somebody within the municipality changed the priorities.

Subsequent to the right to information, the Constitution, as the supreme law of the country, states that all citizens of South Africa, without exception, are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship.

#### 2.9.2.3. **Service Delivery Improvement Plan (2015/16 – 2017/18)**

According to Stats S.A. the Constitution requires all citizens within the country to have access to information, especially the ones in the public domain. The strategic plan of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) of Cape Town (2012/13 -2015/16) indicates that one of the key service under consumer complaint support is that information on consumer protection awareness and services should reflect the languages which are widely spoken in the said province and disseminated via relevant platforms and media in simplified terms. This means that information, both verbal and written, should be conveyed to the people in their languages and that the language used should be simplified to accommodate every citizen in the province.

Similar to any other government department, Stats SA uses different platforms to disseminate their products (e.g. websites, telephonic and personal visits) to all provincial offices.

#### 2.9.2.4. **The White Paper on Transforming Public Service and Delivery (WTPSD) (Batho Pele) 1997**

The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WTPSD) (1995)* also referred to as the *Batho Pele White Paper of 1997* (Notice No. 1459 of 1997) is a policy framework that is intended to provide a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery; wherein the needs of people come first, hence the Sesotho slogan '*Batho Pele*' that has been coined even in legislation written in English to emphasise the importance of putting people first in matters of governance (*White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1977*). According to the WTPSD, transforming service delivery should be seen as the key to transforming priority.

In his foreword Zola Skweyiya (DPSA, 1997), the then Minister of Public Service and Administration, emphasised the importance of improving the delivery of services of the

citizens of South Africa. In his words, he affirmed, “Access to decent public services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few; it is now the rightful expectation of all citizens, especially those previously disadvantaged” (Ibid). What prompted him to utter such a statement was the political and historical background of South Africa, moreover, the environment the indigenous communities endured prior the democratic government. There was no communication about the basic needs of black communities. One would be right to say that the basic needs were decided upon by the apartheid regime without the involvement of the communities themselves. People were in the dark concerning information on service delivery, as this was decided upon by the government in the parliament where they were excluded.

In his thesis titled, ‘The Principle of More Efficient and Effective Information’ Crous (2002), reaffirmed the advocacy of the ‘*Batho Pele* White Paper’ that public institutions, local governments included should inform users in a clear and forthright way of the services they provide and how to reap the most benefits from those services.

#### 2.9.2.5. **The Green Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery**

The *Green Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* has laid down a framework for the delivery of public services, which puts citizens/customers first. The framework encompasses seven simple national principles, derived from the policy goals set out in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service. Those principles are the cornerstone or the underpinnings of the relations between the citizens and the government through its municipalities. The principles are linked to the Constitution and require a person to know about the services they are entitled to. Those principles are consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, responsiveness, and value for money.

Albeit all the principles alluded to above are equally important, there are, however, two principles, which, in my view, are the nucleus of all the principles. The two principles are consultation and information and have been expounded on and explained in details below. Accordingly, the two principles require that there should be interaction by the municipality as a local government with its communities. Interaction, in turn, requires a language/s that will be comprehended by both the supplier of the service: in this instance, the municipality as well as the client who is at the receiving end.

### **(a) Consultation**

Amongst the eight principles of *Batho Pele*, the first principle, which is a milestone of all principles, is consultation. *Batho Pele* principles refer to this involvement in one of the principles, namely, consultation, without which the effort of the public sector will be in vain if overlooked. This principle requires that people should be consulted first before any decision is implemented about their needs. This is the responsibility of the local government. The principle requires the government to take stock of the needs of people, nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided. This is supposed to be done through consultations, which, in turn, requires a user friendly language or jargon which can be comprehended by every member of the community without exclusion. Consultations require the local government through its public servants to interact with the people they serve and it may take various forms and shapes. It may be in the form of campaigns, *imbizos*, workshops, etcetera conducted in a user friendly language which will be understood by even an ordinary member of the community as already alluded to above. Consultations will assist the local government not only to know its communities but also to know what its needs are as well as to assess or evaluate the level of services already rendered to the people. Likewise, the Department of Justice in the Service Delivery Charter has echoed its obligation to *Batho Pele* principles. One of the commitments made was that of opening a platform for regular consultations with all stakeholders, communities included.

### **(b) Information**

Information is important for communities to be informed about the services they are entitled to. Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian diplomat who was awarded the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize, views knowledge as power and information as liberating. The Department of Justice shares Kofi Annan's sentiments by committing to provide the customers with information that will aid them in getting assistance effortlessly. The irony is that the very same document wherein the commitment has been emphasised is not written in the languages of the majority of South African, but in English. Citizens should be given full accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive in the language they understand. Information is about reaching all customers to make sure they are well informed about the services departments provide.

## 2.10. Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

The RDP is a South African Policy framework implemented by the African National Congress (ANC) government to address some of the imbalances and injustices of the past that stem from the apartheid regime (RDP Policy Framework). In the preface of the Reconstruction and Development Programme policy framework, the first democratic president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, stated that the RDP reaffirms the belief that people are the greatest asset of the government. RDP is therefore a people-centred programme, which put first people and their needs. One of its basic principles is its emphasis on people and their needs. It is a people-driven process, which is inculcated in the notion of *Batho Pele*.

Similar to *Batho Pele* principles, the RDP warrants the people of South Africa - irrespective of their race, gender, economic status - to work together in shaping their future. The framework states that, "Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry." People must equally play a role in ensuring that their needs are met. One of the major policy programmes in the RDP is that of meeting the basic needs of the citizens. The policy requires people to take part in decision-making in deciding the location of infrastructure. The RDP relates to the importance of the local Government in the delivery of services. The main shortcoming is that, important as it is, it is only written in English and not any other language. With the levels of illiteracy being so rife in South Africa, this implies that a majority of South Africans are still excluded from the significant information. Also, to note the knowledge of English as a second language does not make one to be seen as more educated than the ones who do not know it. Makoni (2003: 87) has rightfully put it, 'Language is not education.'. He further contends that lack of written records of African languages prior to the advent of European domination does not mean that African societies were incapable of producing knowledge (Ibid). Every language is rich in some way or another (Hickey, 2012) and that, given the opportunities, speakers could use their languages to describe anything under the sun.

## 2.11. Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens to find the best solutions to achieve good long-term development (IDP for Local Government). Legislation in South Africa requires every municipality to have the IDP. The IDP is a document which could be likened to a drawing plan that each municipality in South Africa is required to produce timeously for the smooth running of

activities of the government. The municipality draws the plan in consultation with the citizens. The purpose of the IDP is to enhance service delivery and to fight poverty by means of an aligned and integrated approach between different stakeholders and role-players. The stakeholders in the IDP are municipalities, *inter alia*, councillors, communities, service providers, and national and provincial sector departments.

## **2.12. SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE RURAL CONTEXT**

### **2.12.1. The role of Municipalities in the Delivery of Services**

The historical imbalances of the apartheid era posed a massive challenge to municipalities to such an extent that municipalities must ensure that the basic needs of people are catered for (Dzaga, 2004). Delivery of the basic needs of the communities go hand-in-hand with the type of language used to serve those to whom services are due. The Constitution of South Africa, as the supreme law of the country, has adopted a policy that legitimised the equality of 11 official languages spoken in South Africa. According to the stipulations of the Constitution, all recognised official languages should be given equal status and viewed through the same lens. Equality means all the official languages be used equally in every sphere of government, in education, public services, commerce, business, to name only a few.

As organs of state within the local sphere, municipalities have a role to play to ensure that communities in their jurisdiction are empowered in terms of interactions and involvement in issues that directly concern them. Service delivery is no exclusion to those issues alluded to above. According to Prah (2007), municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents. Municipalities must communicate with their communities in the language they will understand. In his recommendations, Dzaga (2004) has stated that municipalities should ensure that their citizens are effectively empowered such that they can be able to make inputs in matters which impact upon their daily livelihood. The empowerment that Dzaga (2004) had alluded to, can only be possible if both the municipality and the community have the same command of language; otherwise the communication will not bear fruit as the municipality will be using not only a foreign language but also jargon and diction only understood by them and foreign to the masses.

### **2.12.2. The Role of Communities in Service Delivery**

The goal of the National Development Plan (NDP) is to eradicate poverty and to reduce inequality by 2030. These, the local government could not do alone without heeding to the ‘voices’ of those regarded as living below the poverty line; those who solely depend upon the government for the provision of their needs. Inequality was not only in terms of the resources they need to live a sustainable life, but also in terms of understanding what their roles are in governance. Communities need to have a say about their social lives in their own language. Thus the Constitution of South Africa emphasised that municipalities in their interactions with communities should consider the languages and preferences of their residents.

The role of communities, with regard to delivery of services, cannot be overemphasised. Municipalities could not work in isolation in determining the types of services which the communities need and knowing which one should be provided first. Communities also have a role to play in the planning an implementation of the Municipal Service Partnership (MSP). The involvement of the communities will assist in equipping the municipalities with the ‘know how’ to plan for the services to be delivered and also give them an opportunity to evaluate potential service providers. This can only be possible if people understand not only the language used but also the relevant jargon employed in the interactions.

### **2.13. Conclusion**

Language is a vital tool for communication. It is the most essential source of our day-to-day interactions as well as our development as the society. It is a mode through which a speaker presents a thought to the hearer who should respond in such a way that it is clear that she/he has comprehended the message conveyed. Effective service delivery in the public service is an integral ingredient for the general welfare of the societies. South Africa prior 1994 had a very serious backlog of infrastructure that impacted the lives of black communities and weighed heavily on the democratic government. One of the fundamental requirements of *Batho Pele* principles is that people should be able to have access to information from the government. Information should be in a language that is understood by the recipients of the services. Interaction with communities is a basic requirement rooted in both the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as well as the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. In this chapter,



various literature - as well as government documents reflecting on language discourse in communication and how it relates to service delivery - were reviewed.



## Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed framework of the research design and methodology underpinning this study. Harrington (2005) explains methodology as the theoretical principle or principles governing the application of a set of methods. Mouton and Babbie (2001: 56) point out that research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used in order to achieve the purpose of the study. The chapter does not only focus on the design and methodology used in undertaking this study, but also details methods and techniques used in data collection as well as data analysis. The study used a qualitative method and the case study design to comprehend the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be explored within its context.

### 3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2009: 55) defines research design as, “A plan or a blueprint of how you intend conducting a research”. The research design is important for each study in that it articulates the type of data required and methods of data collection and analysis that enable the researcher to attain empirical answers to the questions under inquiry. A case study was chosen as a research design since the case was a decision-making one, regarding communication with other stakeholders, but the case could not be considered without context (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

#### 3.2.1. Case Study

One of the strategies of inquiry identified for this study is that which Creswell in De Vos (1998) refers to as a case study. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin in Kohlbacher, 2006). Hartley (2004), also regards case study research as that which ‘consists of a detailed investigation,

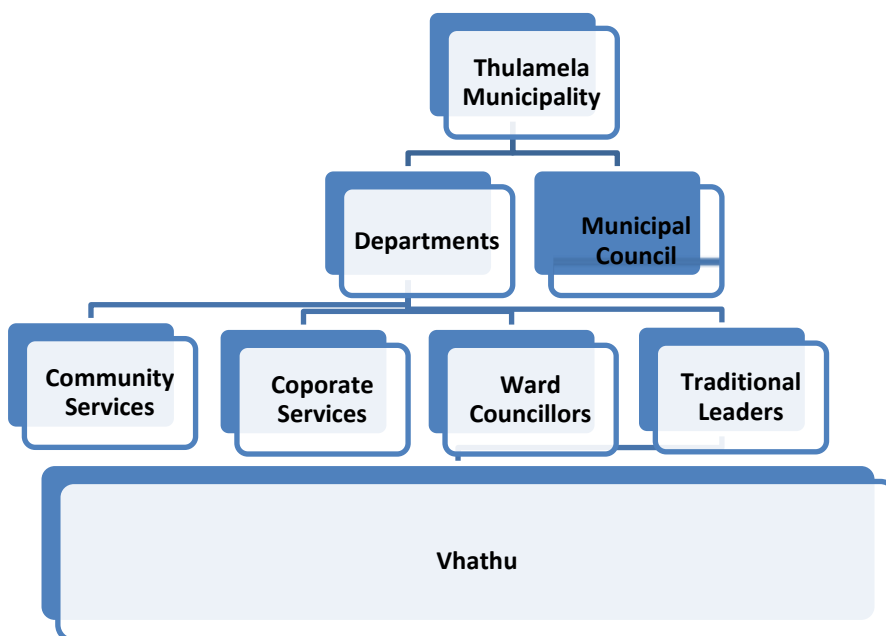
often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context. Accordingly, the aim of using the case study was to provide an analysis of the context and processes that help in comparing the phenomena studied through the lens of the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Like Yin in Kohlbacher, Kruger (2001) sees the case study as an enquiry, which, according to Baxter and Jack (2008), should focus on answering the questions, 'how' and 'why'. An enquiry is where a number of units of analysis, such as an individual, a group or institution are studied extensively (Ibid). In this instance, the concept of an institution signified in the preceding sentence can be associated with either a society or an organisation, which can also further be understood semantically to mean the government; hence the definition of an organisation that pronounces the idea that it is a social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals.

Bramley in Creswell et al (2007) further defines a case study as a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events that aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest. The case chosen for this research is neither an event nor an individual, but rather a municipality that is categorised as one of the local governments in Limpopo Province, identified in the Local Government: Municipal Structure Act, No. 117 of 1998 and regulations of the Thulamela Municipality. Mouton & Babbie (1998: 281) assert that case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of the multi-level social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours.

Nonetheless, De Vos et al (2001) criticise the usage of case studies. They argued that it is a weak evaluation design, which, according to their analysis, should be used as a last resort (Ibid). In contrast, De Vos et al, Cook and Campbell, as cited in Babbie and Mouton (1998), argue that case studies can yield valuable scientific information when they take place in settings where many variables are measured. According to Creswell et al (2007), case study has multiple meanings, amongst them there is one which is used to describe a unit of analysis whilst another describes a research method. Thulamela Municipality had been chosen as a case for this study due to its geographical position and its historical background prior the 1994 democratic elections. It is a municipality which covers areas, which, during apartheid era, were categorised under the Republic of Venda which was by that time regarded as a Bantustan territory.

### 3.2.2. Thulamela Municipality as a Case Study

As already foreshadowed in the previous discussions, Thulamela Municipality was a case chosen for this study. However, within Thulamela Municipality there were a number of sub-cases the researcher identified as relevant for the study. I chose two departments, namely corporate services and community services and municipal council as sub-cases. The two departments of the Municipality were purposively selected because of their different natures. One department deals with all internal and external communication strategies of the municipality and also play a significant role in portraying its image. The other department has direct contact with communities, as its mandate is to see to it that services are delivered to the communities effectively and efficiently. The Municipal council - ward councillors and traditional leaders - is another sub-case selected because of the role they play in reviewing the needs of their communities and also ensuring that social and economic development is promoted. The Figure 3.1 below depicts a picture of how Thulamela Municipality was sampled:



**Figure 3.2: Structure of Research Participants**

The Figure 3.1 presents the research participants. It indicates that each department had three employees that were sampled for the interview, which makes their total number six. In the Municipal Council, I sampled six people, subdivided as follows: three ward councillors and three traditional leaders.

### **3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Barnard and Hanekom (1997: 28) define research methodology as the process that necessitates a reflection on the planning, structuring and execution of the research in order to comply with the demands of truth, objectivity and validity. As a process of the research, the research methodology steers the entire research process and aids the researcher in executing and arriving at the conclusion. According to a plethora of literature (De Vos et al, 2001; Creswell et al, 2007), there are two types of research methods used in research, namely, qualitative and the quantitative. The nature of the problem under investigation is a social phenomenon, and, as a result, this study revealed: the life histories and experiences of the Thulamela employees, and members of the communities, their views about the interrelatedness of language and service delivery in terms of the decision that Thulamela Municipality makes in the planning and implementation of services distributed to the communities. To achieve its goal, the study adopted a qualitative study.

#### **3.3.1. Qualitative Research Methods**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected a qualitative method. Flick in Maswanganyi (2016: 39) refers to qualitative methodology as that which aims at a detailed description of processes and views that are used with the small numbers of cases in data collection. Wagner (2012) argues that qualitative research does not only deal with understanding the processes and the social and cultural context, but also strives to create a coherent story as seen through the eyes of those who are part of the story. The qualitative methodology assisted in understanding the language discourse of Thulamela Municipality, the views and experiences of the employees through what they had uttered during interviews and also through the documents they used to communicate with each other as well as with communities.

The method had been selected to unravel the role of language in delivery of services on one hand, as well as the language in context in the public service and how this can have an impact on service delivery.

### 3.3.2. Study Location

The research setting denotes a site or place where the research is conducted, which Neuman (2006) identifies as the study location. The study was conducted in Thulamela Municipality, which is rated as a Category B municipality, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Vhembe District Municipality in Limpopo Province. Thulamela Municipality is one of the four local municipalities in the eastern part of the Limpopo Province. It is a municipality which covers areas that, during the apartheid era, were categorised as being under the Republic of Venda, which was, by that time, regarded as Bantustan.

Like other municipalities, the Thulamela Municipality was established in terms of section 12 of the Municipal Structure Act as already implied. According to the statistics of South Africa, this municipality had 45 wards, a population of 724 312, and 208 389 households in 2007 (Statistics South Africa, 2008) and a staff complement of about 4 600 before Malamulele town was amalgamated with part of Makhado Local Municipality into a new municipality in 2016. These wards included, *inter alia*, urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

The Thulamela Municipality had previously incorporated the two major towns, namely Thohoyandou and Malamulele, before the latter was demarcated into a new municipality, namely, Collins Chabane Local Municipality in 2016. The municipality serves communities in and around Thohoyandou. The two predominant ethnic groups found in Thulamela Municipality are: Vhavenda, who live in and around Thohoyandou and Vatsonga who are scattered throughout the areas of Thulamela municipality; and Indians and few white people. The dominant official languages spoken by the citizens in the Municipality are Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

The choice of the research setting was influenced by several factors, amongst which: the historical and cultural backgrounds; its derivation from one of the former homelands, which was located north east of South Africa with its counterpart homeland, Gazankulu, situated in the south east of South Africa; ethnicity; social conditions, and diversity among the municipality residents. In addition, the study location is the municipality that services the researcher. Figure 3.2 below depicts the map of Thulamela Local Municipality.

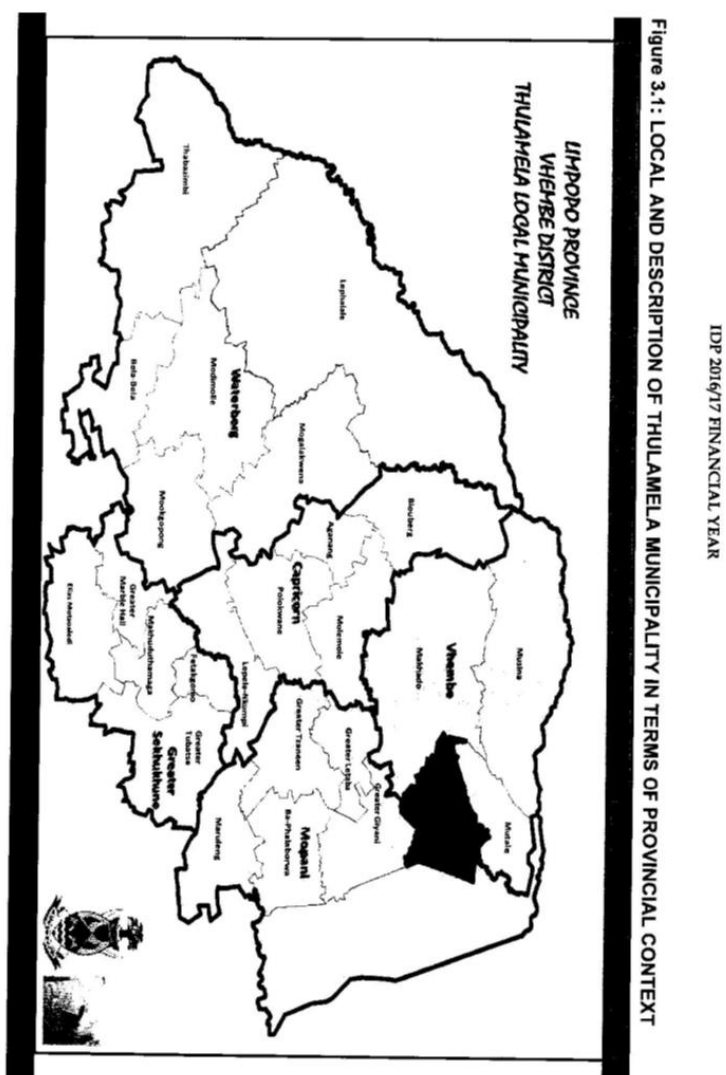


Figure 3.1: LOCAL AND DESCRIPTION OF THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY IN TERMS OF PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Figure 3.2: THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY MAP (Source: Thulamela Municipality IDP 2016/2017)

Figure 3.2 presents the map of the Thulamela Municipality where the research was conducted. According to the Thulamela Municipality IDP (2016/17), the area covers 5834.70 km<sup>2</sup>, which covers the population of 618462 (106.00 per km<sup>2</sup>). The number of households is 156594 (26.84 per km<sup>2</sup>).

### 3.3.3. Study Population

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 101) describe population as the group under study from whom conclusions will be drawn. Relatedly; Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee also perceive population as the entire set of objects or people, which is the focus of the research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics (2006: 98). A population chosen for this study is comprised of group of people who are characterised by similar characteristics, in that they are employees, ward councillors, and traditional leaders under Thulamela Municipality. Units of analysis in this study encompassed not only humans (members of the communities, municipality employees), as highlighted in Kruger (2001), but also Thulamela communicative documents (like notices, newsletters, statements and speeches), some of which are used for public consumption. The population group is demonstrated in Table 3.1 below.

**Table3.1: Population Group in Thulamela Municipality**

<b>Population Group</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Black African	614079	99.29%
Indian or Asian	3049	0.49%
Other	489	0.08%

**Table 3.2 Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	339812	54.94%
Male	278650	45.06%

**Table 3.3: First Languages spoken in Thulamela Municipality**

First Language	People	Percentage
Tshivenda	389911	63.64%
Xitsonga	201302	32.85%
Other	9651	1.58%
English	4475	0.73%
Afrikaans	1637	0.27%
Sepedi	1560	0.25%
SiSwati	1212	0.20%
Sesotho	793	0.13%
Sign language	701	0.11%
isiZulu	527	0.09%
Setswana	393	0.06%
isiNdebele	345	0.06%
isiXhosa	213	0.03%
Not applicable	5743	

### 3.3.4. Sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting a subset from the whole set, which, in this regard, is the entire population. Sampling attempted to respond to the question: “Who or what precisely were the units of analysis for the study? Bless et al (2008) avers that sampling is a technical accounting device used to rationalise the collection of information - to choose in an appropriate way the restricted set of objects, persons, events from which the actual information will be drawn. On the other hand, Babbie and Mouton (2012) likened sampling to a political polling in a sense that it creates an opportunity for the social researchers to discover the accuracy of their estimates.

Samples are selected elements from the target population earmarked for the study. As already alluded to above, the sample of this study is Thulamela employees, ward councilors and traditional leaders as well as documents. The choice of the sample of this study was influenced by how Bless et al (2006) describes a good sample. They indicate that the characteristics of a good sample should be threefold:



- A well-defined population;
- Adequately chosen;
- An estimate of the representative of the whole population.

Since the study is exploratory in nature, the researcher used non-probability sampling in the collection of data. Under non-probability sampling, two types of sampling were used, namely, purposive and convenience criterion-based sampling (Creswell et al, 2009). Creswell et al (2009) describe purposive sampling as a convenience sampling method whereby elements in a population are selected based on their availability. Bless et al (2006) and De Vos et al (2002) identify the two types of sampling as accidental and purposive samples, respectively. Accidental means that the sample occurs by accident or convenience. Here, the sample was not accidental, but purposive, as the participants of the study were selected based on their availability on the days of the visits to the municipality, which, according to Bless et al (2006), is purposive, or convenience sampling.

The sample for this study was threefold; firstly, it was comprised of government officials who worked in the Thulamela Municipality offices in Thohoyandou; secondly, it was drawn from the ward councillors, who had direct contact with communities; and, lastly, it was also drawn from government official and non-official documents used for disseminating information of the communities under the service of Thulamela Municipality. The choice of the sample was not determined by the age or the gender of the participants, but was guided by the fact that all participants are the employees of Thulamela Municipality who worked for the municipality more than three years, as well as the offices they were holding during the time of the interviews. Over and above, it was as well determined by the fact that participants interacted with every end user of the services the Municipality offers. Ward councillors were selected based on their availability and their willingness to participate in the study.

As indicated earlier on, Thulamela Municipality was chosen as an overarching case for this study. The municipality is comprised of six departments, each headed by a manager. There was a need to work with managers of various departments to address the question of representability as well as to ensure the credibility of the data collected. However out of six departments, the researcher sampled only four departments as sub-cases for this study. In each department, the researcher further sampled two employees. The sample also included

ten (10) councillors representing various wards, and four traditional leaders or their representatives.

Information was also gathered through a survey of available documents, official and non-official, like notices, speeches, meetings, advertisements. Document analysis was done with the purpose of establishing procedures and processes of communicating with communities. Furthermore, they were used to have an understanding of different models or methods through which the municipality communicated with the clients.

### 3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Social sciences research, as highlighted by a plethora of literature (Bless et al, 2006; De Vos et al, 2002; Babbie en Mouton, 2012; Creswell et al, 2009), differs from the research in natural sciences, because, in the latter, the objects of the study are usually human beings. As a result, De Vos (1998) stated that social sciences bring unique ethical problems that will not be found in the pure clinical laboratory settings of the natural sciences. According to Rogelberg (2003), the word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word, 'ethos', which means 'one's character or disposition'; ethics is defined as a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, and are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rule and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students (De Vos, 2000: 63).

Kitchener in Rogelberg asserts that ethics refer to a brand of philosophy concerned with how people should act, and judgment made about the action and developing rules for justifying actions. The definition of the word 'ethics' by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* line up with the one echoed by De Vos et al (1998) in that it is also perceived as a set of moral principles that concerns human conduct. Babbie and Mouton (2012) affirms the definition by further expanding that the words 'ethics' and 'morality' deal with both matters of right and wrong. The university ethics policy was adhered to in terms of ethics. The protection of the rights, welfare and dignity of all who participated in this study was key.

Some of the principles which were explained to the participants included, amongst others, informed consent, which attempted to answer questions like: what is the purpose of the research? What are the roles of the participants in the research?

De Vos (1998: 58) states that participants should be thoroughly informed about the potential impact of the investigation. In order to get positive responses for the questions above, the researcher was obliged to inform the participants about various ethical principles to be taken into consideration beforehand to avoid misconceptions that might hamper the outcomes of the study. This was done through informal discussions with the participants prior to the commencement of the study; whereby the foundation was thoroughly laid before the ultimate take off of the study. Participants had informed consent about the research they participated in as required by Babbie in de Vos (2002) that anyone who takes part in scientific research needs to be aware of a general agreement about what is proper or improper in scientific research.

The researcher took into account all ethical attributes of the research as articulated by a plethora of literature, (Bailey et al, 2011; De Vos et al, 2000; Babbie, 2007; Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005). Those attributes are identified below.

### **3.4.1. Voluntary Participation**

Participants were not deceived into participating in the research under false pretences. It was the prerogative of the respondent/s to voluntarily actively participate in the research, not being under duress, after all the information about the study was disclosed to them. The participants in the research were made aware of this ethical aspect and were also informed about their rights to decide their involvement in the study.

### **3.4.2. Anonymity**

Dane in Maswanganyi (2016) states that anonymity could be understood when there can be no existence of any link that can relate a participant's identity to any information provided in the project. There is an association between anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were promised that their identities would not be exposed in the interpretation and discussion of the results. The researcher used pseudonyms to adhere to the promise made before collecting data, that of protecting the identities of the interviewees. Anonymity of the subjects had been strictly adhered to as required by the University Policy on Ethics.

### **3.4.3. Informed Consent**

De Vos et al (2000) assert that informed consent relates to amongst others, disseminating adequate, accurate information about the goal of the investigation to avoid what Judd et al in De Vos (2000) refers to as the impairment of the participants' rights to self-determination if their involvement in the study is without their consent. Babbie in De Vos et al (2000) refers to informed consent as voluntary participation whereby participants make a choice of willingly participating in the research without deceit. Participants were afforded with sufficient information about the nature of the study and what it aims at achieving so that they could make an informed choice, whether to participate in the interviews of the study or not. Permission was sought from the participants after all the relevant information about the study had been detailed (See Appendix A and B).

The researcher used a clear, straightforward and understandable language in disseminating information about the research to the participants as required by Babbie and Mouton (2012). This was done in order to enable them to consent willingly to the study without feeling they were being lured into the study by deception. They were also informed that they were allowed to withdraw their participation from the study at any given time even though they had initially committed themselves to participating in the study. This is also in line with the requirements of the University of Venda Research Ethics Policy.

### **3.4.4. Confidentiality**

Creswell et al (2009) regards confidentiality as the essential aspect of the research. The researcher had addressed this aspect by obtaining a letter of consent first from the authorities in Thulamela Municipality. The researcher entered into verbal agreement with other participants, that is, ward councilors and traditional leaders, in terms of protecting their identity. The researcher took an undertaking to protect the identities of the participants and to handle all the data records with the highest confidentiality they deserve. Babbie in de Vos (2002) argues that anyone who takes part in a scientific research needs to be aware of a general agreement about what is proper or improper scientific research. The participants in research had, amongst others, the right to privacy, which allowed them to decide whether

they want their names to be attached to the information they have provided to the researcher or not.

### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

Collecting data is, according to Babbie and Mouton (2012), one of the most crucial phases in the research process. It is crucial in the sense that, if not properly executed, it may impact on the findings of the research. Data consists of facts expressed in the language of measurement (Bless et al, 2006). This study, as alluded to in the preceding chapter, used a theoretical perspective, which Stewart and Klein (2016) also termed a 'theoretical lens'. The critical and social theoretical lens assisted the researcher in understanding issues under investigation and also in the collection of data.

Bless et al (2004) distinguished between two sets of data: firstly, the data that the researcher collects for the study, and the one that the researcher collects from other investigations. Since the research design for this research was a case study, the researcher employed interviews and document analysis as sources of data collection. The secondary source data collected by the researcher was in the form of interviews, whilst the primary source data was collected from prevailing documents, which were in existence before the research commenced. The study used both the primary and the secondary source methods of collecting data. The two qualitative data collection methods were applied as described below.

#### **3.5.1. Interviews**

An interview, according to Maree et al (2009) is a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data. As one of the modes of collecting qualitative data, interviews were used in this study to deal with what De Vos et al (2005) refers to as research interview guide or schedule that required explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their contexts (Snape & Spencer, 2013). An example of the interview guide that was used to direct the interview process is attached as Annexure I.

The interviews conducted also aided the researcher in understanding the lens through which the participants understand social realities. Maree (2009) distinguishes between open-ended (unstructured), semi-structured and structured interviews. The primary data was

collected through face-to-face or what De Vos et al (2005) refer to as the one-on-one interviews with municipality employees, and the municipal council, namely ward councillors and traditional leaders. The one-on-one interviews are further, according to Patton (in Berry, 1999), and reiterated by De Vos, divided into three types: namely, the informal conversation interview; general interview approach; and standardised open-ended interview (Ibid). The researcher employed all three suggested forms in this study. The interviews emerged as more of a conversation between the researcher and the participants and were conducted at their convenient places.

Participants from the Thulamela Municipality were interviewed in their working environment, that is, at their offices as per our arrangements. De Vos et al (2005) regard these types of interviews as in-depth interviews. These are in-depth interviews in a sense that they probe profoundly into the issue under investigation. To achieve this, the researcher visited the Thulamela Municipality offices on several occasions to interview already identified participants. The interview questions were administered in Tshivenda, and English. This means that the researcher used both indigenous languages, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda, as well as English, to collect data. The responses were recorded on tape as per the permission granted by the participants before the commencement of interviews. The recorded conversations were later translated and transcribed before they were evaluated.

The in-depth interviews helped in retrieving information from participants about their understanding and experiences of social contexts and the fundamental means of communication for public service in ensuring effective service delivery in Thulamela Municipality (Polit & Hungler, 1999: 194-196; Babbie, 2004: 89, 370). Through qualitative interviews, the researcher attempted to understand the world from the participants' point of view so that the lived experiences of participants could be uncovered and be well understood (De Vos et al, 2005). In undertaking this task, the researcher also considered some purposes of conducting in-depth interviews, as highlighted by Wengraf in Bailey, Hutter and Hennink (2011):

- **The value of collected narratives about people's lives.** The unstructured interview questions were phrased in such a way that they allowed the interviewee to narrate or to relate their knowledge and experiences about the interactions of the municipality with the communities.

- **Recognising the subjectivity of the interviewee.** The researcher took into account the perceptions from personal influence of the participants that might negatively affect findings of the research.
- **Acknowledging the context in which the interviewee lives.** The context where the interviews were conducted was taken into consideration. Interviewees were interviewed at the places of their choices, where they would feel mostly comfortable to provide answers without any prejudice.

### 3.5.2. Document Analysis

Data from secondary sources concerning how language impacts on service delivery was also collected through one of the social research methods, namely document analysis, which Maree (2009) refers to as content analysis. Document analysis as one of the qualitative research methods is a technique that enabled the researcher to extensively examine documents and records used by the Thulamela Municipality. Examined records and documents were later evaluated and interpreted. Creswell et al (2007) distinguished between the use of documents for literature review as well as using documents as a method of collecting data. Document analysis in this regard was not used as a way of reviewing literature, but as a mode of collecting data relevant for the study.

Document analysis used as the data gathering technique was considered to pay particular attention to every written communication for public consumption in Thulamela Municipality, which shed light on the topic under investigation (Creswell et al, 2009). The analysis of documents enabled the researcher to unravel the messages behind the written words and to understand the voice used in communication. Data was collected from official and non-official Thulamela Municipality documents, amongst others, newsletters, speeches, reports, notices, and minutes.

### 3.5.3. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis is a process whereby raw data, which was collected through interviews from various stakeholders and document analysis, was converted into useful information, which assisted the researcher in drawing conclusions or making inferences. According to Patton (2002), analysis of any kind of data refers to its systematic examination to determine its parts, the relationship among the parts, and their relationship to the whole. Bell (1993: ) maintained that, hundred separate pieces of interesting information will mean nothing to a



reader unless they have been placed into categories or groupings, patterns and items of particular significance.

The transcribed qualitative data from interviews as well as that collected through document analysis were compared, analysed and interpreted through the thematic content analysis (TCA) and the theory guided analysis. Theory guided analysis assisted in comparing and complementing the primary data collected within the research project with the secondary data from documents (Kohlbacher, 2006). Thematic content analysis was used to sub-categorise data. The data was classified into themes that emerged during analysis (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

Van Manen's (1990) qualitative approach of thematic content steps of analysis were adapted and implemented as follows:

- The researcher repeatedly read the participant's description until she/he was familiar with what has been said.
- Data was read and meaningful phrases, statements or words, which seemed to be important for the phenomena studied, were identified and highlighted.
- The researcher took each significant statement and gave it a code or number.
- Different statements were organised into clusters of themes. Themes which are common or similar in meaning were identified and grouped together.
- The researcher then tried to find the links between these themes and then described and summarised them.
- Regularities and sets of similar ideas grouped into categories were then compared.

### **3.6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study required the researcher to interview participants and also to access Thulamela municipality documents for analysis. The undertaking of this study faced various challenges, which, if not handled properly by the researcher, could have impacted negatively on the collection of data as well as in drawing conclusions. Amongst some of challenges encountered were difficulties in accessing information from municipality employees who seemed unwilling or rather skeptical to share their knowledge and/or understanding of the phenomena in question. This challenge was attended to by signing the declaration as a commitment by the researcher to adhere to research ethics.



Another challenge concerns time constraints. The process of seeking permission to conduct the study from the municipality authorities took a long time. Moreover, bureaucratic procedures involved in gaining access to decision-makers in the municipality made it impossible to proceed with the study at the time when the research had planned. The municipality was visited on numerous occasions, but there were instances where they could not be accessed; because one or two reasons: either they were attending meetings or they had gone out on work-related events. As a result of this challenge, the completion of the study took longer than anticipated. However, this did not impact on the data collected or on the analysis.

### **3.7. CONCLUSION**

The chapter explored all research methodological processes and procedures followed during the undertaking of this study. It presented information about the research design underpinning this study as well as the research methodology. The chapter also explained how the two methods, namely interviews and document analysis, were employed in the collection of data. The chapter further gave a brief overview of how sampling was arrived at, and the methods of analysing data. The chapter also highlighted research ethics adhered to in the undertaking of the study.

## Chapter 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation and the analysis of data. Pierce (2009: 241) describes this process as, 'assembling all the raw data, validating it and reducing it to ordered information'. It should be recalled that, from the previous chapter on Research Methodology, there had been a substantiation that data collection was through qualitative method for the purpose of establishing the connection or the relationship between language and service delivery. Data - collected from the identified sources through interviews, document analysis, questionnaires and content analysis - was first presented, and subsequently analysed according to what Pierce (2009) distinguishes as quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this chapter, the data is presented, organised, interpreted and discussed to arrive at the findings presented. The data was based on both the primary and secondary sources.

### 4.2. DATA PRESENTATION

In data presentation, the researcher presents the collected raw data without drawing conclusions for examination. In this study, the data was classified according to the way in which it was collected, that is, data from primary sources and that from secondary sources (Bless et al, 2006: 111). As already alluded to in Chapter 3, the primary data presented was founded on the answers recorded from the interview guide with public service employees of the municipality, ward councillors and traditional leaders. The interview guide was, in turn, guided by the objectives and the fundamental objective of the study; which investigated the extent to which language impacts on public services in service delivery in the Thulamela Municipality. The secondary data was grounded on the information accessed from the Thulamela Municipality website as well as that collected from the Thulamela offices (like, newsletters, notices, speeches, communicative strategy, etcetera) which were reviewed extensively to validate data collected from primary sources. As already indicated in the research methodology, the researcher used mixed methods of collecting data, namely interviews and document analysis.

Almost all participants in the two sub-cases identified in Chapter 4 except one were Tshivenda speakers.

### **4.3. DATA ANALYSIS**

The qualitative data collected during the research process was two-fold and was analysed qualitatively. This implies that the analysis of data was guided by the two qualitative techniques of data collection, namely, interviews and document analysis; or what other scholars refer to as desktop study. With regard to gathered qualitative data, the researcher used what most literature refers to as thematic content analysis (TCA) (Babbie and Mouton, 2012; Neuendorf, 2017; De Vos et al, 2005) to analyse and describe the patterns that emerged. Through the TCA, the researcher compared various categories to establish patterns that were similar and merged them for interpretation. Themes that emerged are outlined and described below.

### **4.4. FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS**

Data was transcribed and analysed from the interviews conducted with Thulamela Municipality employees, Municipal Council, that is ward councillors and Traditional leaders. The following themes have emerged during data analysis.

#### **Theme 1: Language policy**

Almost all participants (P1-P10 except P5), though interviewed separately, concurred that the Thulamela Municipality does not have a language policy. However, three participants (P1, P2, P3 and P4) indicated that, albeit lack of a language policy, Thulamela has a communicative strategy. One participant (P5) signalled that he is doubtful whether Thulamela has a language policy or not. In his response this is what he said,

*“No, I am not sure.”*

P5 further stated that, *“If ever they have a language policy it means they are undermining it, they are not implementing it.”*

What prompted this kind of response above was his expectation of how the municipality should handle issues of language/s. The expectation that the Municipality would align its administration to the laws of the country and to heed to the stipulation of the Constitution, which requires in municipalities in Section 6(3)(b) to take into account the language and

preferences of their communities. Prah (2006) articulated that South Africans should move from language policies that are only on paper to pursue policies at the level of active practice. With this in mind, the sentiments of Prah leave so much to be desired; also when taking into account the commitment of the Thulamela Municipality, which, in its mission statement, promised:

“... to promote social, political and economic empowerment of all our people through delivery of quality services, community participation...”

Social empowerment cannot be possible if people's communication is still mainly in a foreign language to the residents. The outcome of this could be miscommunication and having difficulty in accessing accurate information that affects the livelihood of the communities.

## **Theme 2: Equal Opportunities for All**

All members of the community must have equal opportunities in terms of access to resources distributed or provided by the municipality. It should be understood that equality is not only a decorative statement written on paper, but should be a reality in all circumstances. People should have equal opportunities at all times. Language should not be a barrier to any member of the society in terms of their accessing resources that improve their day-to-day life. The Critical Theory requires human beings to be liberated from the circumstances that enslave them. If language is one of those circumstances referred to, there should be transformation that changes the status quo into a just rational and reconciled society. It is a cornerstone of democracy according to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

## **Theme 3: Lack of Communication and Dissemination of Information**

The participants (P1-P10) have attested to the fact that there are challenges with regard to dissemination of information to the public, especially written information. Disseminated information was found to have been written in English, which makes it difficult for some community members to decode the meaning or comprehend what is said because of the language barrier. According to SALGA, the municipality has a role to play in terms of making bylaws to which community members need to abide. One of the participants (P2) reaffirmed this role and further confirmed that the bylaws create a language barrier since they are all written in English. This has been confirmed by one participant (P2), who stated that the

municipality has bylaws, which must be implemented by the community and that if they are communicated in the language which is not understood by everyone else, there is a serious challenge. Furthermore, the participants said, “In terms of the laws, somebody can raise the issue to say that ‘I did not know.’” (P2) In this instance, nobody would blame them because the information, though available, it was ‘user unfriendly’ since it was not in the language of the communities. This was supported by P3 who stated that one should know why one is communicating.

*“Arali ndi tshi khou amba na vhone, uri vhone vha pfe zwine.” “Ndi khou amba, ndi fanela u di vhudzisa uri vho mpfa naa.”* This is translated as, “If I talk to you so that you can understand what I say, I must ask myself whether you heard me.” The purpose of communication is to convey messages to one another in a more user-friendly way. If in the process of communication, there is a disjunction, then it is flawed.

One of the respondents (P5) stated that there are times at which the Thulamela Municipality takes drastic measures in some villages, without first even communicating with the traditional leaders who are heading those villages. When engaged further, one participant (P5) emphasised:

*“I am referring to the issue of maybe allocating stands, you find the municipality sometimes does not inform the leader of that particular place and you will be surprised to find people ... starting to allocate stands.”*

The observation is in line with one of the findings of the study of Mhlanga (2012) that asserts, “There is no absolute proper consultation of traditional leaders by either local governments or municipalities before any development is done in their areas.” This is a challenge faced by other municipalities (as well as that attested to above).

#### **Theme 4: Parity of Esteem**

The findings revealed that, in Thulamela Municipality, there is no parity of esteem in terms of languages used for public service for effective service delivery. All participants attested to the parity of esteem in languages, though a few did so indirectly. The Constitution in the Bill of Rights, Section 30, declares that everyone has the right to use the language of their choice, and this right is further emphasised in Section 31(a), which reiterates that no one should be denied this right. Evidence of the collected data shows that the Thulamela Municipality (whether consciously or subconsciously) disregards this right. The municipality,

as the sphere of government, is expected not only to know but also to adhere to the laws that govern the country as envisaged by the South African legislation. Apparently, the municipality is perceived as elevating the status of one language, English, at the expense of Indigenous languages spoken in the area. However, one participant (P2) alluded to the fact that Thulamela has drafted a manual, which requires translation in three languages. P2 asserted,

*“We are required by the law to do so.”*

*“Even our sign board, mostly they are written in English.”*

The participant went on to praise the homeland stating that it had a language section that was responsible for translating even the laws into the local language.

### **Theme 5: Negative Attitude Towards Indigenous Languages**

The findings indicated that three participants (namely P1, P3 and P6) discussed the perceptions created when one communicates verbally in one of the Indigenous languages in formal gatherings. P3 ideally stated that speaking in Tshivenda in a formal gathering renders one not considered as educated enough, or not knowing English, in terms of people's preconceived ideas. The attitudes created by some Thulamela Municipality officials and politicians make other officials think twice before communicating in their own languages, in which they are fluent, because of fear of ostracisation. People still have the misconception or the myth that speaking in English symbolises intelligence or being more knowledgeable than those speaking in indigenous languages. Prah (2013) refuted this belief by emphasising, in his interviews with Alicia Mitchell, that no country can make progress on the basis of a borrowed language. This is regrettable especially in a democratic SA where people are required by the laws of this country to take pride in their own identities, which are embedded in their languages and cultures. This opens wounds of the past since it reminds people of the era when the apartheid government enforced Afrikaans on all black learners and the fierce retaliations that marked a drastic change in the history of South Africa.

## 4.5. FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Documents analysed were, *inter alia*, newsletters, speeches, public notices, and the Agenda for Council meeting; some of which were accessed through the Thulamela Municipality website, whilst others were collected from the municipal offices.

### Theme 1: Lack of a Language Policy

A language policy is a legislated document designed to address language discourses, in that it guides the institution into identifying the language/s to be used in verbal, oral and/or written communication. The Thulamela Municipality has a wealth of policies. However, at the time of the analysis, the Thulamela Municipality did not have a language policy, not even in the pipeline. The Thulamela Municipality documents that were probed confirm what came out from interviews that the municipality does not have a language policy. This is contrary to the requirement of the Policy of the Department of Public Service and Administration, which supports the redressing of previously marginalised official languages, like Tshivenda and Xitsonga in the case of Thulamela Municipality. The language policy should include the two languages spoken in Thulamela as reiterated by most participants.

### Theme 2: Information Gap

The Thulamela Municipality has a wealth of information for public consumption in the form of public notices, newsletters, etcetera. The documents are, however, written mainly in English rather than the language of the majority of the people. In the Newsletter of October-December 2016, only one article, entitled 'IDP NDI MUTHEO WA MVELEDZISO' was written in Tshivenda, and the entire newsletter written in English. If only one article is written in Tshivenda, the questions raised could be to which readers is the newsletter written? Furthermore, who is entitled to information written in Tshivenda and that which is written in English? This anomaly in my view leads to information gap since the message which is exchanged could not reach to the people it is intended for. This is also in line with what the interviews picked up from most participants. When asked about the consequences of using English in the predominantly Tshivenda and/or Xitsonga areas, one participant, namely P5 said:

“Ay! A lot of problems because some of the documents are legally binding”. The implication, according to P5, is two-fold, first people sign some documents without understanding the contents of the documents because they are written in English. Secondly, the document

also has legal terms which are also foreign jargon. More explanation is required for those with a little command of English. This is still in line with sentiments shared above by P2.

### **Theme 3: Social Cohesion**

The Thulamela Municipality has special programmes that speak to social cohesion. Through these programmes, groups of community members are given the platform to participate in social issues that affect their daily life. Events organised by Thulamela to address social cohesion make provision for people living with disability, children, gender as well as senior citizens. This information was also articulated by one of the participants, who also further identified various constituted forums of Thulamela, amongst others, the pastor, the business, the traditional leaders' forum, etcetera; who meet on a quarterly basis. Amongst events organised annually to address the community's needs are 16 days of Activism, National Women's day, Heritage Day, World Aids day. However, a challenge is that the means of communication in these events is not conducted in the residents' mother tongue. Maximum participation could therefore not be guaranteed since the majority of the communities, including people at grassroots are neglected the opportunity of full interactive communication. The messages conveyed reach only a few who are eloquent in English, let alone people who are hard of hearing and are dependent on sign language and braille for communication. In this way services are not delivered to all members of the community alike, but to a few who happen to be counted as the elites.

### **Theme 4: Barriers to Access Information**

The disparity with regard to access to information is not only in terms of the use of English in written documents, but also in terms of the jargon that is not user friendly, which the Municipality uses in their documents to communicate with the communities. Jargon is specialised terminology that is unique to a particular field or institution. Some of the jargon used by the municipality prohibit most community members, even those who regard themselves as learned, to access some valuable services to which they are entitled. What about those whose level of education is low? Lunenburg (2010) refers to this as a 'semantic barrier', which usually affects the quality of communication. A point to note is, service delivery is not only in terms of concrete infrastructural projects - like, construction of roads,



the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP houses), provision of water and sanitation - but also in terms of abstract services like information, which people require in order for them to access the services that are due to them, like access to information about assessment rates. These services will empower the communities in their day-to-day activities. Jargon used by the Thulamela Municipality, like IDP, BEE, which, to some people, even those who are regarded as proficient in English are user-unfriendliness and as such reduce the effective communication. If the sender has never been privy to or exposed to the terms used in the speech, it will be difficult for him/her to decode the message conveyed. This was alluded to by one participant (P6) who, when questioned the level of understanding of the jargon used by the Thulamela Municipality in public documents, responded thus:

“You touched on an important issue. I could say I am an educated person, but I still find jargon which I find difficult to understand, perhaps I have the advantage that I will get ways of trying to, but let’s say this jargon, that has been, which one can I take ... the word ‘IDP’, you know, you can take almost, and I am talking about myself now ... It took me some years to understand what we mean when we say ‘IDP.’”

Notwithstanding the exceptional prowess in communication by some public servants, and the municipal council; there are still elements of misunderstanding and mistranslation experienced in the delivery of messages. This is an indication that the majority of the community members are excluded from important deliberations and decision-making processes due to the impairment of the language. In addition, the jargon used also in tender documents, is so technical, to such an extent, that, not everybody, even those regarded as the intellectual, can be able to comprehend the terminology language used.

## **Theme 5: Jargon Impacting Access to Information**

The disparity with regard to access to information is not only in terms of the use of English in written documents, but also in terms of the jargon the municipality uses in their documents. Some of the jargon used by municipality prohibit most community members to access some services, which they are entitled to. To reiterate, a point to note is that service delivery is not only in terms of concrete infrastructural projects - like, construction of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP houses), provision of water and sanitation - but also abstract services like information which will empower the communities in various fields. The

municipality uses jargons like 'IDP' and 'BEE', which, to some people, become user-unfriendly since they were never privy to the meaning or the knowledge of such acronyms.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The chapter discussed the presentation, analysis as well as the interpretation of the data which was collected through two methods of data collection, namely, interviews and document analysis. It became clear from the presentation of data and the analysis that language does have an impact on service delivery. The responses from participants as well as the information explored from a number of Thulamela Municipality documents all attest to the fact that there is a connection between service delivery and language. The participants are all agreeable that Thulamela Municipality does not have a language policy. It should also be mentioned that challenges in service delivery could also be accounted for by the lack of language policy.

# **Chapter 5. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

## **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The study was aimed at investigating the impact of language in the public service context for service delivery. This chapter provides the summary of the findings of the study stemming from the data which was collected, analysed and interpreted in details in the preceding chapter. The study brings to light, in its findings, the significant role language plays in service delivery. This study reveals that indigenous communities in Thulamela still face challenges that occurred in the colonial and apartheid eras, in that they are excluded from the main language discourse, since the language used for communication is predominantly English. The chapter has also outlined the recommendations the study is proposing as a way forward in addressing essential language issues, which have been unravelled through interviews and document analysis.

## **5.2. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Service delivery became a point in question in democratic South Africa; even more so, following the aftermath of apartheid, that left the government overwhelmed with serious backlogs of basic needs that were not provided to indigenous communities by the apartheid regime. Indigenous communities were deprived access to some of the basic needs, like water and sanitation to name but two. This deprivation had weighed heavily on them, as attested to by Zausmer and Hawtin (2013), when they affirmed that people are the mostly affected since they are the ones who are in dire need of basic services that had been denied for so long.

- When the first democratic government came into power, the term ‘service delivery’ became a ‘buzz word’ in all political gatherings, as well as in the government deliberations. Hence, most legislation in South Africa advocated the significance of the delivery of services. Political leaders of various political organisations, in their election manifestos (in rallies etcetera) promised communities a better life, which they had so

long been awaiting. The political gatherings were mostly addressed in the language of the communities. This was done as a camouflage to win not only the confidence of the communities but also their votes at the polls and also to earn their trust. Suffice to say that they, political leaders through this, were indirectly conveying the message that they relate to the problems encountered by indigenous black communities, since they are also affected.

- People waited in anticipation with expectation for the provision of basic services - as legislated firstly by the Constitution of South Africa, then reiterated by most government documents, such as the RDP, White Paper on Transforming Public Service and Delivery, the Green Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, etcetera. The provision of services, though eventually provided, had its setbacks and flaws. The progress was made at snail's pace.

Issues of delivery of services in most municipalities in various provinces had always been marked by controversies. The Thulamela Municipality is no exclusion to this predicament. Communities under the jurisdiction of Thulamela Municipality had, like other municipalities, been marked by political demonstration concerning service delivery. There have always been protests about the effective and sustainable service delivery in the Thulamela Municipality. According to the research conducted by Thaba (2006) on rural transformation, the youth in the area of Ha-Makhuvha were dissatisfied with the services provided by the municipality. Ha- Makhuvha is one of the rural villages under the jurisdiction of Thulamela Municipality. They believed that they are being ignored and undermined simply because of their residential setting, which is rural in nature. Apparently, the residents concluded that the municipality felt obliged to offer full services to urban areas at the expense of the rural areas which were provided for partially.

### **5.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Notwithstanding the fact that the Thulamela Municipality was not marked by large scales of political unrest (e.g. protests that ranged from lack or poor service delivery, to corruption by most of its communities) there was, however, overwhelming evidence of parity of esteem, which accounts for the information gap experienced. The challenge was caused by lack of a language policy which all participants attested to. The document analysis and interview schedules gathered from this study also attest to this reality. There was also lack of a language service or language desk which was supposed to take care of all language related issues.

Rejoice Mabudafhasi, former Deputy Minister, has, in her budget speech of 2015/2016 at the National Assembly, affirmed the importance of a language service and its role in developing terminology. There is no consensus with regard to the language in which documents for communication should be written. By and large, the findings, to a large extent, shed some important insight into some critical language discourse and how that impacts on service delivery in public service. Comparatively, though one may say, the polemics were not directly founded on language, the data points to language as a fundamental factor to delivery of services.

Though some respondents claimed that verbal communication is done in Tshivenda, there was however evidence from most respondents that almost all documents, even those that are for public consumption (like, IDP) are written in English. One would be right to conclude that the Thulamela Municipality does not fully accommodate residences under its jurisdiction, given that the 2011 statistics show that of the 618462 of its population, 389911 are Vhavenda speakers, whilst 201302 are Vatsonga speakers, and the remaining numbers are distributed between other languages, which are in a minority. According to Statistics South Africa, the percentage of the predominant speakers in the Thulamela Municipality is 63.64% and 32.85%, respectively, and those are Vhavenda and Vatsonga. Considering the percentages of speakers in Thulamela, one would contend that the language disparity that occurred prior to democracy; is still persistent to date. This implies that the majority of the people are excluded from major interactive communication, or rather from access to information, because documents are written in a foreign language to them.

The concept of equality is a right, which is enshrined in the constitution and could not be denied. It was, however, established that inequality is still rife in Thulamela, as far as the language is concerned. What was evident from responses by most participants was that language issue in Thulamela Municipality is not top priority. Negative perceptions of people using indigenous languages in formal meetings is an indication that there are still people who define themselves in terms of foreign language/s. However, there was a commitment from the Thulamela Municipality officials that, in the very near future, some other documents will be translated into indigenous languages, a step in the right direction, though long overdue.

## **5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following what has been unearthed by this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

### **5.4.1. LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE SERVICE DESK**

South Africa is a democratic state with a multilingual policy which acknowledges diversity, hence the recognition of 11 official languages spoken within the borders of South Africa. The right to use one's language of choice is a right that cannot be denied since it has been stipulated in the Bill of Rights. All languages have equal status and should be treated such. Thulamela has a wealth of policies that regulates its activities. Notwithstanding all policies of Thulamela and even those which are in the pipeline, the municipality should develop the Language Policy to conform to the laws of the country. The policy should be in line with the requirements of the Constitution and the Municipal System Act, 2000. Adherence to the language is not a matter of choice but to the policy. This implies that should the municipality develop a policy, it should not only be on paper as is evident with some of the policies in some institutions, but there must be implementation. A monitoring system should also be put in place to ensure implementation and adherence to the policy. The language policy should use predominant languages of the residents, which, in this regard, are Tshivenda and Xitsonga. English could still be used to cater for those residents who are foreigners and also those who are few in terms of numbers in the municipality. The study therefore recommends that every document, official and non-official, for instance - calendars, notices, newsletters - which are meant for the public and also used by the municipality to communicate with the communities must be written in the official languages of the people as legislated in the policy.

### **5.4.2. COMMUNITY GATHERINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

All community gatherings are aimed not only at the effective delivery of services to communities, but also at activating social change. This is, according to Critical Theory, significant in a sense that issues which contribute to inequality are exposed and thereby addressed accordingly. This can only be achieved when people who talk to each other have the same command of the language utilised. The study suggests that all community gatherings that are invited by Thulamela Municipality should be conducted in the language/s

of the residences. Though, from the data interpreted, there was no consensus concerning the language of command used in those gatherings. Some respondents maintained that some *Imbizos* (gatherings or assemblies) were conducted in English, which, from the researcher's perspective, is a serious challenge, which undermines the language policy of this country. For a fact, that *Imbizos* are held in locations or in villages, which are predominantly occupied by Vatsonga or Vhavenda speakers, there could not be any excuse not to use the language/s of the speakers. Communication should be in both indigenous languages. If there are other members present in those gatherings who could not hear the languages spoken, they should not be excluded from the deliberations; instead, there should be some mechanism put in place (in the form of translations into language that could be comprehended by those speakers) for the effective delivery of the messages conveyed. The notices that invite people to the meetings should also be written in the languages of the people. The gatherings should be done at the time convenient to most members of the communities, but not on days when members had gone to work. It would, as a suggestion, possibly be more convenient for the *Imbizo*, survey and/or workshops to be conducted on Saturdays, for maximum participation by community members.

#### **5.4.3. PROMOTION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY**

According to one of the findings, it was established that language could be a barrier to effective and efficient service delivery. Communication serves two aspects, both orally and in a written form. In as much as delivery of services could be through both means, Thulamela Municipality should heed to both modes of communications to reach to all its communities without some hindrances. Community should be in a position to understand not only oral communication, but communication in a written form. The promotion of previously marginalised languages, namely Tshivenda and Xitsonga, in the Thulamela Municipality should be a top priority in every planning and programme of the municipality. The promotion of indigenous languages will aid in ensuring that all members of the communities have equal access to resources, as well as information.

The municipality should strive, at all costs, to promote and develop the indigenous languages, as stipulated in the Constitution by not excluding them from any mode of communication. People from all walks of life - irrespective of their gender, level of education, race and class - should be allowed to speak and write or read documents in the languages they feel comfortable with, and should also have equal access to information and/or services as required by the law and reiterated by Batho Pele principles.



#### 5.4.4. FUTURE RESEARCH

Given that the study described and explored the extent to which language impacts on the public service sector in terms of service delivery (in one of the local municipality under Vhembe District Municipality) and that the findings confirm that the impact thereof is lacking; the researcher asserts that there is a need for a broader study, which focuses on the district municipalities, since they are the engines of the local municipalities. The study is recommending that more studies be conducted which will also investigate the role of language in constructing knowledge required for effective service delivery.

#### 5.5. CONCLUSION

South Africa is a diverse country with a multilingual language policy. Section 6 of the Constitution (Act No. 108, of 1996) recognises 11 official languages, which should all be treated equally in all spheres. Dr B. Ngubane viewed language in the foreword of the *National Language Policy Framework* (2003) as a person's 'second skin'. The implication in his quote is that no language should be compromised at the expense of the other, as language makes us who we are. It is a milestone of national identity. It is the basic tool through which everyday communication takes place: a means of interaction between humans. Language discourse, in terms of service delivery, by the public service, could not be overemphasised. The study has unravelled that there is a close connection between language and service delivery in the public service context, which has been evidenced by the findings. The right to language (and, by implication, access to information) is the most essential element the Constitution of South Africa and *Batho Pele* principles emphasise. It is necessary that the Thulamela Municipality to communicate with members of the community in a language they can easily understand, the language they had been exposed to from their early childhood. That language could not be any other language except the mother tongue of individuals. The study concludes that language has an impact on service delivery. The extent to which the impact could be realised in service delivery depends upon the way communication, both verbally and orally, takes place in a particular set up. In Thulamela, it has been found out that most community members are excluded from important decisions because of the dominant language used in communication. As a result, it would be proper to conclude that language in used by the Thulamela Municipality impacts negatively on public services for service delivery, since not all community members have equal access to information.



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(<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organization.html>).

([http://sociology.com/od/C\\_Index/g/Critical=Theory,htm](http://sociology.com/od/C_Index/g/Critical=Theory,htm))

## Annexure A: LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



University of Venda

P.O. Box 2919  
SIBASA  
0970

Tel No 0159628200  
Fax NO 015962 8789  
email: lamolam@univen.ac.za

---

Attention: The Municipal Manager  
Thulamela Municipality

Sir/Madam

### **Re: Request to conduct a Research in Thulamela Local Municipality**

I am a student registered for MA in African Studies with the University of Venda. My Supervisor is Prof Masoga M.A who is a research professor in the School of Human and Social Sciences. I hereby request permission to conduct my study within the Thulamela Local Municipality.

My research topic is, Impact of Language in Public Service Delivery: The Case of Thulamela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province. The nature of the study is exploratory and descriptive. The study employs qualitative research method, and triangulate both interviews and document analysis as data collection methods.

I hope my request becomes accepted

Yours Faithfully

.....

M.G. Maluleke

## Appendices

### Appendix B: Permission letter to conduct study



## Department Of Corporate Services

Private Bag X5066  
Thohoyandou  
0950  
Limpopo Province  
Tel: 015 962 7500  
Fax: 015 962 4020

Ref : 4/3/4/1  
Enquiries : Matloga S.T  
Tel : 015 962 7514  
Fax : 015 962 4020  
Email : matlogast@thulamela.gov.za

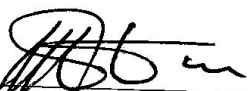
To : Maluleke M.G

From : THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY

Date : 26 JULY 2017

Subject : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT  
THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY

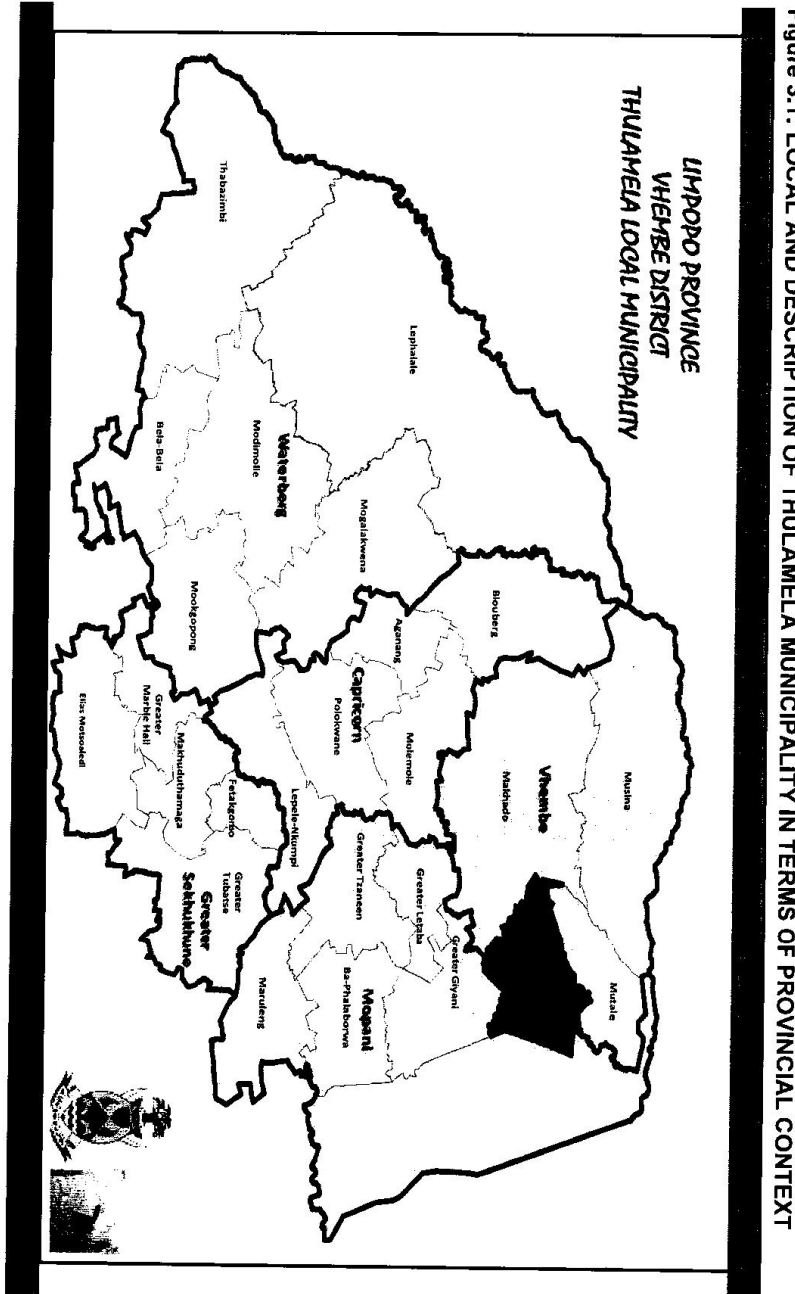
1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly note that your permission to conduct research has been granted.
3. Contact Human Resource Section for more information.
4. Hoping that this will reach your favorable consideration

  
MUNICIPAL MANAGER: MALULEKE H.E.

THULAMELA  
MUNICIPALITY



# Appendix C: Map of Thulamela Municipality

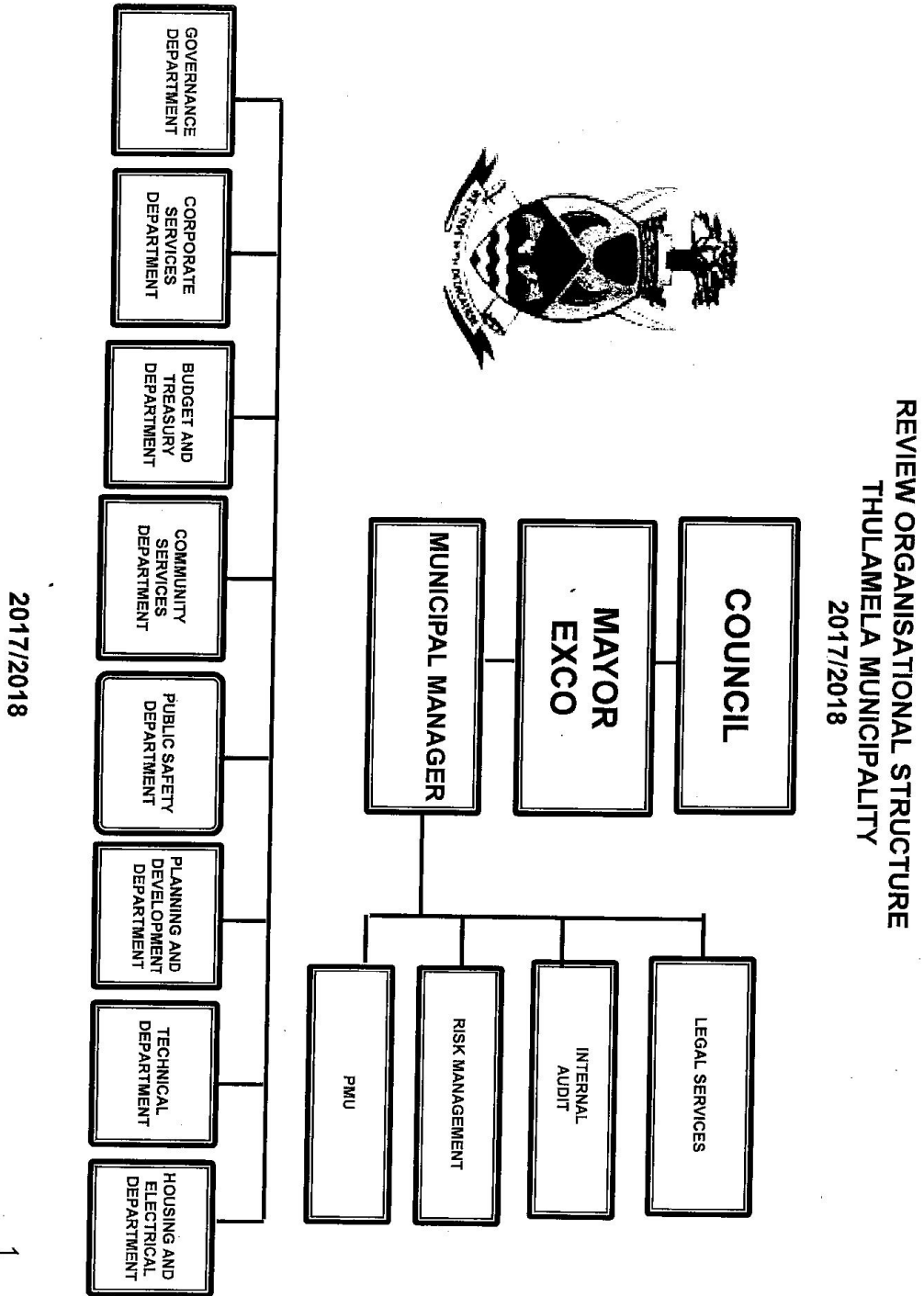


IDP 2016/17 FINANCIAL YEAR

Figure 3.1: LOCAL AND DESCRIPTION OF THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY IN TERMS OF PROVINCIAL CONTEXT



## Appendix E Organisational structure





## Appendix F: BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES



# BATHO PELE

U VHEA VHATHU PHANDA

RI ROTHE RI A THOGOMELA RI A NI SHUMELA



We belong



We care



We serve

### MILAYO

1. **VHUKWAMANI (CONSULTATION)**  
→ Vhadzulapo vha tea u kwamiwa malugana na tshiimo na khwalithi ya tshumelo dza nnyi na nnyi dzine vha dzi wana, nahone hune zwa konadzea vha tea u tendelwa u nanga kha tshumelo dzine dza nekedzwa.
2. **MAIMO A TSHUMELO (SERVICE STANDARDS)**  
→ Vhadzulapo vha tea u divhadzwa nga ha tshiimo na khwalithi ya tshumelo dza nnyi na nnyi uri vha dzule vha tshi divha zwe vha zwi lavhela.
3. **TSHWIKELILO (ACCESS)**  
→ Vhadzulapo vhothe vha tea u swikelela nga u lingana tshumelo dzine vha tea u dzi wana
4. **THONIFHO (COURTESY)**  
→ Vhadzulapo vha tea u thonifiwa na u dzhielwa ntha
5. **MAEHUNGO (INFORMATION)**  
→ Vhadzulapo vha tea u newa mafhungo a vhukuma nga vhudalo nga ha tshumelo dza nnyi na nnyi dzine vha tea u dzi wana.
6. **U VHA KHAGALA NA U SA DZUMBA (OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY)**  
→ Vhadzulapo vha tea u divhadzwa uri mihasho ya lushaka na ya vundu I langulwa hani, I shumisa tshelede nngafhani, nahone I langulwa nga nnyi.
7. **U LUGISA (REDRESS)**  
→ Arali maimo a tshumelo o fulufhedziswaho a songo swikelelwa, vhadzulapo vha tea u humbelwa pfarelo, u netshedzwa thalutshedzo nga vhudalo na ndugiso kana ndulamiso ya vhudi nga u tavhanya, na uri arali hu na dzimbilalelo, vhadzulapo vha tea u wana phindulo yavhudi nahone I vha khuthadzoho.
8. **NDEME YA MASHELENI (VALUE FOR MONEY)**  
→ Tshumelo dza nnyi na nnyi dzi tea u nekedzwa nga ndila ya u vhuedza nahone nga vhukoni u itela u nekedza vhadzulapo ndeme yavhudi ya tshelede

RI SHUMA ROTHE NGA MAFULUFULU KHA NDI SEDZO YA TSHUMELO

[WE SERVE WITH DEDICATION]

## Appendix G: DESCRIPTION OF THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY IN TERMS OF PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

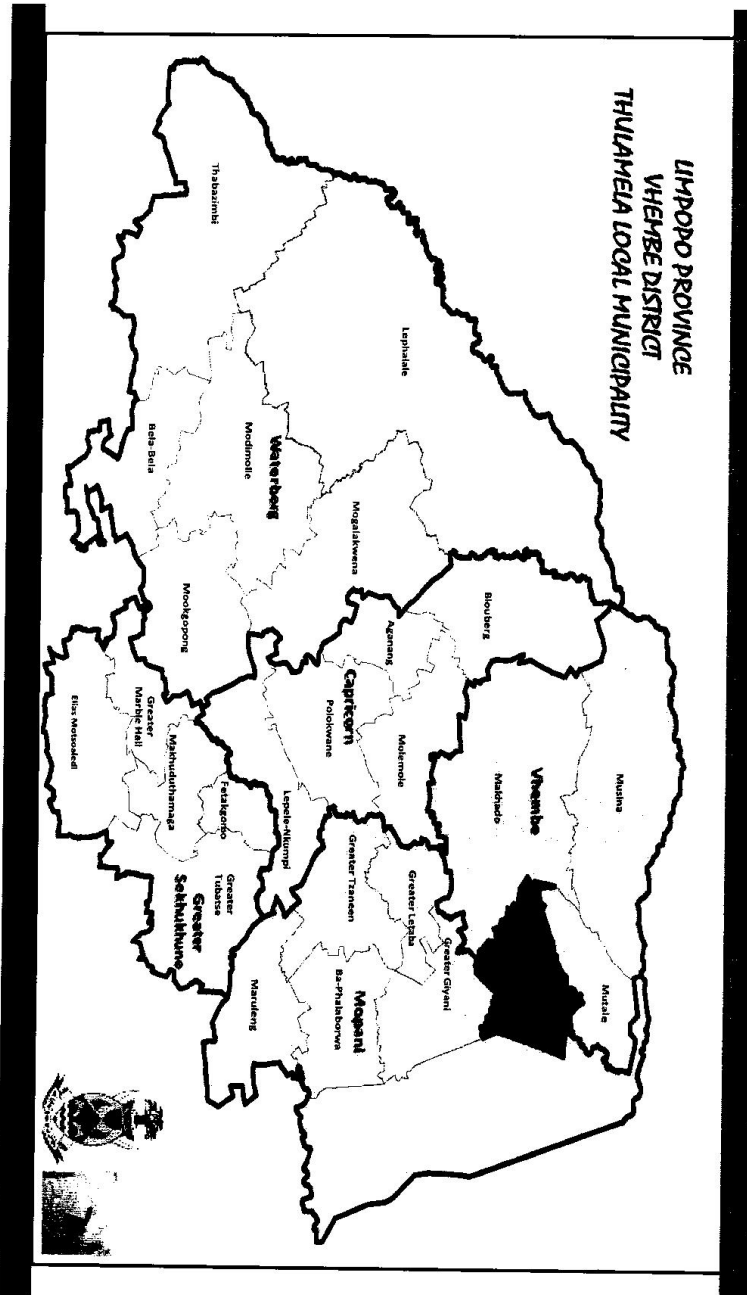


Figure 3.1: LOCAL AND DESCRIPTION OF THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY IN TERMS OF PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

IDP 2016/17 FINANCIAL YEAR

## APPENDIX H: SAMPLE OF DATA TRANSCRIPT

### Data Transcripts: The Impact of Language in Public Service Delivery: The Case of Thulamela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province

RESPONDENT 1

**Question: How do you rate your interactions with the communities under your jurisdiction in the municipality?**

Answer : If – I could say nna akere it would be my observation not that we have rated it, we haven't, but we are in the process of rating it, how the municipality perceive the situation in the process of doing that but I haven't. How I rate I think *gore* its good in terms of the way Thulamela Municipality relates to the community its stake holders to me actually it is I cannot say its excellent but I can say it's even above good if there is anything between good and excellent, I would say it's there if it was I would say from 1 to 10 are at 9 the way in which we relate to our community as a municipality both politically and administratively. But the people that should account to the community are not necessarily the administrators but are the politicians because *akere* they are elected in to the office. Why do I say we are good is because of the structures that this municipality has formed there is no structure in the community that is not represented that has not been communicated to. *Ee* have the main structure which will be *imbizo* or the mayoral *imbizo* were the mayor would go to various municipalities and convene an *imbizo* where in the people would say how they perceive service delivery their issues and then they were responded to by the executive committee comprising of ten members including the mayor. All In above that we have the pastors forum, we have the business forum, we have the traditional leaders forum, we have the disability forum, we have the elderly we have the youth all this forums are meeting on a quarterly bases, sometimes even more there is work that is done behind the outside of this meetings where in this forums are being engaged and not talking about the ward committee which is regulated to say that, there will be ward committees that would be there that would see the day to day running of the institutions that the community members would relate to.

**Question- how do you as a municipality interact directly with the communities is it through those *imbizos*?**

Answer 1f - it is through the *imbizos*, it is through the ward committee members, it is through the ward Councillors, with the Ward Committee meeting with the ward committee members we have ward community meetings on a monthly bases. The meetings culminate into a ward community meetings, held every month wherein they would meet and they would talk about the challenges they face. If the challenges is about water, for instance if for a week they did not have water that would be on top of the list, if there is any ritual murders and whatever anything it doesn't have to be the local mandate for it to be discussed in the ward community meetings, it can be anything that affects them in terms of either security, be health, or even education, they discuss it and then bring it and then they take it to the relevant departments.

**Question- in which language do you communicate with the communities?**

Answer 1f –the language that is mainly used in this institution is Tshivenda ne, if we are to give you our records, sometimes you may be thinking it is the only language unfortunately it is not written, but it is spoken in the *imbizos*. It is spoken in every interaction that we are making with all those forums and everywhere. It is spoken in Council meetings. it is spoken even in the executive committee, it is spoken in the portfolio committee. I don't remember them talking in any other language except when we are in with provincial people from the province that is, when we are with treasury with AG that is the only time they would.....use English.

**Question-how do you publicise the imbizos?**

Answer Through the radio and through community radios and through the national radio which is Phalaphala and also through newspapers we take an advert to newspapers.

**Question – do you think if I have send my article in Tshivenda they won't publicise it?**

Answer : No they won't, *akere* it would be their main policies of that newspaper *akere* is not about us it will be about that.

**Question – what do you as a municipality ensure that information distributed to your community is also accessible by an ordinary community member?**

Answer: That one was taken care of by Constitution of South Africa and also the Systems Acts when they introduced the system of public participation through the Ward Committees

in each and every Ward ne we have nine members and the tenth member is the Ward Councillor these other nine members are Ward Committee members, ne. In each and every Ward meaning we have ten Ward Committee Members including councillor. These are the people that are taking down the message to the very last person. They communicate what the IDP contains. In the Ward Committee of ten people all of them have got portfolios. This one will be responsible for health, the other one for water, the other one for housing, this other one for roads, this other one for this and that you find all of them they have responsibilities. They always have to make sure gore they inform..., *ne ke batho ba e lego gore* they live in that community, members of that community know about them. They have to say what they communicate on behalf of the municipality on a day to day basis. They know gore the councillors may not be accessible to other people hence also on a monthly bases more and above those there is a Ward Community meetings where in which those people are going to account to those to say last month these are the issues that they raised and these issues we have corrected. This is what the municipality is introducing. There are the events or programs of the municipality that take place every month. If there is going to be an Imbizo at Itsani or there is going to be an Imbizo wherever, those are the people that are the mouth piece of the municipality in the Wards.

**Question – don't you think that there is limitation of information to the communities on drafted documents that use formal language rather than one's language?**

Answer: Yah you are correct. That is wherein I would say it is quite a hindrance. The fact that we still have policies in the municipalities written in English. We still have documents in the municipality not only policies that are mainly in English not in any other language which ordinary people cannot access and read for themselves. I think that is a hindrance but we are aware of that, already in the past Council meeting we passed a policy, we are busy drafting a manual wherein we are going to say they would be those documents that we are going to translate. We are presenting that manual to Council to allocate resources for us to print those documents in the three languages as we are required by the law to do that.

**Question –don't you think that it will be proper if maybe you start with a language policy?**

Answer: I think it is important to have a language policy. But the problem is resources.

**Question – can't you see how the language impact negatively upon service delivery?**

Answer: I understand especially the importance of language in the community more especially in a community like this one that is still rich in its own language and its own culture, I think we need to take it further and communicate in the language. As a municipality we have Bi-laws, those bi-laws must be implemented by the community and if those bi-laws are not understood by the communities that they are intended for, in terms of the law somebody can raise the issue to say that I did not know.

**Question –do you think that there is relation between service delivery and language?**

Answer There is relationship between service delivery and language for an examples, that I had already given to say that if we are saying to this people for example we put a board that says No Dumping place in English, and there comes this old lady who cannot or any other person who cannot read English who would not understand *gore* there we do not want people to dump garbage they will continue dumping some refuse even though they are not supposed to do so following the notice that has been put, maybe until they are caught and fined. Who then should take accountability of this issue? The municipality in a way could be seen as having ignored communicating with its people in the language which could be understood by all or even ensuring that those who are unable to read in one way or the other get the message which is been conveyed to them.

**Question –and when you find the poor woman dumping then you would arrest her?**

Answer: Yes. As I have said and she will be fined, not even considering that the municipality is the one at fault.

**Question –is Imbizo conducted in English?**

Answer: That one I am not going to find out, I know for sure there is no any English communication unless if we have an official from the province who is going to present something, be it about health issues, there will be an interpreter who to Tshivenda when the health official who does not know Tshivenda speaks. If I am to give you all the records of all the communiqué all the council meetings and everything, you would hear *gore* these people's main language is Tshivenda, if its English it would be convenient for somebody like myself who cannot speak Tshivenda, but we don't allow that and I do not address communities I am an administrator Councillors only are responsible for addressing the communities.

## RESPONDENT 2

**Question- which means does the municipal use to communicate with you?**

Answer-hmmmm is communicating through civic... what do you call this the committee for the----- there is this committee that deals with aahhh...I forgot not Ward Committee, but there is this committee is a sort of mediator between the government and the community.

**Question- Are the traditional leaders involved?**

Answer –yes, but again beside that we have the Civic that is the mouth piece for the municipality. Sometimes you will find that the. Mmm... Traditional Leaders work hand in hand with, eeh..., mm... its own eeh mm Council, together with the Civic it becomes easy to communicate with the municipality but there are some other issues were the municipality decide on its own without informing the leader of that class.

**Question- how does the municipality call or communicate with the communities?**

Answer –Isn't it that they have power now, I am referring to the issue of maybe the allocation of sites, you will find that the municipality sometimes does not inform the leader of that place either the Chief or the Headman of that particular village and you will be surprised to find that there are some people who are starting to allocate sites when you are there, you are not even informed at your place but there are some instances, for instance where the community is supposed to gain, that is then that the Civic committee will come to the leader or to their Royal Council to the royal place to say we want to do something either we want to employ people because the community are going to gain and they want to do their thing in a democratic way they will come to the Chief and inform the Chief about what is going to take place. But there are some other issues where the Chief or the leader is not even informed for instead as I have said the demarcation of land, the allocation of sites you will be surprised to find that the place that you think it's unoccupied there are people who are now going to occupy that when you try to investigate you will never even find who gave them the sites. No one will be responsible to answer, they said this place has been demarcated already.

**Question- do those people have documents from the municipality indicating that they occupied the sites officially?**

Answer: yah of course



**Question -What form of documents?**

Answer: for instance the PTO (permission to occupy)

**Question- in which language are the PTO's written?**

Answer: In English even for those who cannot even read.

**Question –which language does the municipality mostly make use of either orally and/or written?**

Answer: You mean when it comes to allocation or...

**Question –No, when rendering services**

Answer – They would use African languages but when it comes to paperwork all of them are written in English.

**Question –don't you think that when they write the documents in English is limiting or discriminating against the majority of the people who speaking African languages?**

Answer- That is obvious because sometimes you are signing a contract which you don't even understand. You are just happy that I am occupying this space and you are happy for the space that you are given and you don't even mind what is mentioned or what is the rule or the condition of the site or the PTO.

**Question- It there any explanation done of the PTO's before you append your signature?**

Answer – they may explain but I think you know when it comes to sites, you know that people do not care of any other thing the conditions or whatever, theirs is to go there make their own fence build their own houses and stay. They don't read whether the conditions say if ever we happen to find mineral underground you are going to be removed they don't worry about that but because most of our people cannot even read they are just happy getting a site and they think getting a site that's the end of the world



**Question –Is Thulamela municipality doing anything to develop indigenous languages?**

Answer- yeah! mmm but not in the real sense of the word they may when there is an occasion because they want to demonstrate that they are trying to do something in order to empower languages.

**Question –occasions like what?**

Answer-if ever they organise something like traditional dances they will even propagate that we are trying to develop our languages. Whatever they may organise they may even organise functions to give prizes to students who worked well but you find that the language that is used there is not even in our area is Tshivenda but they will not use Tshivenda they will use English as if they are English speaking people there when there is not even a single person.

**Question – what is your view concerning this matter?**

Answer- well obviously Thulamela must try by all means to improve or to develop our language. For instance we are in a place where Tshivenda is an official language and Tshivenda is one of the 11 official languages in South Africa and formally it was disadvantaged so Thulamela must do something in order to improve it, for instance all documents either the document they are written in English but with one or three African languages that are spoken around here for instance we have Tshivenda we have Sepedi we have Xitsonga so these languages you will find that there are some people who speak those languages so I think there must be this option were a form is translated into one of those languages in order to make things easier for the people who are supposed to get that information or to be serviced.

**Question- does Thulamela has a language policy?**

Answer- No, I am not sure. If ever they have a language policy, they're still undermining it. They are not implementing it which is against the constitution of the country, but again at the end of the day one may say our constitution is like a white elephant, is just there to beautify the law of our country while people are not implementing it.

**Question- do you think communities are involved in deciding services which should be rendered to them?**

Answer- No, they don't decide. There are politicians who decide because if that was not the case you wouldn't find people fighting over a particular thing if ever they decided that thing together as a community. Because to be a politician doesn't take you out of the community, you are a member of the community and you are supposed to set an example to them. If ever we say there is service delivery, you must deliver services when you are staying with them, when you are amongst them other than to be like an immune person, separate from them, far away from them.

**Question- what do you think are the consequences of using English in documentation in Thulamela municipality?**

Answer- a lot of problems because some of the documents are legal binding. If a document, I think if you know law is very difficult because one word can change the whole statement. If they say whatever and thereof, that thereof may contradict the main statement and the imbedded statement may be saying something that is different, so if it's written in English it is a problem. Point number one, you don't even know the law because all the political documents are legal binding, meaning that law is also involved, so whenever you sign the document, you are signing something that you don't even understand, point no two, you're not even aware that this document is legally binding.

**Question- as a traditional leader, in which language does the municipality, communicate with you? Do you sometimes have the interaction with the municipality?**

Answer- it's through Tshivenda but when it comes for verbal interaction but not written documents all documents are written in English.

**Question-which documents do they give to you?**

Answer- for instance when there is a meeting it will be in English if ever there is any other information about the training of traditional leaders it will be written in English if ever there they are calling you for something it will be in English.

**Question –have you ever showed some dissatisfaction with regard to the municipality making use of English in those particular meetings?**

Answer –Yeah. I think you know our politicians once they are elected to be leaders they are no longer leaders they think they are demi gods because they think they are there to decide to take decisions in whatever they want to. They don't even listen to you they will do what they think is good for them they will do what is beneficiary for them and they will never want to listen to you because they don't even recognise traditional leaders, they are no longer respected, remember if you respect somebody you can't just get into his jurisdiction without informing that person. You must negotiate with the person, inform him/her you want the piece of land maybe you want to allocate stands which will be sold, each stand maybe selling for R5000.00 (five thousand rands) and out of which you are going to get ten percent. This is not done you will be surprised to find that the place its empty it's not even occupied but the next day you will find some people busy there given stands do you think if ever they don't respect you for that where else can they respect you.

**Question –what do you do as traditional leaders?**

Answer- well obviously in order to address that issue it must be taken to the court and the courts needs a lot of money where do you get money? They don't have any problem with money the government is paying for them whether is a mistake of an individual of such an individual the government is going to pay on his behalf or her behalf as long as that political party is now gaining status because of what they are doing because even this, eeh.... subjects they are no longer interested in traditional leaders because they know that they are powerless so they just follow the political leaders because they know whatever they need they will get it from them

**Question – do you think that all members of Thulamela municipality have the same access to information?**

Answer – I don't think so they don't have access to the information. I don't think so. Maybe very few of them and maybe those who have subjects who are working at Thulamela municipality who respect them, who naturally respect their leaders they are the ones who can take the information to those traditional leaders but those who are saying now is my chance I want to show this traditional leaders that I have got more power than him or her. Again, when it comes to accessing information there are those chosen few who can get that

information those chosen few who have the latitude to can bid and get the tenders, the friends of those who are in the offices.

**Question – don't you think the language used in the documents is exclusionary to the majority?**

Answer- one they don't have chance to access them. They don't know when is such a thing going to be conducted, two when they happen to get the document they cannot even read it three four they don't even have chance to can get it, how can you have chance while you cannot even fill the documents how can you get it maybe you are not even empowered with the information that is needed in the documents.

**Question- do you think the issue of black economic empowerment is working for the indigenous community around Thulamela?**

Answer –it is working for the chosen few. Very few people, those who are lucky, those who are...I don't know how can I put it but those very chosen few people are the ones who are benefiting sometimes they are fronted we cannot say they are lucky because you will find that the tender that you get is not actually your own tender is for one of the officials who's fronting you knowing that you are doing a job for him or for her so they are not benefiting anything, again you can check the poor remain poor in Thulamela and the rich become richer and richer day after a day.

**Question – do you know the public document that you are entitled to as a community member to have access to?**

Answer- hmmm is very difficult, unless you are eager there is something that you need from that particular information but it won't be easy it would be a tug of war to get it.

**Question-do you understand anything by IDP?**

Answer- IDP which stands for what? I know the document but the document is not written in African languages, it's in English, so which sometimes become difficult, as I have indicated any document from the government is not just a document is a legal binding document and meaning that the language that is used is not just English but also having some legal terms .

**Question – have you ever participated in the documents wherein public comments are required?**

Answer – yah sometimes you will find that the municipality will say just participate make some comments on this issue. They will do so if ever you have a problem at your area you don't have water, you have a problem with the school which is dilapidated and whatever.

**Question – how do they inform you?**

Answer – *eeem* it will be through a sort of communicate letter.

**Question –does it get to every member of the community?**

Answer – as I have indicated initially you may get the document through asking what about this? They would say if ever there is an event at your area where they would come with that document because especially if ever there is a senior person who is coming to address something at that particular area they will come with those forms and they will say in case you need something here is the form you can make some comments on, we will address this problem but you will just do it for the sake of formality.

**Question –do you know that as a member of the community you are entitled also to make some inputs in to the draft budget?**

Answer – of course yes?

**Question – how do you access that information?**

Answer- No. its either through the people who are in the committees who can inform you that the person is going to read a budget speech and you are supposed to have a share on it and that you can go and participate. But, remember when he reads the budget speech everything by then is finalised you will just listen to the speech even if there is a mistake, I think you know our politicians they will never listen to you because they have their own plans.

**Question –does it mean even if you can make an input into that budget it is not considered?**

Answer –they don't consider that it is not considered as long as you have said it they will say noted, remember when they come up with something, that thing is already finalised. There what they need is a rubber stamp, you rubber stamp it as if you have contributed a

lot and your contribution is going to be considered when they know that they have already finalised everything

**Question –ever since you were sworn as a traditional leader how many meetings did you attend with your municipality?**

Answer- I have never. I just attend as events or sometimes I will send someone on my behalf.

**Question –what is the requirements according to the constitution in terms of what the role of the municipality is with regards to African languages?**

Answer – One, the municipality must have African languages in their departments in each section whether is a legal department there must be an African language depending on the population of which language does the population speak, so meaning that if ever there are some documents that are supposed to be translated those people are trained they can translate the document in to their own language/s. You see, meaning that if ever we have, we know that in our village or in our municipality we have the Xitsonga speaking people we have the Sepedi speaking people or we have Tshivenda speaking people those people must have those three languages there, because it's not by co-incidence that those people find themselves under that particular municipality. When the demarcation was made they knew, that is the government knew that this section is occupied by BaPedi that section is occupied by VhaVenda and that section is occupied by VaTsonga, so it means that when the municipality accumulate everything it must take into cognisance that we have three African languages and we must have them in our offices if that means democracy.

**Question –do you think the municipality should have a language department?**

Answer – Answer – yah definitely that is exactly because they are going to do the same work but in different languages. If ever English is the source language of that particular community they will seat down as various languages and translate that document into their own languages.

**Question –what stops the municipality from adopting translation services to African languages?**

Answer –and again that is the supreme law of the country so whatever they do can be replicated underneath because we have it in our constitution and any person who

contravene the constitution must be called to order, even where English is the medium of communication you know the information that you have or the expressions that you want to make if you are supposed to make in English it dilutes what you want to say because if ever you use your own language you can express yourself better than in any other language. It reminds me in 2003 on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March when we were attending the translation meeting in Durban when by then Jacob Zuma was still a premier in Durban so he came and expressed himself in isiZulu. He was talking about a beautiful lady with white eyes that could hypnotise you. He said that in isiZulu. After uttering the statement, every person was laughing and you know they stood up and gave him a standing ovation and continued to say remember if I was using English I would not have been able to express myself as I did. He stated, I am saying to you your own mother tongue or your own language is better than any other language because that is the language that you use when you think that, the language that you use when you see and talk about something. You can express yourself in your language better than in English because in English you will think about what do you call that, is it a tree, what do you call that one is it a tank or a dam you see but in your own language you have the vocab and relevant words.

**Question –do you think English is quicker?**

Answer- No English cannot be quicker it depends upon words which are used. There is a word which is longer in English but which in our African languages is very short, in as much as there are words that are longer in our African languages which are very short in English. But, remember English is using a lot of words from other languages so maybe one can say I don't think is a matter of saying English is shorter, is a matter of us wanting to use English better than, eee.... African languages but I can express myself better than in any other language except in Tshivenda.

## Appendix I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



University of Venda

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviews schedule with Public Servants investigates how language impacts on service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The purpose of this interviews is to establish out whether the language used by the municipality plays a role in the public service for delivery of services. Responses or the information provided in this study will be treated as confidential as promised in the informal discussion that were held before the commencement of this research.

#### A. INTERVIEWS WITH THE PUBLIC SERVANTS

1. How many ethnic groups does Thulamela municipality render service to?
2. How do you rate your interaction with the communities as mandated by Batho Pele principles?

1.	Excellent
2.	Good
3.	Moderate
4.	Poor

3. Which methods does Thulamela use to communicate with the communities?



Word of mouth	Through Imbizos	Through Municipal structures	Through media
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4. In which language does the municipality mostly communicate with its communities?

Tshivenda	Xitsonga	English	All of the three
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5. In your opinion do you think language could be a barrier to effective service delivery?

6. One of Batho Pele principles requires citizens to be given full and accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive, what do you as a municipality do to ensure that the information distributed to your communities is also accessible by a person at grassroots level?

7. Do you know that Thulamela municipality has a language policy or not? Why?

YES	NO
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8. Do you think that there is a connection between language and service delivery?

9. What does the municipality do to promote the previously marginalised Indigenous languages as required by the Constitution?

10. Do you have a language desk or any desk that deals with issues that concern language; like translating documents to indigenous languages? If not how do you handle such issues?

11. When you engage with people who are predominantly Vhavenda speakers why do you still communicate with them in English?

12. Don't you think that there is a limitation of information to the communities if the written documents are in English and not in an indigenous language?



University of Venda

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviews schedule with Ward Councillors investigates how language impacts on service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The purpose of this interviews is to establish out whether the language used by the municipality plays a role in the public service for delivery of services. Responses or the information provided in this study will be treated as confidential as promised in the informal discussion that were held before the commencement of this research.

### B. INTERVIEWS WITH WARD COUNCILLORS

1. What is your role in Thulamela municipality?  
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2. How often do you engage members of your communities concerning service delivery?  
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3. How do you invite members of the communities to your meetings/gatherings?  
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4. In which language/s do you address your communities and why?
5. Do you think that the jargon use in communication with the communities is user-friendly such that it is understood by everybody, even by the person at grassroots.

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6. What do you do as Ward Councillors to promote the Indigenous African Languages spoken in the jurisdiction of Thulamela Municipality as required by the Constitution of South Africa?

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7. What challenges have you encountered in your interaction with the communities?

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8. How do you evaluate the services you have rendered unto your communities?

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9. In what way do you involve community members in your planning and also prioritising the services to be rendered?

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University of Venda

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviews schedule with Traditional Leaders investigates how language impacts on service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The purpose of this interviews is to establish out whether the language used by the municipality plays a role in the public service for delivery of services. Responses or the information provided in this study will be treated as confidential as promised in the informal discussion that were held before the commencement of this research.

### C. INTERVIEWS WITH THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS

1. What is the means through which Thulamela Municipality communicate with you and your community?
2. What is your role Traditional leaders in Thulamela to ensure that the interest of the people especially in terms of language are catered for?
3. What do you do as traditional leaders to preserve African languages and to instill pride to the speakers of those languages in Thulamela municipal area?

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4. How do you interact with Thulamela municipality in terms of issues related to service delivery; what language/s do you make use of.

5. In your opinion what are the challenges of using English in documentation in Thulamela Municipality to communicate with communities?

6. What role do you play in terms of deciding the services to be rendered to communities in your ward; services like, provision of water, constructions of roads, clinics, schools, etcetera.

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7. Do you know whether Thulamela Municipality has a language policy or not?

8. In which language/s does the municipality communicate with its communities?

9. Do you think there is a relationship/connection between service delivery and language?

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10. What is your understanding in terms of the requirement of the Constitution concerning the languages the municipalities should make use of?

11. In terms of the redress of the past injustices by the constitution, more specifically in terms with regard to language do you see Thulamela doing something to develop indigenous languages?