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THE ACCESSIBILITY TO ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF VHEMBE DISTRICT

by

SHUMANI ERIC MADIMA

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Department of Communication and Applied Language Studies

School of Human and Social Sciences

Supervisor: Dr NE Phaswana

Co-Supervisor: Prof EK Klu

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mother Kufamuni Johannah Madima, who has been a pillar of my strength ever since I started schooling up to now. Her support is immeasurable, and may The All Mighty God be with her for many more years to come.

DECLARATION

I, Shumani Eric Madima, declare that the dissertation for the Master of Arts degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my work in design and execution, and that all reference material contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature: ..... Date 2/08/2016

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ABSTRACT

Language is commonly described as the tool by which a person acquires knowledge and literacy. It stands at the centre of the many interdependent cognitive, affective and social factors that shape learning. The question surrounding the use of language of learning and teaching in schools becomes particularly important in multilingual societies – especially for, educators, learners, parents and policy-makers. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have been mandated by the South African Schools Act (SASA) to choose a language to serve as the medium of instruction in the South African public schools. Most of the SGBs prefer the use of English as the sole medium of instruction in public schools of Vhembe District. Since English is the preferred language of learning and teaching (LOLT), this study investigated its accessibility by learners in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District. The qualitative research method was used to collect and analyse data. This study project took place in six public primary schools in Vhembe District. The findings of the study revealed that English is not well accessed by learners in public primary schools of Vhembe District.

Key words: Accessibility, Language of Learning and Teaching, Language Policy, Medium of Instruction, School Governing Body

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	:	African National Congress
BCM	:	Black Consciousness Movement
CAPS	:	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CNE	:	Christian National Education
CPSA	:	Communist Party of South Africa, now known as South African Communist Party (SACP)
D.E.I.C	:	Dutch East Indian Company
DET	:	Department of Education and Training
EFA	:	Education for All
EMI	:	English Medium of Instruction
FAL	:	First Additional Language
GET	:	General Education and Training
HL	:	Home Language
KPEP	:	Kituwah Preservation & Education Program
L1	:	First Language
L2	:	Second Language
LANGTAG	:	Language Plan Task Group
LiEP	:	Language-in-Education Policy
LOLT	:	Language of Learning and Teaching
MoI	:	Medium of Instruction
MT	:	MotherTongue

MTBE	:	Mother Tongue-Based Education
MTE	:	Mother Tongue Education
MTP	:	Mother Tongue Policy
NLP	:	National Language Plan
NCS	:	National Curriculum Statement
NP	:	National Party
PanSALB	:	Pan South African Language Board
PED	:	Provincial Education Department
RSA	:	Republic of South Africa
SASA	:	South African Schools Act
SGB	:	School Governing Body
SSRC	:	Soweto Students Representative Council
SWAPO	:	South West African People's Organisation
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USSR	:	Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African language policy as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, deals with the subject of language in a variety of inter-related ways. For the purpose of this study, the focus will only be on the section dealing with the right of all to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public schools. The Constitution recognises the eleven official languages of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) as being; Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenḓa, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. Section 29(2) of the Bill of Rights, which forms part of the South African Constitution, is clear about the right of all to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public schools. However, exercising this right is hindered by the state's ability to provide for this right only in a context where 'that education is reasonable practicable'. The Bill of Rights also compels the state to consider all reasonable education alternatives to promote the exercising of the rights, including the establishment of single medium institutions. In effect, although the Constitution affords learners the right to learn in the language(s) of their choice, this right is tempered by the state's ability to implement it only where reasonably practical.

Vhembe District is dominantly a rural area in which major languages are Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Other languages are Sepedi, Afrikaans and English. Vhembe District is characterised with low proficiency in English by primary school learners. During the apartheid [era], schools did not have the right to choose the language of learning and teaching. It is only now in the history of language in education policy where schools have a democratic right to choose the language(s) that should serve as medium of

instruction. The Bill of Rights does, however, point to the principles that should be considered in order to ensure effective access to education.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Section 6 of the South African School Act of 1996, prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance in this Act is the power that the Act confers on School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to determine the language policy of a school. Although this policy leaves a room for other languages to dominate as languages of learning and teaching, the SGBs have been mandated to choose the languages for learning and teaching. Most primary schools in rural areas of Vhembe District offer education through the medium of English. Scholars, especially in African languages are in accord that through the efforts of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), African languages have received proper terminologies that could be fairly utilised at all academic levels. Alexander (1992) once pointed out that when adequate educational materials in the indigenous languages become available, the use of English as the medium of instruction will change.

The underlying principle of Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) of 1997 is to maintain the use of home language as the medium of instruction (especially in the early years of learning), while providing access to an additional language(s). During the apartheid [era], the Language-in-Education Policy in South Africa was fraught with tensions, contradictions and sensitivities, and underpinned by racial and linguistic discrimination (LiEP, 1997). A number of these discriminatory policies have affected either the access of the learners to the education system or their success within it. The Language-in-Education Policy of 1997 is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the democratic government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa (LiEP, 1997). This Language-in-Education Policy is meant to facilitate communication across

the barriers of colour, language and religion, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for other languages is encouraged (LiEP, 1997).

Therefore, schools in Vhembe District have a democratic right to choose a language of learning and teaching like other schools in South Africa. However, public primary schools in Vhembe District prefer English as the language of learning and teaching from grades four (4) until grade seven (7). Now that English is preferred as the language of learning and teaching in the public primary schools, this study seeks to investigate its accessibility in those schools. To use second or third language as a medium of instruction, impacts negatively on the scholastic performance of some learners. There is enough evidence supporting the fact that learners perform better at school if they are taught in a language they are familiar with (Cummins, 2001:3). According to Pinnock (2009: 8), the language to deliver the school curriculum pulls down the educational performance of many of those who do not use it at home, particularly those who do not have regular access to it outside school. This view is supported by Myburgh, Poggenpoel & van Rensburg (2004) who point out that where learners do not speak the language of instruction, authentic teaching and learning cannot take place.

South Africa is a prime example of a country facing the dilemma of how to most effectively equip the majority of its population with a second language, in this case English which is the medium of instruction in most public primary schools. Although South Africa has also adopted what is seen to be a very progressive Language-in-Education Policy which encourages schools to teach learners in their home language (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004) point out that most African schools have rejected the use of home languages in favor of maintaining English as the language of learning and teaching. An increasing body of research however suggests that where young African learners have little exposure of English in their daily lives outside the classroom, and where schools are poorly resourced, the early adoption of English as

the medium of instruction has been counterproductive, and has adversely affected the acquisition of English and the quality of education attainment (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004; Heugh, 1999).

The majority of South Africans speak an indigenous African language as their home language; just over 80 per cent of the population are Africans, of whom less than one per cent speak English as home language and a smaller percentage speak Afrikaans, a derivative of Dutch at home (Casale & Posel, 2010). However given the legacy of British colonial rule, as well as the language policy under apartheid government, English and Afrikaans have been the dominant languages of education. In 1996, the South African government adopted a progressive Constitution, giving official status to eleven languages (nine of which are African languages). However, English in particular remains the only dominant language of learning and teaching in public schools.

Section 6 of the South African School Act of 1996, prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance in this Act is the power it confers on School Governing Bodies to determine the language policy of a school. Although this policy leaves a room for other languages to dominate as languages of learning and teaching, the SGBs have been mandated to choose the languages for learning and teaching in their schools. As a result, most primary schools in rural areas of Vhembe District offer education through the medium of English.

Scholars, especially in African languages are in accord that through the efforts of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), African languages have received proper terminologies that could be fairly utilised at all academic levels. Alexander (1992) once mentions that when adequate educational materials in the indigenous languages become available, the use of English as the medium of instruction will change. However, this is something still to happen in South African education system.

Now that many public primary schools prefer the use of English as the language of learning and teaching, we need to look at its promotion and accessibility by learners in the public primary schools of Vhembe District. For the purpose of this study, 'accessibility' refers to the opportunity to being able to speak English as the language of learning and teaching at school and at home.

The underlying principle of Language-in-Education Policy of 1997 is to maintain the use of home language as the medium of instruction (especially in the early years of learning), while providing access to an additional language(s). During the apartheid [era], the Language-in-Education policy in South Africa was fraught with tensions, contradictions and sensitivities, and underpinned by racial and linguistic discrimination (LiEP, 1997). A number of these discriminatory policies have affected either the access of the learners to the education system or their success within it. The new Language-in-Education Policy is conceived as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa (LiEP, 1997).

The language history of South Africa dates as far back as the mid-seventeenth century when Jan Van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape, with his crew in 1652. Alexander (1989: 12-13) points out that:

> When the Europeans arrived at the Cape, they (Europeans) 'found the Khoikhoi phonetics impossible'. They could not pronounce their clicks sounds. In any case, the Dutch East Indian Company (D.E.I.C), ever mindful of the need to reduce costs, decreed that 'the natives should learn our language rather than we learning theirs'.

Alexander (1989) further mentions that the complementary development in the Western Cape was, of course, the rise of Afrikaans as a language of trade, education, negotiation and social intercourse between whites and non-whites. When the Khoikhoi later entered into the services of the settlers as child minders, stock herds and farm labourers i.e., together with the slaves, who performed the same kind of work, it also

became the language of production in white-brown relations (Alexander, 2000:13). Moodie (1980:40) cites that Afrikaans and Dutch co-existed such that by the end of 1795, most of the Khoikhoi and slaves were part of an Afrikaans-Dutch language community.

Alexander (2000:14) explains that half-hearted attempts were made to teach the 'Dutch Reformed religion' to the slaves and their children and to those Khoikhoi who were absorbed in the colony. These half-hearted missionary's attempt represented the first modern experiments in formal schooling in South Africa and were the first conscious intervention in the sphere of language policy in a multilingual South African society, more particularly in the very complex matter of the medium of instruction (Alexander, 2000:14). Dutch was taught to the slaves and their children in the earliest schools. Alexander further mentions that schools were subjected to numerous and prolonged school boycotts.

The British language policy was that English should be the language of public discourse among whites while Afrikaans (Dutch) was pushed back into the private and religious spheres. That is to say, generally speaking, English was the language of the courts, central and local government offices, the schools, newspapers, etc., while Afrikaans and Dutch were spoken mainly at home and in church respectively. Alexander (2000:16) further states that the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the struggles between Boer and Britain in the wake of the mineral discoveries gradually led to an attitude of rejection towards English as the language among the colonists of Dutch descent.

In 1910 when the Act of Union was signed, Article 137 of the Constitution accorded Dutch co-equal status with English as an official language of the Union. The Constitution did not even acknowledge the existence of African languages, let alone allocate them any status. Endless resistance to the constitution regarding Dutch by the

Afrikaans speakers, in 1925 led to an amendment to the Act of the Constitution and made Afrikaans an official language alongside English. The recognition and adoption of Afrikaans as an official language was eventuated by a series of struggles and remarkable efforts on the part of the Afrikaners. Cluver (1992) writes that the victory of Afrikaans over Dutch became an effective strategy for maintaining the ethnic identity of the Afrikaners, which formed the base of the political power of the National Party. However, the African languages were still not being recognised or awarded any official status.

When the National Party came into power in 1948, a policy of Christian National Education (CNE) was adopted. As a result, Afrikaans became a compulsory subject alongside English in white education up to Senior Certificate level (Grade 12 level as it is known today). The Nationalist government made sure that Afrikaans was developed and elevated to a position to compete with English. It became a language of instruction in the education of an Afrikaner child. In other words, Afrikaner children started to receive education through their mother tongue and unfortunately not being the case with a black child whose only first four years of schooling were conducted in mother tongue followed by either English or Afrikaans.

The introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was intended to promote Afrikaans (not African languages) while on the other hand reducing the influence of English in black schools by imposing the use of English and Afrikaans on the 50-50 basis. The promotion of vernacular (African languages) in black primary schools as media of learning and teaching beyond the fourth year of schooling and the use of Afrikaans were strongly opposed by blacks in South Africa. The promotion of African languages to serve as media of instruction was perceived by blacks as part of the Afrikaners' divide and rule policy. When South Africa became a Republic on 31 May 1961 under the National Party (NP) leadership, the Republic of South Africa's Act reinforced the equity between English and Afrikaans. During this period Afrikaans and

English were the languages of learning and teaching beyond the fourth year of schooling in black schools.

The majority of blacks preferred English over Afrikaans as their language of education. Afrikaans was regarded as the language of the oppressor whereas English was regarded as an international language and a language of liberation. It was after realising that the majority of Africans were denying Afrikaans to serve as a medium of instruction on par with English in black schools that the Minister of Bantu Education, M.C. Botha, issued a decree in 1974. This meant that half of the subjects in black secondary schools should be offered in Afrikaans and the other half in English. The introduction and enforcement of Afrikaans as a language of learning and teaching was resisted and opposed by students and school boards in which parents and other stakeholders were involved. The government refused to change this language policy stating that the introduction of Afrikaans should be perceived as an academic matter that did not need the sanction of the students nor the school boards but only the Minister of Bantu Education.

Students found it difficult learning some subjects in Afrikaans. In 16 June 1976, students protested against having to learn through Afrikaans in schools. The protest was intended to be peaceful and had been carefully planned by the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) Action Committee with the support of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Tsietsi Mashinini led students from Isaac Morrison High School to join up with others who walked from Naledi High School. Witnesses latter said about 15,000 and 20,000 students in school uniforms attended the march. The police, who were not aware of this gathering until students began their march, hastily rushed to form a line in front of them. They ordered the students to disperse. When they refused, police dogs were released and teargas was fired. Students responded by throwing stones and bottles at the police. Journalists late reported seeing a policeman drew his revolver, shot without warning into the crowd and other

policemen also started shooting. Many students were killed and the uprisings spread all over the country.

In July 1976, the apartheid government had to withdraw its policy, and black schools were given the right to choose the language they preferred as medium of learning and teaching. That was the first time in the history of South Africa that the people resisted the apartheid government's language policy. June 16 uprising was fascinating because instead of them [youth] fighting and losing their lives for the use of their mother tongue or African languages, they fought for the use of English as a language of learning and teaching after the first years of their primary schooling. Since then many public schools preferred English to be the language of learning and teaching.

The reason why blacks preferred English instead of African languages was that the use of the latter was perceived as one of the apartheid government's strategies to separate them on the basis of language (divide and rule policy), and to offer black students inferior education. This is supported by Cluver (1992:114) who indicates that generally the codification and elaboration of African languages was perceived by blacks as an attempt by the apartheid government to promote ethnicity and prevent unity. Since the government's intentions were no longer a secret to the South African Black masses, every step taken by the government, especially one that had an effect on Africans, was suspiciously interrogated and scrutinised.

Like the question of colour, the language question is one that confronts South Africans in every sphere of life in South Africa. As it was during apartheid, it is not a question that can be ignored or avoided under any circumstances. However, Alexander (1989:29) puts it that,

> ...few if any of the politicians had given serious thought to the claims and rights of the African languages spoken in South Africa, beyond the issue of the medium of instruction in primary schools.

Despite the fact that English is preferred as a language of learning and teaching in schools, little was done outside the schools and the churches to spread the knowledge of English. As Alexander (1989) points out that only the thin layer of mission-educated, middle-class teachers, preachers, some nurses and few professionals gained proficiency in English. The working class continued to speak in their many different home languages. This was nothing comparable with the kind of systematic Afrikaans literacy campaigns undertaken by the Afrikaner nationalist movement (Alexander, 2000:30-31).

Only in the ranks of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and associated organisations were very conscious attempt was made to spread English among black working class. Alexander (2000) mentions that attempts were made by Edward Roux and other communists to use night-school infrastructure set-up by the CPSA in order to promote the learning of English and the post-literacy reading circles among African workers in particular. English continued to be favoured by black South Africans in spite of the apartheid government's language in education policy aimed at promoting Afrikaans. For example, in 1982 the Department of Education and Training (DET), made it clear that when it comes to the choice of the medium of learning and teaching, the concerned parties could choose among the vernacular and the medium of instruction to be followed by either English or Afrikaans after, for example, four years of primary education (Maartens, 1989). As a result, English was chosen in black schools as a language of learning and teaching, the status core still remains today.

The present language policy of South Africa, enshrined in the language Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, was born out of the negotiations between the Nationalist Party and the African National Congress (ANC). During these negotiations, the NP preferred a shift from segregation to assimilation in the language policy. The primary aim of the NP was to protect the position of Afrikaans as an official language and the

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language of education in some schools. It is this reason that the NP fought for the retention of both Afrikaans and English, as well as all other African languages, the latter were to be accorded a lower status. The ANC's position in this matter was that of multilingualism. The ANC's language policy favoured the elevation of the nine major African languages spoken in the country to the position of English and Afrikaans. In order to achieve this goal, the government operating through the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, established the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG). The LANGTAG Report of 1996 may therefore be considered a document that lays out a framework upon which the National Language Plan (NLP) can be based.

However, some scholars like Heugh (1995) claims that the ANC has taken a *laissez-faire* position on the question of language. Heugh (1995) argues that there is a policy decision but no formulation of strategies for implementing that decision. Indeed, despite its new democratic language policy, South Africa is fast moving in the direction of becoming a monolingual English country. English remain the preferred language of learning and teaching in South African schools, other than a few cases where Afrikaans is utilized for this purpose.

Section 6 of the South African School Act of 1996, prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance in this Act is the power that the Act confers on SGBs to determine the language policy of a school. Although this policy leaves a room for other languages to dominate as the language of learning and teaching, the SGBs have been mandated to choose the languages of learning and teaching. The underlying principle of Language-in-Education Policy of 1997 is to maintain the use of home language as the medium of instruction (especially in the early years of learning), while providing access to an additional language(s). A number of these discriminatory policies of education during apartheid government have affected either the access of the learners to the education system or

their success within it. The new LiEP is conceived as an integral and necessary aspect of the ANC government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and religion, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for other languages is encouraged. According to Ahmed (2013), medium of instruction is the language that is used inside the classroom for instruction by the teacher. It is not necessary that the official language(s) of the country is/are used as the medium of instruction.

In Zimbabwe, after independence, the language policy regarded English as the official language to be used in formal settings, including education. The indigenous languages like Shona and Ndebele were national languages to be used in informal settings. The government amended its policy in 1987 and 1999 in order to use mother tongue in teaching and learning especially in the early years of education (Kudzai, Rwodzi & Mhlanga, 2013). According to the amended Education Act, indigenous languages such as Tonga, Venda, Kalanga and Shangaan together with Shona and Ndebele were to be used as medium of instruction up to grade three levels in those areas where they are commonly spoken (Kudzai et al. 2013). From grade four pupils were to learn either Shona or Ndedele as subjects while English became the medium of instruction in other subjects. According to Kudzai et al. (2013), other languages such as Barwe, Khoisan and Ndau were completely ignored. A transitional programme in which English, the language of learning and teaching for later grades was to be introduced after pupils have received instruction in their mother tongue to grade seven. Kudzai et al. (2013) further points out that the amended policy remained what one might call 'paper policy' because it has never been fully implemented due to several challenges. The new Constitution of Zimbabwe of 2013 gives all seventeen languages of Zimbabwe official status with the recommendation that they will be given full recognition in education. Thondhlana (2002) cited in Kudzai et al. (2013) addresses the question of which language(s) to use for teaching and learning in Zimbabwe. Thondhlana advocates for the use of mother tongue in primary education. This suggestion was incorporated in

the 2006 amended Education Act even though examinations are still written in English. According to Kudzai et al. (2013), one of the reasons of the failure to the implementation of the amended Education Act is the problem of negative attitudes of parents and pupils. It has been found that parents and pupils preferred English as the language of instruction from infant level, despite challenges faced in accessing the curriculum through the use of the second language. Kudzai et al. (2013), mention that this is not the problem only facing Zimbabwe as Mawasha (1996:23) also observes that black people in South Africa prefer English as a language of learning and teaching even from the earliest years of primary schooling.

Namibia received its independence from the apartheid South African government in 1990. During apartheid government, Afrikaans was the language of education, though English was used in few schools. Oshiwambo, the indigenous language spoken by more than a third to a half of the population, was used in the first four years of elementary school. Afrikaans which was the first language of the majority of whites was the language that blacks had to know if they hoped to get education. The South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), the popular movement to drive South Africa out of Namibia, has developed detailed plans for an independent Namibia. SWAPO's language policy for independent Namibia declares that English, not Afrikaans, will be the official national language (Kennedy, 1989 cited in Tollefson, 1996). For those who can speak English and Afrikaans, education is the key to the future. To those who cannot speak the language of learning and teaching, they will never succeed in education system (Tollefson, 1996). Language learning problem makes it highly unlikely that they will ever have the language competence they need to gain access to school, to jobs in the state bureaucracy, or to the political system (Tollefson, 1996). According to Tollefson (1996:4), the South African language and educational policies have made it difficult for Oshiwambo, Khoi-san or any other indigenous language to serve as the national language of Namibia. The use of Afrikaans which is not spoken anywhere outside South Africa was seen as a means of

isolating the Namibians from the rest of the world; hence they preferred English (Tollefson, 1996). These policies mean that Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and other indigenous languages would not be effective tools for communication in a united and independent Namibia (Tollefson, 1996).

In response to this situation, blacks have increasingly sought to learn English, which in recent years has come to be seen as the language of liberation (Duggal, 1981 cited in Tollefson, 1996). However, the opportunities to learn English are severely limited as it is taught in only few schools. In those few schools, the emphasis on teaching English is on grammar and as a result there is little use of it in daily communication (Tollefson, 1996). The disadvantage of SWAPO's language policy is that only those few Namibians who speak English will be able to serve in the government and other official positions. As a result, English speakers will have significant advantages in education and employment. But according to Tollefson (1996), given the impact of apartheid, SWAPO's decision to adopt English is probably the best policy for reducing inequality based on languages. Like in the South African situation, English will equally disadvantage much of the population.

Kenya has forty two spoken languages (including Kiswahili and English) within its borders. English came to Kenya through British colonialism, while Kiswahili initially spread throughout the country as a language from the coast (Ogechi, 2009). The official language in education policy in Kenya prescribes that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in rural areas for the first three years of learning, whereas either Kiswahili or English is used in the urban schools. According to Ogechi (2009:144), no clear policy exists for peri-urban schools, although they usually use Kiswahili to introduce education. From grade 4 onwards, Kiswahili is taught as a subject whereas English becomes the medium of instruction. At the end of English primary course, all learners are expected to have a sufficient command of English in spoken and written forms to enable them to communicate fluently, follow subject

courses and textbooks, and read for pleasure and information (Kenyan Institute of Education, 2002:3 cited in Ogechi, 2009:144).

According to Ogechi (2009), it is worth noting that although English is taught in classrooms from Grade 4, it is doubtful whether the learners communicate in English when they interact among themselves on the playground and/or in class. Bamgbose (2000) cited in Ogechi (2009:145) calls for more use of indigenous languages in primary education citing successful experiments in his native Nigeria. Prah (2003) contends that the quality of education offered in most of Africa is highly compromised and that graduates have difficulties finding jobs. He cites the language of instruction as the main cause, as most African learners are taught in foreign languages. According to Prah (2003:23), cited in Ogechi (2013:145), all African learners, from primary to tertiary level, should be educated in local languages, home languages, mother tongues.

In Mozambique, the official language, Portuguese, is spoken as a mother tongue by less than two per cent of the population (Hyltenstam & Stroud, 1999). It is estimated that approximately twenty five per cent of the population speak Portuguese as a second language the use of Portuguese as *lingua franca* is more in urban areas. Indigenous Bantu languages of Mozambican are about twenty in number. According to Hyltenstam & Stroud (1999), the largest of these languages are distributed geographically in such a way that Makua, which accounts for more than three million speakers, is the largest language of the Northern part of the country (spoken in Nampula, Cabo, Delgado, Niassa and Zambezia), Sena and Shona comprise approximately three million speakers in the middle regions (Sofala, Manica, Zambezia Tete and Inhambane), Shangaana and Ronga with approximately 1 million and 500 000 speakers respectively in the Gaza and Maputo provinces. All these languages have a developed and codified written form. Since Bantu languages are used as *lingua francas*, it implies that these languages are also learnt as second languages by portion

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of the (migrant) urban population (Kathupa, 1994) cited in Hyltenstam & Stroud (1999). Around 70 per cent of the population are speakers of more than one Bantu language, and approximately 25 per cent are bilingual speakers of Portuguese and at least one Bantu language, thus giving rise to an impressive proportion of bilingual speakers (Kathupa, 1994 cited in Hyltenstam & Stroud, 1999). Portuguese is taught with little regard of the fact that it is a second language to the majority of the learners, although accommodation is made for non-native speakers in first grade and by necessity at later grade levels (Hyltenstam & Stroud, 1999). Furthermore, Hyltenstam & Stroud (1999) point out that it has been shown that in many countries that such a language education situation contributes to problems for children's mastery of those language proficiency levels that are necessary for formal learning.

In Ethiopia, there are significant large Ethiopian languages (Promina, Amharic and Tigrinya) as well as smaller languages. For historical reasons, Amharic plays a role as it sometimes contested as the functional *lingua franca* of the country (Heugh, Benson, Boggle & Yamane, 2007). English is highly prized as a language which may offer access to higher education and international opportunities; however, it is foreign to most, and is known and used only by a small minority of the educated economic and/or political elite. According to Heugh et al. (2007), the current language in education policy, which has been in place since 1994, accords high practical status to the mother tongue as medium of instruction, particularly at the primary level; transition to English as grades five, seven and nine depending upon the region; and the learning of Amharic as a subject by speakers of languages other than Amharic. The policy for most students is trilingual (also known as multilingual) based on the mother tongue, Amharic as a national language, and English as an international language (Heugh et al. 2007).

Hong Kong has an almost unique political complexion and is a country where the medium of instruction has changed and changed again (Dearden, 2014). The policy

which was announced in 1997, requires that most schools should adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction. Those schools which wish to make English as medium of instruction must adopt Hong Kong's Department of Education's policy which requires that their teachers and students are able to teach and learn effectively in English (Evans, 2002). In early 1998, the Department of Education announced that only one hundred and fourteen schools in the territory would be permitted to teach in English, while the reminder (around 300) would be required to use Chinese as the medium of instruction. The announcement of the new language policy in September 1997 and the publication later of list of schools with permission to teach English caused a storm of controversy. As expected the most vocal opponent of the policy has been parents of students whose schools will be forced to adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction. Hong Kong's parents sent their children to English medium schools, because those schools had been perceived to provide best conditions to acquire high levels of English proficiency. English was regarded as a language of success in colonial Hong Kong. Given that a successful English medium education continues to be regarded as a prerequisite for socio-economic advancement in post-colonial Hong Kong, it is understandable that many parents and students feel that the creation of an 'elite' English medium stream and an apparently 'inferior' Chinese-medium stream is discriminatory and socially divisive.

In India, the medium of instruction varies among English, Hindi, and the respective states official languages. Private schools usually prefer English, while public (primary/secondary) schools tend to go with Hindi language. Independent English medium schools are gaining popularity throughout India as urban upper middle class Indians who feel that English is the global language send their children to these schools. Increasingly, many poor families too are sending their children to English medium schools due to the poor quality of education in Government run vernacular medium schools'. However, the medium of instruction in colleges and universities is always either English or a regional language. With government funds and resources,

materials have been developed for primary schools in eight minority languages in Andhra Pradesh and ten in Orissa. An integrated theme-based approach was introduced for grades one to two. Materials alphabet charts, piers, big books for class and group reading, small books for individual and paired reading, the majority of which were locally authored. Second language learning curriculum and mother tongue and bilingual textbooks for subject areas were produced during the later primary years. Some schools in the programme were chosen for specific research purposes and additional materials were developed with a focus on reading both at home and at school, and more engagement from the community. The programme has been a real success. Children have been able to understand the content and connect classroom knowledge with their own experience.

China did not have to depend on English as the medium of instruction to launch and develop its modern technological industry. However, it made English compulsory in primary schools from grade 3 in 2001, while big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai have already introduced English at grade one. According to Graddol's research, estimated 176.7 million Chinese were studying English in 2005 within the formal education sector (Asia Times, 01 July 2009).

In Malaysia, the medium of instruction in most schools is Malay. However, there are also Chinese and Indian schools serving the respective communities which allowed Mandarin and Tamil respectively as medium of instruction, though Malay is still required to be taught as a subject. English medium schools were present during the colonial period, though they were slowly phased out after independence. Nevertheless, English continues to be a compulsory subject in all Malaysian schools. Malay has been the medium of instruction for more than 20 years and has not faced any problem that necessitate a change in the language policy, especially regarding the use of Malay as the language for imparting knowledge and instruction (Gill, 2004 cited in Putel, 2012:14). During the period of education where the medium of instruction is Malay,

there were developments in many knowledge fields including medicine, aerospace, science and technology. The professors, lecturers and teachers gave their lectures in the Malay language effectively in science and mathematics subjects (Puteh, 2012). The medium of instruction in Malay is judged to be successful because it has produced graduates and professionals that help to develop the country. Malay scholars had created a lot of terms in biology especially for animals and trees (Putel, 2012:15). However, some Malays do not see the need to change the national education policy but the Ministry of Education reintroduced English as a medium of instruction to teach Mathematics and Science in all schools, colleges and universities. The stress on English medium shows that British colonial belief that language can change one's pattern of the output and to see things differently (Barhour, 2000 cited in Puteh, 2012:15). British wanted many Malayan people to study in the English medium because this would help them to administer Malaysia pre-independence and post-independence (Puteh, 2012). This objective was fruitful because after 53 years of independence, many of the English educated still believe learning English as the best way to face the global world.

In Russia from the beginning of 2000 the dynamics of language in education began to be determined by preparations for a new educational reform (Zamyati, 2012). Since the Soviet education reform of 1958, parents were to choose their children's language of instruction and even decided whether they be taught their native language at all (Kreindler, 1989:49 cited in Zamyati, 2012:19). According to Zamyati (2012), parents were force to choose Russian for their children, rather than their native language, because it was seen as the language of opportunity. in the 1970s many languages in Russia beginning with the languages of the people of the Caucasus stopped functioning as a medium of instruction; the amount of teaching of many languages, especially the Finno-Urgic languages decreased; the native language of instruction almost disappeared in urban areas (Zamyati, 2012). In the 1990s, which saw the beginning of the decentralization education reform, the dynamics of language teaching were determined by the implementation of a language revival policy for decade and

even longer, notably in the republics. The number of languages taught and the amount of language teaching increased, due to the implementation of a decade long language revival policy. By the end of 2000, thirty nine languages were media of instruction while 50 languages were taught as a separate subject (State Council Report, 2011:11 cited in Zamyati, 2012:20).

In Slovakia, education in minority languages has to be provided in municipalities where Slovak citizens speaking respective languages constitute more than twenty per cent of the population. In higher, technical and vocational education medium of instruction is Hungarian. In a substantial part of technical and vocational education, the medium of instruction is Ruthenia and Ukrainian and a substantial part of pre-school education for those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient, medium of instruction is in Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Germany, Polish and Roma.

In Finland, Finnish is the language most used in schools, but Swedish, which is also an official national language, is used in a number of schools along the coast and Abo Akademi. The right to education in Swedish is based in the Constitution. There are few schools where education is given to some extent in Sami in the South. Swedish is a mandatory school subject for Finnish speaking pupils in the last three years of primary education (grades seven to nine). This so-called domestic language is also mandatory in high schools, and vocational universities.

In Scotland, 'attempts were made by legislation, in the later medieval and early modern period, to establish English at first among the aristocracy and increasingly amongst all ranks by the education acts and parish schools. In 1607 nine Gaelic chieftains were abducted and forced to sign the Statutes of Ioan, which would seem to have been designed specially to Anglicize leaders and institutions of Gaelic society, in order to bring it under control of central government. Among the items listed in this agreement was the 'planting of the gospel among these rude, barbarous, and uncivil people" by

protestant churches; the outlawing of bards who were traditionally on circuit between the houses of noblemen; the requirement that all men send their heirs to be educated in Lowland schools where they would be taught to speak, read and write English. Since 1918 education acts have provided for the teaching Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas, but development was very slow until Gaelic became an initial teaching medium in Gaelic areas of Inverness-shire and the Ross-shire from 1958. In 1975 the newly created Western Isles education authority introduced bilingual primary education shortly followed by Highland Region in Skye. Gaelic medium primary education commenced with two schools in 1985, growing to 42 by 1994. In secondary education, Gaelic has long been taught as a subject often through the medium of English, even to native speakers. A move towards bilingual secondary education in the Western Isles was frustrated by the change of government in 1979. Gaelic medium secondary education has developed less satisfactorily. Gaelic medium streams followed on from primary in Glasgow and Inverness and there has been some experimentation in the Western Isles, but the sector is hampered by acute teacher shortage, and an inspectorate report of 1994 regards Gaelic medium secondary education as divisive and inappropriate. The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005 is the first piece of legislation to give formal recognition to the Gaelic language in Scotland. It recognizes Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding "equal respect" with English. The Minister of Education, who has ministerial responsibility for Gaelic, said that that was a momentous day for Gaelic as they opened a new chapter in the history of the language.

Australia was inhabited by indigenous Australians, who spoke languages grouped into roughly two hundred and fifty language groups. Australia is a developed country and one of the wealthiest in the world, with the world's twelfth largest economy. In Australia, most schools use English as the language of learning and teaching. However, in the State of Victoria (known for its many Greek and Italian settlers) there

are a number of schools that teach in Greek and Italian. A number of schools also teach in French, Irish, Chinese, Arabic and Japanese.

In Canada, education is a provincial matter under the Canadian constitution. Almost all public schools use either English or French as the medium of instruction. French is standard in the province of Quebec (though a few cities also offer English-language schools), and along with English, in New Brunswick. The official language not used as the primary medium of instruction is taught as a mandatory subject in primary school, and becomes optional for most secondary school students. Many public and private school systems in English jurisdictions also offer French immersion. In parts of Canada such as the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, some aboriginal languages, such as Inuinnaqtun and Tijchǫ, are also used in local school systems. Heritage languages (immigrant or diaspora languages) are also common across Canada in public and private schools. French outside of Quebec and all other minority languages have faced laws against them at one time or another. English only education laws were gradually rolled out across Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth century, culminating in the Manitba Schools Question 1896 and Regulation 17 in Ontario in 1912, which both attached French and other European minority language, and the Indian residential schools system which attacked Aboriginal languages. These policies were gradually abolished in the wake of Canada's adoption of official bilingualism (French/English) in 1969, and the multiculturalism in 1971, but English remains the predominant language of education outside of Quebec and New Brunswick.

In American, English is used, but in some schools, Spanish, French (in Louisiana), Hawaiian (in Hawaii) and local Native American/ American Indian languages are used as well. The Cherokee Nation instigated a ten year language preservation plan that involved growing new fluent speakers of the Cherokee language from childhood on up through school immersion programs as well as a collaborative community effort to continue to use the language at home. This plan was part of an ambitious goal that in

fifty years, eighty per cent or more of the Cherokee people will be fluent in the language. The Cherokee Preservation Foundation has invested $3 million into opening schools, training teachers, and developing curricula for language education, as well as initiating community gatherings where the language can be actively used. Formed in 2006, the Kituwah Preservation & Education Program (KPEP) on the Qualla Boundary focuses on language immersion programs for children from birth to fifth grade, developing cultural resources for the general public and community language programs to foster the Cherokee language among adults. There is also a Cherokee language immersion school in Tahlequah, Oklahoma that educates students from pre-school through eighth grade.

The public primary schools in Vhembe District have a democratic right to choose the language of learning and teaching like the rest of other public schools in South Africa. However, public primary schools in Vhembe District prefer English as the language of learning and teaching from grades four until grade seven in public primary schools. Now that English is preferred as the language of learning and teaching in public primary schools of Vhembe District, this study investigated the accessibility to English by learners in those schools.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although language research has unearthed the importance of multilingual competence, classroom practices, remain monolingual (where English is the only medium of instruction) in most public primary schools (The Status of LOLT in South African Schools, 2010). This is happening despite the fact that the SGBs are empowered by the provision of the National Education Act (Act 27 of 1997) and the South African School Act of 1996, to determine the language(s) to be used as medium (media) of instruction in their respective schools. English is chosen as the only medium of

instruction across the curricula, in most, if not all non-Afrikaans medium schools in South Africa.

Despite the fact that English is the language of learning and teaching in primary schools in rural areas of Vhembe District, the question of its accessibility has never been raised. English is, in most cases, in the country, spoken as the second language, or to a certain extent, third language; yet it is favoured over all the other official languages of South Africa as the language of learning and teaching. The main problem that this study intends to address is how accessible English is, as it is the language which is dominantly used as a medium of instruction in the rural areas of Vhembe District.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study project is to investigate the accessibility to English as a language of learning and teaching in selected public primary school of Vhembe District.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine how schools make English accessible to learners as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District.
- To explore how parents make English accessible to learners as the language of learning and teaching at their homes and communities in Vhembe District.
- To asses language policy documents with a view to find out how issues relating to Medium of Instruction (MoI) are addressed and perceived.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study shall attempt to answer the following research questions:

- How do schools make English accessible to learners in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District?
- How do parents make English accessible to learners as the language of learning and teaching at their homes and communities in Vhembe District?
- How is MoI question addressed by language policy documents?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since English has been the preferred language of learning and teaching in public primary schools, the question of its accessibility, especially in Vhembe District, has never been raised. This study is significant because it will give an insight at how selected public primary schools access English as the language of learning and teaching in Vhembe District. The study will benefit learners, parents, educators and the Department of Basic Education by obtaining and making available necessary information relating to accessing English as the language of learning and teaching by primary school learners in Vhembe District.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in selected primary schools in three local municipalities of Vhembe District, namely; Musina, Makhado and Thulamela. Due to time and resources constraints, the researcher was not able to visit all the public primary schools in Vhembe District, but selected two (2) schools from each of three (3) local municipalities. In the same vein, the researcher was purposefully sample from each school, and only two educators and two parents were sampled. A complete coverage of the total population is seldom possible, and all members cannot be possibly reached (de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2010: 224). However, the researcher is of the

opinion that the sampled size gave sufficient information through the use of the qualitative research method.

1.9 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Below are some of the terms used in this study, as well as their definitions:

1.9.1 Accessibility

It refers to being able to use something. For the purpose of this study it refers to being able to speak English at school and at home. Accessibility can be viewed as the ability to use something and benefit from some system or entity. In this study the concept focuses on enabling learners to access English as the language of instruction anywhere. Accessibility is strongly related to a process which is creating products that are usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating within the widest possible range of situations. This is about making things accessible to all people.

1.9.2 Additive bilingualism

Additive bilingualism refers to a situation where users of a particular language also begin to use another language. It is the sociolinguistic circumstances that occur when another language is implemented in the region while not intimidating the presence or status of the indigenous language. For instance, the majority of English speakers of Canada choose to educate themselves on the French language because many employment opportunities in their region demand that person qualified for the position speak both languages. Still, these persons go on utilizing English as their primary language.

1.9.3 African languages

It is a term used as a geographic rather than linguistic classification of languages spoken on the African continent. African languages may be defined as languages spoken by black South Africans. They are also referred to, as indigenous languages because they are spoken by the people who are the original inhabitants of South Africa.

1.9.4 Bilingualism

It means equal ability to communicate in two languages, especially with equal or nearly equal fluency. For others, it simply means the ability to communicate in two languages with great skills.

1.9.5 Home language

It means the language first acquired by children through immersion at home; the language in which an individual thinks. A home language is the language or the variety of a language that is most commonly spoken by members of a family for everyday interactions at home. It is sometimes called the family language.

1.9.6 Language development

It means a process starting early in human life. Infants start without language, yet by ten months of age, babies can distinguish speech sounds and engage in babbling. Some research has shown that the earliest learning begins in the mother's womb when the foetus starts to recognise the sounds and speech pattern of its mother's voice. According to a general principle of language development, new form then take over old functions, so that learners learn words to express the same communicative functions which they had already expressed by preverbal means.

1.9.7 Language of learning and teaching

The language of learning and teaching is the language in which learning and teaching take place. Sometimes the language of learning and teaching is referred to as the medium of instruction. The language chosen by a school's governing body in consultation with parents to be used as the medium of instruction in a particular school. It is the language teachers use to instruct and assess. A medium of instruction is the language used by a teacher to teacher learner. Simply put, it is a means of conveying information to students. Such a medium could be the official language in the country or it could be native mother tongue of the learners.

1.9.8 Language policy

It refers to the decisions taken by language planners concerning the teaching and use of language, and their careful formulation by an authority which has the power to do so. Language policy is what a government does either officially through legislation, or policy to determine how language are used, cultivate language skills needed to meet national priorities or establish the rights of individuals or groups to use and maintain languages.

1.9.9 Mother tongue education

It refers to the use of learner's mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2003:15) describes the term mother tongue as 'the language(s) that one has learnt first; the language(s) one identifies with; the language(s) one knows best and the language(s) one uses most'.

1.9.10 Multilingualism

It is the ability to speak or use different languages. Prah (2009:259) does qualify multilingualism by saying that 'the richness in command over languages is however mainly oral, with little or hardy any bases in literacy. This weakness means that the

foundations of multilingualism in Africa are tenuous. It is a multilingualism which suffers from all the debilities of oral as opposed to literacy'. South Africa is a multilingual country as this is enshrined in the Constitution which recognises eleven (11) official languages.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the study. This chapter outlines the background, statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, methodology, limitations and delimitations, significance of the study and definitions of terms.

Chapter 2

This chapter presents various literatures that relates to this particular study. The medium of instruction issues, mother tongue based education, the South Africa's Department of Education language policy, the status of the language of learning and teaching in the South African public schools and conclusions are also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on the research design and research methodology used to obtain data in the study. Aspects like the research design that sampling, population, data collection procedures, interview process, validity, reliability and data analysis were outlined.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents analysis of data collected from respondents in the study.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents the summary, recommendations and conclusion of this research study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the main aim of the research study is to investigate the accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District, literature on the medium of instruction issues, mother tongue-based education, South Africa's Department of Basic Education Language Policy, the Language-in-Education Policy in South Africa and the status of the language of learning and teaching in South African Public Schools have been reviewed.

2.1 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION ISSUES

Most South African public primary schools offer mother tongue instruction in the first three grades of schooling with transition to English as the language of instruction from the fourth grade onwards. Ex-colonial languages are still used as the media of instruction in education in African countries. However, out of forty five African countries, thirty seven of those who adopted second language medium of instruction policies are reported to be reconsidering the use of the first language as medium of instruction. It is now twenty one years after the democratic government came into power in South Africa, but the African languages are not afforded the role of media of instruction in schools. It can be said that a body like PanSALB, which is charged with protecting and promoting people's linguistic rights, is doing its best. However, Langa (2014) is of the opinion that the indigenous languages of South Africa might be experiencing different degrees of marginalisation, with some possible getting better deal, but the stubborn fact is that they are all being marginalised. Although some black people may find this unacceptable, Langa (2014) believes that blacks are the architects of the destruction of their African languages.

Heugh & Siegruhn (1995) observe that education theory relating to minority groups in South Africa advocates additive bilingualism as the only feasible model of language in education. If empowerment is a primary goal, an African language should therefore be included with English as medium of instruction and must therefore enjoy equal status with English (Heugh, 1987:217). Luckett (1995) suggest that a new language plan for schools be based on the principle of "National Additive Bilingualism" in which:

- all South African children would have access to a designated regional language;
- all children would receive instruction in their first language; and
- no child would be denied access to an educational institution on the grounds of race or language.

Mclean (1994:10) holds the view that the status of African languages can be addressed through teaching methodologies which:

> ...encourage a different rather than deficit view on devalued varieties, through the elaboration of the pedagogical and codified literacy resources of African languages, and through a rise in the socio-economic status of African languages speakers.

English is preferred as the medium of instruction because it is well developed, and richer in materials far more than African languages. As Harlech-Jones (1987) points out the second language is adhered to as a medium of instruction because it is much richer and has more written materials available than the first language. There are possibilities of corpus development in South Africa, although Ohly (1993) maintains that this will be very slow. Ohly (1993) further says, if corpus development is achieved, then it will be easier to use African languages as media of instruction, for there will be availability of scientific terminologies. To show that corpus development is Africa is slow, Ohly (1993:21) points out that:

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> ... if we take other Third World countries into consideration, the Malaysian example proves that modernization efforts can be very successful and realized in short time. Already in 1982 more than 250 000 new scientific Malaysian terms, to be used at University level, were introduced. Meanwhile even countries with high language awareness like Nigeria or Tanzania, 30 years after independence, are still unable to replace English in some secondary subjects by an African language.

In South Africa, English is a language of high functions as Carey (1993:30) points out that English is used in politics, in the economy and as a language of academic power. Carey (1993:34) further characterises educational settings in the townships and the homelands in South Africa, by saying that:

> ... for many students, due to their new literacy home situation and the shortage of teachers, receiving their entire schooling in English will be insufficient to developing their literacy to a level sufficient for post-secondary schooling unless self-directed enrichment is provided.

The use of foreign languages as media of instruction affects the status of the so-called local or indigenous languages. Cluver (1992:34) observes that in Peru, the use of Spanish has changed the status of the indigenous Quechua to that of a lower language and a vehicle of oppression. Cluver (1992:34) further mentions that the introduction of a language of wider communication as a medium of instruction lowers the status of the indigenous languages. On the other hand, Eastman (1992:105) notes that the introduction of Mother Tongue Policy (MTP) in South Africa blocked access to science and technology, politics and economy as well as jobs to those who were poor and failed to go beyond primary education.

Eastman (1992:105) shows that despite the fact that African languages have produced a sizeable body of literature, Afrikaans and English are the languages of science and technology at the present time in South Africa. Although one would question the view that Afrikaans is an indigenous language, Eastman (1992:105) regards it as an indigenous language that has fully acquired and attained university status. Alexander (1992) believes that, African languages may be developed to the point that they

become media of education as it happened with Afrikaans. Alexander cites the economy as the determining factor towards the promotion of a language, saying that:

> ... we must promote and encourage the development of all the other languages spoken in this country. We have to find the resources to do this, whether it takes a century or only the next ten years. All these things are determined by economics. We have to find the resources to develop these languages as far as possible. We have to reach the point where, if people want, we should be able to offer them at the universities whatever subjects they wish to take in one or the other of the indigenous languages.

Alexander (1992) further explains that in other parts of the world, for example, in Germany, Japan and Denmark, everything is German, Japanese, and Danish respectively. Alexander argues however, that this is due to the fact that these countries, unlike South Africa, do not have a colonial past. These countries do not share the South Africa's linguistic diversity. Their language policies are not as complex as those of a linguistic diversity South Africa.

It is because of English's perceived high status in South Africa that indigenous African languages are despised as largely associated with backwardness, ethnicity, and international unacceptability. McDermott (1998) argues that attitudes such as these, where English is observed as an instrument for entering the international arena, and its "superiority" as the medium of instruction, economic development, political development, etc. are no more than linguistic colonialism and ultimately are denial of basic human right – the right to use one's mother tongue. As McDermott (1998) contends, this has far reaching consequences for someone using a mother tongue to conceptualize.

Some scholars perceive English as a language of oppression because of its 'English is best" myth that many indigenous Africans want to get rid of their African languages which are so undermined and devalued by the colonial machine. In analysing negative attitudes towards accepting African languages as languages for empowering blacks,

Msimang (1992) argues that since people's reactions are influenced by a variety of factors, and that since none of the African languages can at present be utilized as a bargaining tool in the labour market, indeed negative attitudes will prevail. African languages are always utilized at the lowest domain, for example, sports, agriculture, families, etc.

2.1.1 Language learning at school

It has been noted that most second language learners failed to achieve verbal fluency as a result of classroom instruction, in contrast with the universal success of young children in acquiring their native language. According to Richards (1978), the traditional approach in teaching second language familiar to most language teachers involves the teaching of the language. Learners are introduced to the target language as a school subject by a teacher who, ideally, has native language proficiency.

However, it should be noted that what is commonly regarded as 'communication' in the second language classroom rarely corresponds to any acceptable definition of which might be termed communication outside the classroom. Macnamara (1973) cited in Richards (1978), observes that rarely do the language teacher and the leaners have any genuine important or exciting things to say to each other, and the teacher's preoccupation with the form of the learner's utterances rather than with the content is hardly conducive to the situation of spontaneous verbal exchange. Long (1977) cited in Richards (1978) has shown that feedback supplied by teachers in traditional second language classroom focuses primarily on linguistic form, that is at the best ambiguous and at the worst misleading. The young children's communicative intentions are, at least in the early stages, relatively limited, predictable, and closely related to the experiences which they share with their mothers. Their communicative needs will quickly not be concur with the programmed presentation prescribed by the instructional syllabus.

The shortcomings inherent in the traditional classroom approach to language learning may be exacerbated by the fact that the amount of curriculum time devoted to second language instruction is typically small. Nonetheless, many studies according to Richards (1978), appear to indicate that the number of hours, or years of formal second language study is not in itself a strong predictor of second language achievement as measured by proficiency tests, particularly one measuring oral fluency.

According to Richards (1978), the explicit teaching of grammar, while useful in the carrying out of classroom activities such as transformation exercises or skills, or written work, does not appear to transfer readily to situations out of the classroom, where the learner must draw upon his knowledge of the target language in the face-to-face interchange with native speakers. The lack of transferability of classroom learning to unstructured situations is one of the prime criticisms of second language instruction. The second language educator can often change the settings completely, by moving out of the classroom and visits places on interest with learners. By so doing, the educator will be involving learners in community work, weekend camps, and so on, thus exposing them to natural language usage in the variety of situations. Such experiences are very valuable but cannot form the whole of the syllabus for any class, and are obviously impossible for foreign language teachers. Role-plays or 'classroom mock-ups' of situations are sometimes suggested as alternatives to such excursions, but however useful these may be in stimulating the learner's interest, they can never be completely satisfactory as a means of teaching communicative language.

Richards (1978) mentions that from a linguistic viewpoint one can add that pupils get little opportunity in full class interaction to hypothesize, evaluate, argue, challenge, disagree, express approval, appreciate, etc. or to use language in the tentative, speculative, or exploratory way which is appropriate in small group discussions. Second language educators in a school which includes native speakers of the

language being taught can further extend the advantages of pupil-to-pupil interactions by making use of the native speakers and tutors.

There is increasing awareness of the need for material aimed at developing sociolinguistic competence in a second language, which takes account of the sociolinguistic norms of the particular learners being taught and their specific requirements in this area. Many second language learners lack confidence to initiate or contribute anything substantial to a conversation. This hampers their ability to use the second language for communication purposes. They regard English, for example, as the language for education and only spoken in the classroom situation by an educator. Many second language teaching textbooks include exercises which can be used or adapted to give learners more opportunity to contribute genuinely to interactions.

Richards (1978) draws from an example in Quebec, an industrialised society which was then experiencing the impact of abrupt language policy change, where after twelve years of formal instruction in French, many high school graduates were able to pass written examination in French literature, but show a limited level of oral fluency interactions with native speakers and tendency to retreat from situations in which they might be called to speak French. This example suites well with the situation in South Africa, where there are learners who learn in English which is their second language from primary school but with very limited level of oral fluency in it. Ironically, there seems to be an assumption on the part of education that if learners preserve through college level courses, the elusive communication skills will eventually emerge. However, according to Richards (1978), nothing is known about how far such learners are from functional fluency in the target language could they cope with university studies in English and if they could hold a job in English environment.

Richards (1978) further points out that there are indications that in immersion situations, where the educator is the sole native speaker of the second language and

where the native language is homogeneous, the prolonged absence of contact with the target language peer group, or significant intercultural contact, leads to the development of a somewhat pidginised form of the language. Macnamara (1976) in Richards (1978) mentions that pidginisation does not appear to occur when individual children are immersed in classrooms with many native speakers.

As noted earlier, native language acquisition appears to conform remarkably closely to the principles of informal learning. It is embedded in a context of social interaction. It does not involve the formal articulation of a set of rules. According to Richards (1978), it results from the opportunity for sustained verbal exchange with a model with whom the learner identifies closely who provides a tractable input of the target language and feedback about the appropriateness of the learner's utterances. In typical second language programme, most, if not all, of these principles are violated because learners who follow these programmes do in many instances successfully acquire reasonably good literacy skills, like those which the learner learns in his/her mother tongue (Richards 1978). Furthermore immersion programmes conform closely to the principles of informal learning. However, the absence of an influential peer group of native speakers apparently cannot be compensated for the presence of a sole adult model in the classroom (Richards 1978).

2.1.2 Language of learning outside school

It is difficult in a multilingual community to find numerous examples of thoroughly successful informal secondary acquisition. It can be said that learners at schools acquire the second language more quickly and effectively especially if that language is used as the language of learning and teaching. However, in South African context, the large number of people learned English informally through a process of mixing freely with speakers English speakers. In order to enhance the potential of the classroom as a favourable environment for the acquisition of verbal fluency, Richards (1978), calls

for a redefinition of the role of the educator and the learner to one in which both are equal partners in a cooperative enterprise.

According to Brown (1973), learning to speak, like leaning to walk involves a number of identifiable and predictable stages and reveals strong patterns of similarities across languages and cultures. Ferguson (1977) examining the characteristics of language addressed to children by their mother, and the other adults in their environment suggests that such persons play an important role in enhancing language learning and generally more tractable than that addressed to adults. Brown (1973) indicates that mothers play a formal role in the language learning process by providing feedback to children regarding the appropriateness of their utterances. However, the feedback generally concerns the content and not the form of the utterance. Mothers facilitate the natural process of language acquisition by making it easier for the child to perceive for himself/herself not only grammatical rules but also the relationship between meaning and form. Thus, the language-learning process is an unconscious one embedded in the context of everyday activities and not dependent on explicit teaching provided by the adult (Brown, 1973). By the time the child goes to school he/she has already mastered most of the basic grammatical features of his/her language. The learning of vocabulary is one of the aspects of language development which continues throughout life. It is generally in the classroom where learners first encounter language teaching as the introduction of literacy.

According to Richards (1978), many adults possess only the marginal reading and writing skills which may be necessary for survival in their communities. Others, typically from the middle class homes, or the ones in which literacy is cherished, develop high level skills, but it is difficult to determine whether this competence should be attributed exclusively to the effects of formal education or in part to informal learning nurtured by a particular type of home environment. Richards (1978) is of the opinion

that both formal and informal language learning are involved and interact harmoniously.

2.2 MOTHER TONGUE-BASED EDUCATION

The question of mother tongue education in South Africa remains a worrying one. It seems reasonable that learners should be able to receive education in their mother tongue, if they so wish, but there are some very real difficulties in the implementation of the ideal of mother tongue education. It has been found that bilingual learners perform better in their school education when the school effectively teaches the learner's home language and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language (Cummins, 2001). It can be said that such a situation largely accounts for the school ineffectiveness and a low academic achievement experienced by learners. The use of the learners' first language or home language as the language of learning and teaching would be in line with the goals of education. Learning in one's own language holds various advantages for the learner, including increased access, improved learning outcomes, reduces chances of repetition and drop-out rates, and socio-cultural benefits.

Most researchers suggest that learners entering school are able to learn best through their mother tongue, and that a second language (such as English) is more easily acquired if the learner already has a firm grasp of the home language. African languages are certainly able to function as media of communication in levels such as interpersonal conversation, narrative and cultural practice. As they currently exist, however, the standard written forms of the African languages have not yet been developed to the point where they are able to carry academic discourse effectively and function as fully-fledged languages of learning and teaching, even at the Foundation Phase. For the most part, they are based on particular rural dialects in the

conversation contexts, having been standardized in the nineteenth century by missionaries for such specific purposes.

For some years now, educationists have proposed that African language learners should be taught in their mother tongue for at least the first three years of the school before switching over to English. However, as they currently exist, the standard written forms of the African languages have not yet been developed to the point where they are able to carry academic discourse effectively. They cannot function as fully-fledged languages of learning and teaching, even at the Foundation Phase.

According to Smith (1994), bilingual education has been practiced in many forms, in many countries, for thousands of years. Students are sometimes taught a full curriculum in their native language as in English. When schools provide children quality education in their primary language, they give them two things, Knowledge and literacy. Smith (1994) further points out that the knowledge that children get through their first language helps to make English they hear and read more comprehensible. Literacy development in the primary language transfers to the second language learning. According to Smith (1994), children learn to read by reading, that is, by making sense of what is one the page, it is easier to learn to read in a language one understands. Smith (1994) further contends that once one can read in one language, he/she can read in general.

Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas (2010) define mother tongue language education as a system based on strong development of the mother tongue (or language of the immediate community best known by the child), with the additional of at least one other language (often two or even three other languages). This is quite a broad inclusive definition and one wonders whether it is not trying to counter criticisms such as those captured in Prah (2009). Prah (2009) further states that Africans are amongst the

most multilingual people in the world and therefore critiques the notion of additive bilingualism policy in an African context.

Fasold (1984) notes the basic idea that children will learn better if instructed in their mother tongue. However, political, economic, socio-cultural and technical considerations are often used as reasons for not allowing pupils in multilingual contexts to be instructed in their mother tongues, especially if these are not languages of power. Furthermore, the poor pass rate in South African schools seems to indicate that the practice of using English as of learning and teaching is at least one contributing factor. The researcher contends with the views of most researchers that learners learn best through their mother tongue or the language they regularly use outside the school environment.

Mother Tongue-Based Education (MTBE) is when learning and teaching is in a learner's First Language (L1), usually with a planned gradual transition to a Second Language (L2) or foreign language at a specified time in primary school. Mother tongue-based education usually takes place in the language familiar to learners. In MTBE programs, learners have the opportunity to learn concepts in a mother tongue, and later learn the vocabulary for those concepts in a new language. MTBE is especially beneficial in early childhood programs, pre-school, and the early grades, when learners are learning to read and gaining new concepts.

Determining which language that will be used to teach children is one of the most important decisions that Ministries of education make. According to Malone (2007), the language(s) used in the classroom dramatically affects children's opportunity and ability to learn yet this decision is often made without a careful consideration on implications for learning outcomes. Furthermore, the efforts to improve education rarely consider the impact that the language of instruction will have when designing educational projects. (Malone, 2007) is of the opinion that the use of mother tongue is

dismissed as a political or national issue; considered a problem too complicated to tackle within the scope of a project; or overlooked due to lack of understanding of the central role that language plays in facilitating access to schooling and academic achievement.

> The choice of language...is a recurrent challenge in the development of quality education... Speakers of mother tongues, which are not the same as the national...language, are often at a considerable disadvantage in the educational system..." (UNESCO, 2003 cited in Malone, 2007).

By the time learners begin school, they have gained confidence in their ability to communicate meaningfully in their mother tongue. They have built a foundation of knowledge and experience through observing and interacting with peers and adults in their community. According to Malone (2007:1), the language knowledge that the child brings to school form an important foundation for their learning in the classroom. Malone (2007) further points out that the educational problem faced by many children from ethno linguistic communities is two-fold. In the first place, some have no access to education at all and those who have access to school do not speak the official language. When they start schooling they find that their knowledge, experience and language rather than serving as a foundation for learning are treated as a disadvantage. Their language knowledge does not empower them because their language has no place in the classroom. Instead, they are confronted with textbooks and teaching in a language they neither speak nor understand. Their learning and knowledge of how things are done in their culture and social setting do not serve them because the culture of the classroom is that of the medium of instruction (Malone, 2007). Malone further points out that the consequences for many learners are predictable and have been described in numerous studies, as noted in the quotations below:

1. Loss of confidence in themselves as learners.

   When learners' language, culture and experiences are ignored or exclude in classroom interactions, learners are immediately starting from disadvantage.

Everything they have learned about life and the world up to this point is being dismissed as irrelevant to school learning; there are few points of connection to curriculum materials or instruction and so learners are expected to learn in an experiential vacuum (Cummins, 2001 cited in Malone, 2007:2).

2. High repetition and drop-out rates.

Fifty per cent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All (EFA); a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition (World Bank, 2005 cited in Malone, 2007:2).

3. Alienation from heritage language and culture, from parents and community.

The children who go to the primary schools are often teased by other students for using their Mother tongue (MT) in the classroom when they talk to their counterparts. Educators advice learners to use the Second Language (L2) instead of their mother tongue. Parents are asked not to use MT at home in order to make children acquire fluency in L2. All these things have led to negative attitude towards their language in the minds of the parents and children (Malone, 2007:3).

4. Loss of languages, cultures and knowledge systems

More broadly, the loss of language is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems, including philosophical systems, oral literary and music traditions, environmental knowledge systems, medical knowledge, and important cultural practices and artistic skills. The world stands to lose an important part of the sum of human knowledge whenever a language stops being used. Just as the human species is putting itself in danger through the

destruction of species diversity, so might we be in danger form the destruction of the diversity of knowledge systems (Hinton, 2001:5).

Malone (2007) further points out that the above quotations, and many more indicate the concerns that are being raised in Asia and Africa about the negative consequences of exclusionary language and education policies. Mother tongue programs unable learners from medium of instruction language communities to build a strong educational foundation in the language they know best (their mother tongue) and a good bridge to the LOLT, and then encourage them to use both languages for life-long learning (Malone, 2007:3).

Malone (2007:3) further mentions that strong and well planned mother tong based programs help learners to build a strong educational foundation when they:

- Enable and encourage learners to develop oral fluency in their mother tongue;
- Introduce reading and writing in the mother tongue, help learners to become fluent and confident in mother tongue literacy, and
- Build their capacity to use mother tongue for everyday communication and for learning in school.

Mother tongue-based programs help learners to build a 'bridge' when they:

- Introduce oral second language through meaningful, non-threatening activities;
- Introduce reading and writing in the second language by building on what the children have learned about the oral second language and their foundation in mother tongue;
- Build fluency and confidence in using oral and written second language for everyday communication

Mother tongue-based programs ensure that learners achieve educational competencies or standards established by education officials for each grade when they:

- Use the mother tongue for teaching in the early grades, as students are learning basic communication skills in the second language;
- Use the first language with the second language for teaching in later grades, as students gain fluency and confidence in using the second language for learning academic concepts.

The benefit of Mother Tongue-Based Education is that when curriculum content is presented in a familiar language, less time is spent first teaching children to understand, speak, read, and write unlike with the L2 or a foreign language. When learners do not understand the language used in the classroom, are unable to demonstrate what they know, ask questions, and participate. Moreover, children who cannot understand the language used in the classroom, are unable to demonstrate what they know, ask questions, and participate in the learning process. In contrast, providing learners with an opportunity to learn in a language they understand starting on the first day of school gives significant advantages for the education system, teachers, parents, and learners themselves.

Key benefits of mother tongue-based education include the following as mentioned:

1. Improves access to education.

   Children who understand the language of instruction are more likely to enter school at appropriate age and attend school regularly; moreover, they are less likely to drop out than those who receive instruction in a foreign language. An analysis of data from 22 developing countries and 160 language groups revealed that children who had access to instruction in their mother tongue were significantly more likely to be enrolled and attending school, while a lack of education in a first language was a significant reason

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for children dropping out. In another study in Mali, students in classrooms that used children's first languages as the language of instruction were five times less likely to drop out. The chances of keeping children in school are significantly improved if they can understand and learn productively in their language in the classroom.

2. Improves reading and learning outcomes.

A recent review of research reports on language and literacy concludes that becoming literate and fluent in one's first language is important for overall language and cognitive development, as well as academic achievement. Evidence from Cameroon, India, Mail, the Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam, and elsewhere attests to the benefits of learning in a familiar language. First, children learn to read faster if they speak the language of instruction, because they already have a repository of vocabulary, knowledge of the linguistic construction, because they already have a repository of vocabulary, knowledge of the linguistic construction of the language, and the ability to pronounce the sounds of the language. Being able to read and understanding the language in turn facilitates academic learning. For example, a recent evaluation of a mother tongue education program in Cameroon reveals that children who were taught in their mother tongue, can performed significantly better, in multiple subjects (including Maths and English) than a control group of peers who attended schools where English was the medium of instruction. In Vietnam, 68% of grade one learners in mother tongue program achieved the level of 'excellent' compared to only 28% of learners not learning in their mother tongue. Similar results were achieved in the Philippines, where children learning in their mother tongue compared to only to children who were learning Filipino. Although additional research is needed regarding the efficacy of different Mother Tongue-Based models in various contexts, there

is abundant evidence that educating children in a language they understand facilitates both improved reading acquisition and subject-based knowledge.

3. Facilitates learning a second or foreign language.

   Mastering a first language and core learning concepts promotes general cognitive development that is needed to more easily and rapidly learn a second language. Because language and reading are closely related, learning to read in one's first language facilitates reading in a second language, since many key skills related to reading are transferrable from one language to another. However, children will need explicit instruction and support in transferring skills and knowledge from their L1 to L2, as well as consistent and robust language instruction in the L2.

4. Improves internal educational efficiency.

   With the increased efficiency resulting from fewer learners repeating, dropping out, or failing to learn, Mother Tongue-based Education is also more cost-effective than monolingual models of education. One study analysis shows that a 4-5% increase in a country's education budget would cover the immediate costs associated with mother tongue instruction and subsequently reduce the education system's costs in the long run due to improved internal efficiency (Heugh, 2001).

5. Improves children's self-concept and identity.

   By learning in the mother tongue, children's home culture and traditional knowledge are validated and reinforced. Children gain a better self-concept and have a strong sense of their own identity. Such children usually achieve better in school and life than children who are forced to learn in an unknown, strange language.

6. Supports local culture and parental involvement.

   Finally, the use of a familiar language for instruction validates local culture and knowledge creating a bridge between the formal school system and children's home and community environment. This, in turn, facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education, since language is not a barrier to participating in children's schooling.

2.2.1 English as Medium of Instruction

Despite a growing awareness that mother tongue education is more effective than second language medium of instruction (Heugh, 2002:171), English as a second language has become the dominant medium of instruction in Southern Africa (De Klerk, 2002:03). The South African Curriculum and Policy Statement (South Africa Department of Education, 2010) declares that since the First Additional Language (FAL) may be used as language of teaching and learning, its teaching and learning should achieve levels of proficiency that meet the threshold level necessary for effective learning across the curriculum (Uys, van der Walt, van den Berg & Botha, 2007:69). This proficiency includes the abstract cognitive academic language skills required for thinking and learning. It is generally accepted that teachers of English play a leading role in providing learners with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively (Arkoudis, 2003:162 cited in Uys et al. 2007:69). However, Crandall (1998:18 cited in Uys et al. 2007:69) points out that learners fail to understand academic concepts through the language they are still learning because their subject content teachers are incapable of assisting them to do so.

English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) is gaining ground as an internationalizing policy at schools in countries where English is normally used as a second language (Corrigan, 2015). The adoption of English as a medium of instruction may result in

positive or negative educational outcomes (Marsh, 2006:30). Caustically referred to as the language of instruction, if not occasionally destruction, adoption of English as the medium of instruction is responsible for widespread school wastage in various continents (Marsh, 2006:30). 'In some of the poorest countries in the world the use of a foreign language such as English as the medium of instruction in schools is directly linked to educational exclusion and failure. In some continents, attempting to learn through English has led to confusion, despair, and high drop-outs rates. In others it has been introduced using appropriate educational principles leading to successful and sustainable outcomes' (Marsh, 2006).

According to Marsh (2006), the choice of English has been viewed from different perspectives. For some, it is part of a steadily developing socio-economic conspiracy. For others, it relates to the need to have a single common utilitarian language. In the past, other languages have assumed the role of *lingua franca* in a given territory, or socio-economic domain but now, and over the next fifty years, English is viewed as the language which will be increasingly used to serve the demands of the globalising economics (Marsh, 2006:29). Marsh further points out that English is continuing to establish itself as a global *lingua franca* in a period unprecedented by globalisation. In the period 1995 - 2005 educational systems worldwide have shown interest in the adoption of English as a medium of instruction and teaching through a second language has been successful in certain educational environment (Marsh, 2006). According to Malone (2007), in the developing countries of the world, adoption of English as the medium of instruction has often been driven by practical and political decision-making. Here national language policies may have been implemented to achieve social cohesion and educational development, or other objectives. However, it is how these policies manifest themselves in the classroom which is the key to achieving success or failure (Malone, 2007:30). There have been marked successes in using a second or foreign language as the medium of instruction, just as there have been examples of long-term failure. Malone (2007) is of the opinion that there has also

been a distinct lack of discussion between educators responsible for diverse contexts where the medium of instruction acts as a barrier, or as some form of challenge, in the classroom.

In South Africa, for example, school wastage is estimated that some three-quarters of children, or more depending on how you read the statistics, fail school (Heugh, 2000 cited in Marsh, 2006:30). When looking at the overall educational achievement in any country, it is necessary to consider if the medium of instruction acts as a barrier to learning. This is particularly important when fluency in the adopted teaching language may be low amongst learners, and possibly even teachers (Malone, 2007:30-31). Although much work has been done on finding means to improve specific subject teaching, rather little has been done on the foundation of all teaching, namely the medium of instruction. Equally so, whereas there may have been much focus on language policies in some countries, there has been very little on language practice (Marsh, 2006:31).

According to Marsh (2006), English has been introduced in Ethiopia as a medium of instruction partly to offset the problem of children arriving in school with different first language. In England, as throughout Europe, the practice is driven by the wish to enhance language competence, and increasingly cognitive competence, and the lifelong opportunities which this may unlock for the learners. Educators serving in these very different educational contexts actually have much in common when we consider how successful learning in a second or foreign language is achieved. The use of English as the medium of instruction creates a language problem then it is necessary to find solutions which are workable in the classroom. If English as medium of instruction results in enhancing overall learning, then it is equally necessary to identify the conditions leading to success and communicate these across educational sectors (Marsh, 2006:31).

Regardless of what language or educational policy-makers decide, it is the social microcosm of the classroom which reflects the successes or failures of any nation's citizens in the future (Marsh, 2006:31). Where success is achieved, it is usually bound to the methodologies used by the teachers across the curriculum. Educators from the pre-primary to higher education can upgrade their work when language acts as some form of barrier in the learning context, but they need access to the knowledge and skills now increasingly available (Marsh, 2006:31).

Despite the popular support English has among the masses, there is an attitude among the intelligentsia that the dominance of English entrenches present unequal power relations in the country (Gough, 2009:04). It is held that English is not a neutral language, as some would believe, but that it effectively discriminates against the majority of the country's citizen. Gough further points out that in South Africa such thinking appears to be reflected in a shift in state policy towards emphasizing multilingualism and the rights of indigenous languages against English as a prerequisite for democracy.

2.2.2 Mother Tongue-Based Education in South Africa

In South Africa, before 1976, African languages were taught in for eight years (until standard 6), but it was apartheid's policy of *moedertaal onderwys* (Bloch, 2012). In 1979, following the Soweto uprising, the 1953 Bantu Education Act was amended to three years of mother tongue with a switch in the fourth year to English. This *de facto* situation still prevalence in schools today, despite having a language in education policy since 1979 that promotes mother tongue based bilingual education. Many South Africans believe this to be a necessary learning path for their children as they have still not had access to relevant information to help them separate out absolutely legitimate and deeply held feelings and attitudes against *moedertaal onderwys* from the fact that it is not a language itself that is the problem, but the evil of apartheid system (Bloch, 2012). Language learning is successful under specific conditions as mentioned below:

1. Children need at least six to eight years to come to know a language well. New concepts, skills and knowledge should be added to what children already know, and can do. The repository for all of this for young children is their mother tongue(s). Hence the principle of an 'additive approach' to language learning and the value of at least six years of mother tongue education, with the gradual introduction of English as a co-teaching medium until the end of primary school, as promoted buy not in the 1997 Language-in-Education Policy.

2. Role models for a new language need to be proficient in that language and well trained to teach an additional language and why particular approaches to teaching are more beneficial than others. Hence the need for all teachers to have a good enough command over the language they are teaching or using as a teaching medium.

3. Supportive language-rich environments help children to learn. These are environments where conversations and storytelling happen regularly. Many adults do this best in their home languages. Story telling is a bridge to reading and writing, in one or more languages. Engagement with the power of print is the beginning of learning to read and write. Hence the urgent need to publish and provide storybooks for children in African languages as well as English, to mentor adults to become reading and writing role models and to support reading clubs where all children can have regular enjoyable interactions with reading and writing in both their mother tongue and English.

The complex issue that is in the centre of education and development in South Africa is the question of medium of instruction in public schools. Since the dawn of democracy, Afrikaners are putting up a fight for mother tongue instruction in their schools. This is seen as an attempt to exclude black learners from the Afrikaners' schools. The reason for the Afrikaner to demand the use of Afrikaans in their schools is

regarded as racist, because it stems from the apartheid era. During apartheid Afrikaans was made a official language, made compulsory subject in schools, became a requirement in various fields and became a barrier to those who could not gain the required competence in it.

When the ANC came into power in 1994, it did not have the history of language struggle experienced by the Afrikaners during the colonial rule. Unlike the Afrikaners who resisted the imposition of English, the ANC adopted the language as the means of communication and did not interrogate the colonial baggage language carries with it. The ANC's struggle was primarily against apartheid, and not against colonialism, it discarded Afrikaans and retained English. However the ANC unlike the NP did not make any African language its means of communication. The problem of course is that there are so many African languages, whereas Afrikaners had only one. So for the ANC, it was not possible to build its political power through an indigenous language or to develop and educational system based on mother tongue instruction. As a result English has become the chief means of communication and the favoured language of learning and teaching in public primary schools. Those Africans who have adopted English as their first language have become the beneficiaries of the education system. Those who retain the mother tongue are disadvantaged at school and in the work environment. And people continue to talk about education, training and skills development without thought for the complications of having to learn through a foreign language.

The situation in the post-apartheid South Africa places children who enjoy the advantages of mother tongue education from primary school to the secondary and beyond as language speakers of English and Afrikaans. In other words children whose mother tongues are African languages, are still disadvantaged because they have to learn through English which is their second language. Language of instruction policy is necessarily not sufficient explanation for poor academic performance in public schools.

There are many other factors that play part in this regard. Of these are, socio-economic status, teaching method and parental involvement are probably the most important.

Cordeur (2014) asserts that the principle that children should be taught in their mother tongue for at least the first six years of schooling life, is universally acknowledged. But sadly, twenty two years into democratic government, issues hampering delivery of mother tongue instruction to primary school children across South Africa are still unresolved. At the heart of the problem is the belief held by most black South African that their home languages are of subsidiary educational value (Cordeur, 2014). Cordeur (2014) further points out that:

> ...in the absence of the government adequately communicating the benefits of delivering foundation skills to primary school children in their mother tongue, many capable children embark on primary school learning in a language that they do not understand – and that their educators often cannot speak properly.

Mother tongue education at primary school level provides an essential basis for sound education at higher levels. According to Cordeur (2014), the challenge is for the government to commit more towards engaging parents and gaining their confidence and trust that their children will receive a better education if they are taught at least at primary school in a language that they can understand.

2.2.3 The Importance of Mother Tongue-Based Education

Many education system favour using an international language instead of a home language as a results education is often carried out in an international language, such as English. This is often based on the assumption or belief that English gives children a competitive advantage in later life. In other countries, education is taught in the dominant language of a main linguistic group, sometimes at the expense of more marginalised ethnic or linguistic groups.

In far too many countries, the educational basics such as textbooks, learning materials and the teacher's language of instruction are primarily or entirely available only in non-mother tongue languages. Sometimes, in multilingual countries with many local languages, teachers themselves do not speak the local language which children learn at home, and speak the dominant language. In other cases, teachers themselves may not be fully proficient in the language of instruction.

Children in remote rural areas, who speak one language at home and have no contact with the medium of instruction outside of the classroom, often have the biggest problems in gaining any understanding of the language taught as school. This is one of the significant factors contributing to the poor quality education and continuing low literacy. Without the use of mother tongue, children's potential is often wasted resulting in educational failure and lack of development.

It is estimated that 221 million primary school learners from minority languages and ethnic communities do not have access to education in a language they know. Low quality and achievement in many African schools can be partially related to language of instruction. Africa is the only continent where the majority of children start schooling using a foreign language. Education is universally offered in the old colonial languages like French, English or Portuguese which most young people do not speak at home. For instance, in Zambia, where English was the educational language (among non-English speakers), it was found that at the end of primary schooling children are unable to read fluently or write clearly. Many failed examinations because they could not read and understand the instructions. Reading skills were poor, even among secondary school children. A number of studies show a zero level of understanding by children being taught in non-mother tongue languages. Those who manage to survive such schooling have stated that they understood very little until third, fourth or even eighth grade, depending on the amount of exposure to the medium of instruction in and out of the school environment.

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Given the issues related to the poor quality of education in many countries can be directly linked to a lack of mother tongue instruction, improving the quality of education and learning outcomes need more flexible approaches to incorporating mother tongue into the classroom. It is essential that teachers' capacity is built to deal with this, appropriate teaching methods are created, and an interactive classroom environment is fostered, all of which will support the acquisition of literacy and learning in mother tongue.

Where instruction, curriculum and materials are not in the mother tongue and do not take account of the learners known world, the result is widespread non-attendance, increased repetition and low achievement levels. In a study of data from 160 language groups in 22 developing countries, it was found that not using mother tongue language was a major cause of dropout. Those with access to instruction in their mother tongue were significantly more likely to be enrolled and attending school. Where the home language and the school are the same, it has been shown that assessments of literacy levels are higher. A study in Mali found that where the mother tongue language of instruction was used, children were five times less likely to repeat the year and more than three times less likely to drop out. In Ethiopia, local language policy has resulted in lower drop-out rates and higher retention. The language children are taught in often reflects broader societal inequalities. For instance, marginalised tribal groups struggle to have their identity and languages fully recognised, respected or understood within wider society. The failure to provide mother tongue instruction is a form of discrimination that perpetuates these inequalities. Children from poorer rural areas or from ethnic and linguistic minorities are less likely to receive a quality education, am more likely to become non-literate adults.

Many children in minority language communities, especially those living in remote areas, face significant challenges in accessing a good quality education. When pre-

existing pockets of marginalisation, poverty, or poor teaching quality intersect with schooling in an unknown language, children may never make it to school, or if they do, will find little meaning in the classroom to keep them there. Minority groups continue to make up a large proportion of those left out of classrooms. Ensuring more inclusive education policies which guarantee all children's right to education, will involve providing education to minority groups in their own language.

Children need to be engaged in and excited about reading and learning and this can only be done if they materials are ones which they will understand and enjoy. In most developing countries, the only reading material children see are school textbooks, which are often in very short supply. Other materials to support learning are hardly ever available. Without access to good materials, children struggle to become literate and learn. In most low-and middle-income countries, the majority of primary schools have no library, and books are luxuries which families cannot afford. Learning to read requires a range of complex skills, all of which need the right use of suitable materials. These skills include recognising sounds, connecting sounds to symbols, developing vocabulary, understanding the content and developing fluency. As children's language capacity develops, materials with increasing difficulty are required. Materials need to contain cognitively challenging content so that as children acquire knowledge, skills and concepts through their mother tongue, achievement in all subject areas will improve.

In most multilingual situations materials in mother tongue are lacking. A review study of the situation in schools across Africa found that teaching practice and the development of literacy are negatively impacted by a severe lack of appropriate educational materials. The availability of good learning materials, written in a language and with a context that is relevant to children is vitally important; a lack of such materials has a profoundly negative effect on children's learning and literacy achievement levels. Even where mother tongue materials are used, often not enough resources are channelled

towards it for programmes to fully succeed. Such programmes will inevitably break down if there are insufficient materials in local languages. Without adequate materials the teaching of early developing fluency is all but an impossible task.

2.3 SOUTH AFRICA'S DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY

The national language policy for schools is guided by principles derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1997. The South African National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) gives power the Minister of Education to determine a national policy for languages in education. In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Department of Education recognizes multilingualism, the development of official languages and respect of all languages used in the country. The Language-in-Education Policy is regarded as an important part of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and religion (LiEP, 1997). The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. This right has to be exercised within the overall framework on the education system to promote multilingualism.

Section 6 of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1997) prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance for this research project, is the power that the Act confers on School Governing Bodies to determine the language policy of a school. The objective of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1997) is to provide a strong foundation for the protection and advancement of the country's diverse languages. According to the Department of Education's Language Policy, pupils have the right to be taught in a language of their choice, and they should inform the school which language they wish to be taught in when applying for admission.

The objective of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 is to provide a strong foundation for the protection and advancement of the country's diverse cultures and languages. Section 6 of this Act empowers schools governing bodies to determine the language policy of schools within guidelines set nationally and on provincial level. Language policy in public schools stipulates that; subject to the Constitution and the South African Schools Act of 1996, the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine the following norms and standards for language policy in public schools:

- the governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, South African Schools Act and any applicable provincial law,
- no form of racial discrimination may be practiced in implementing policy determined under this section (Sections 6(1-4)).

The main aims of the Ministry of Basic Education's policy for languages in education are:

- to promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education;
- to pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth amongst learners, and hence to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education;
- to promote and develop all official languages;
- to support the teaching and learning of all languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purposes, languages which are important for international trade and communication, and South African Sign languages;
- to counter disadvantage resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching; and

- to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages.

2.4 LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The underlying principle of the Language-in-Education Policy is to maintain the use of home language as the language of learning and teaching especially in the early years of learning, while providing access to an additional language(s). This policy is in line with the views of many linguistics scholars who believe in the mother tongue education in the early years of schooling. Furthermore, it offers learners the opportunity to choose the language of learning upon application for admission to a particular school but there should be a reasonable number of learners to be taught in that language. The Language-in-Education Policy has the following stipulations:

- All learners shall be offered one approved language as a subject in Grade 1 and 2.
- From Grade 3 onwards, all learners shall be offered their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional approved language as a subject.
- All language subjects shall receive equitable time and resource allocation.
- Learners must choose their language of learning and teaching upon application for admission to a particular school. Where a school uses the language of learning and teaching chosen by the learner, and where is a place available in the relevant grade, the school must admit the learner.
- Where no school in a school district offers the desired language as a medium of learning and teaching, the learner may request the Provincial Education Department (PED) to make provision for instruction in his/her chosen language. The PED must make copies of the request and make it available to all schools in the relevant school district.

- The PED must keep a register of requests by learners for being taught in a language or medium that cannot be accommodated by schools.
- It is reasonably practical to provide education in a particular language of learning and teaching if at least 40 learners in Grades 1 to 6 or 35 learners in Grades 7 to 12 request it in a particular school.

In essence, the medium of instruction provided by a school depends to a large extent on the choices made by parents in selecting the language of learning and teaching. The Language-in-Education Policy, read together with South African School Act, which confers certain rights to SGBs in determining the language policy of a school, places the emphasis on choice, rather than strong state intervention, as a basis of determining the policy pertaining to the language of learning and teaching in schools. The Language-in-Education Policy attempts to promote the use of learners' home languages in schools, as well as to ensure that learners acquire an additional language of communication to facilitate the bridging of race, language and regional divides, while encouraging respect for other languages (LiEP, 1997).

According to the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the underlying principle of current Language-in-Education Policy is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). In practice, though, learners' home language development is being abandoned too early. At the same time, premature reliance on a new additional language sacrifices its effectiveness as a medium of learning and teaching. The overall result for learners, whose home languages have been compromised, simultaneously is poor educational achievement throughout schooling. As a result, few learners in South African schools can read and write competently.

According to the Language-in-Education Policy of 1997, in terms of Section 3(4) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), should be seen as part of a continuous process by which language in education is being developed as part of a national language plan encompassing all sectors of society. It should operate within the following paradigm:

- In terms of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the government, and the Department of Education, recognises that our cultural diversity is a valuable national asset and hence is tasked, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism, the development of the official languages, and respect for all languages used in the country.
- The inherited Language-in-Policy in South Africa has been fraught with tensions, contradictions and sensitivities, and underpinned by racial discrimination. A number of these discriminatory policies have affected either the access of the learners to the education system or their success within it.
- The present Language-in-Education Policy is conceived as an integral and necessary aspect of the government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one's own would be encouraged.
- This approach is in line with the fact that both societal and individual multilingualism, are the global norm today, especially in the African continent. As such, it assumes that the learning of more than one language should be general practice and principle in our society.
- A wide spectrum of opinions exists as the locally viable approaches towards multilingual education, ranging from arguments in favour of the cognitive benefits and cost-effectiveness of teaching through one medium (home language) and learning additional language(s) as subjects, to those drawing

on comparative international experience demonstrating that, under appropriate conditions, most learners benefit cognitively and emotionally from the type of structured bilingual education and emotionally from the type of structured bilingual found in dual-medium programme.

- Whichever route is followed, the underlying principle is to maintain home language(s). Hence, the Department's position that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our Language-in-Education Policy.

The Language-in-Education Policy also makes the following statements:

- The parents exercises the language choice on behalf of the minor learner;
- Learners must choose their language of teaching upon admission to a school;
- Where a certain language is available, learners may request the provincial education department to make provision for instruction in their chosen language;
- Governing bodies of schools must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning and teaching, and/or applying special immersion or language maintenance programmes, or through other means approved by the provincial department of education;
- Where there are less than 40 requests in Grades 1 to 6, or less than 35 in Grade 7 to 12 for instruction in a language not already offered by the school in a particular school district, the head of the provincial department of education will determine how the needs of the learners will be met, taking into account; the duty of the state and the right of the learners in terms of the Constitution.

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The language(s) of learning and teaching in public schools must be (an) official language(s). However, the LiEP is aimed at protection of individual rights, the rights and duties of the school, and the rights and duties of the provincial education departments.

2.4.1 Protection of individual rights

Learners must choose the language of learning and teaching upon application for admission to a particular school. Where a school uses the language of learning and teaching chosen by the learner, and where is a place available in the relevant grade, the school must admit the learner. Where no school in a school district offers the desired language as a medium of learning and teaching, the learner may request the provincial education department to make provision for instruction in the chosen language. The provincial education department must make copies of the request available to all schools in the relevant school district.

2.4.2 The rights and duties of the school

In determining the language policy of the school, the SGBs must:

- stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning and teaching, and
- by offering additional languages as full-fledged subjects,
- or applying special language maintenance programmes,
- or through other means approved by the head of the provincial education department.

2.4.3 The rights and duties of Provincial Education Departments

The provincial education department must keep a register of requests by learners for teaching in a language medium which cannot be accommodated by schools. In the

case of a new school, the governing body of the school in consultation with the relevant provincial authority determines the language policy of the new school in accordance with the regulations stipulated in terms of section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act of 1996. It is possible to provide education in a particular language as the medium of instruction if at least 40 Grades 1 to 6 or 35 in Grade 7 to 12 learners in a particular grade. The Provincial Department of Education must explore ways and means of providing alternative language maintenance programmes in schools and or school districts which cannot be provided with and or offer additional languages of teaching in the home language(s) of learners.

2.5 THE STATUS OF THE LOLT IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The staus of the language of learning and teaching in South Africa in public schools is embraced in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the South African School Act of 1996 (Act No. 84 0f 1996), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS of 2002 and the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement of 2010.

2.5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa deals with the subject of language in a variety of inter-related ways. For the purpose of this study, only one section will be highlighted, namely; the right of all to receive education in the official languages(s) of their choice in public schools.

The founding provisions of the Constitution recognise eleven official language of the Republic of South Africa. However, although Section 6(2) of the founding provisions prioritises the need to 'elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages' as a form of redress. Section 6(4) restrains this provision by stating that 'without distracting from the provisions of subsection (2), all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equally'.

Section 29(2) of the Bill of Rights, which forms part of the South African Constitution, is unequivocal about the right of all to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public schools. However, exercising this right is hindered by the state's ability to provide for this right only in a context where 'that education is reasonably practicable'. The Bill of Rights does, however, point to principles that should be considered in order to ensure effective access to, and effective implementation of this right, namely the need for equity, redress and practicability. The Bill of Rights also compels the state to consider all reasonable education alternatives to promote the exercising of this right, including the establishment of single medium institutions. In fact, although the Constitution affords learners the right to learn in the language(s) of their choice, this right is tempered by the state's ability to practically provide for its implementation.

2.5.2 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

Section 6 of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of the language policy in public schools. Of great importance for this study project is the power that the Act confers on School Governing Bodies to determine the language policy of a school, although subjected to the Constitution, South African Schools Act and any applicable provincial law. The interpretation of this section of South African Schools Act has been subjected to legal challenges and resulted in a number of court cases.

2.5.3 The National Curriculum Statement of 2002

The National Curriculum Statement prioritises the importance of additive multilingualism and promotes the need for African languages to be taught at schools. It stipulates that:

- All learners study their home language and at least one additional language as language subjects from Grade 1; and
- That all learners have studied an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the General Education and Training (GET) band.

2.5.4 The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of 2010

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement states that Home language and First Additional should be introduced from Grade 1 in all public primary schools. When children start to learn First Additional Language in Grade 1, they will develop a strong oral foundation. They will hear lots of simple spoken English which they can understand from the context. Listening to the teacher reading stories from books is a good way of doing this as it also supports children's literacy development. As children's understanding grows, they need plenty of opportunities to speak the language in simple ways. This provides the foundation for learning to read and write in Grades 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to investigate the accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District. In order to achieve this aim, an appropriate research design and research methodology have been chosen. This chapter provides insights into the research design and the research methodology that were utilised in gathering and analysing the data in order to provide answers to the research questions.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design goes hand in hand with the plan in which the study is going to use as a way of gathering information. According to de Vos et al. (2011:312), various designs used by qualitative researchers will differ depending on the purpose of the study, the nature of the research questions, the skills and resources available to the researcher. The qualitative research design differs from the quantitative one in that it does not usually provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan or a fixed choices and actions (de Vos et al. 2011:312). The qualitative research design was preferred in this study as it allows the researcher, during the research process, to create the research strategy or design but limited to the study as stated in de Vos et al. (2011:312). The semi-structured interviews were conducted with educators, while questionnaires were administered to parents of the learners. Policy documents w.r.t. language policy and language-in-education policy were analysed as sources of data to address both the research problem and the research questions.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach was utilised in this study project. This is related to the growing recognition that almost every aspect of language acquisition and use is determined or significantly shaped by social, cultural, and situational factors, and qualitative research is ideal for providing insights into such contextual conditions and influence (Dőrnyei, 2007:36). This research method is suitable in this study as it allows the issues involved to be studied and observed in their natural settings or environments (Cresswell, 2003).

Dőrnyei (2007) points out that unlike the quantitative research that involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data, which is then analysed by statistical methods, the qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended and non-numerical data, which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods. The qualitative research works with a wide range of data, including recorded interviews, various types of texts (for example, field notes, journal and diary entries, documents, etc.) and images like photos or video Dőrnyei (2014:37).

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND POPULATION

Sampling refers to the process of selecting individuals for a study in such a way that the selected participants represent the larger group. According to Thomas & Smith, (2003), sampling means taking a portion or a smaller number of units of a population as representative of having particular characteristics of that total population. Well conducted qualitative research is very labour-intensive, and therefore, qualitative studies typically use, of necessity, much smaller samples of participants than quantitative research. Dőrnyei (2007) is of the opinion that in quantitative studies the principle is straightforward, as only a sizeable sample is needed in order to iron our

idiosyncratic individual differences, whereas according to Polkinghorne (2005), qualitative research, focuses on describing, and clarifying a human experience, and therefore, qualitative studies are directed at describing the aspects that make up an idiosyncratic experience rather than determining the most likely, or mean experience, within a group. Qualitative research is not concerned with how representative the respondent sample is, or how the experience is distributed in the population. Instead, the main goal of sampling in qualitative research is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the topic under investigation, so as to maximise what to be learned (Dőrnyei, 2007:126). This goal is best achieved by means of 'purposeful' or 'purposive' sampling.

Purposive sampling was used in this study, for according to Monette, Sullivan & DeJong (2002), this type of sample is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that it is composed of elements that contain the most representative of the population that serves the purpose of the study best. Participants were purposefully selected, i.e. (a) 12 educators teaching English in Grades 4 to 7, and (b) 12 parents who had children in the selected schools. The researcher sampled participants with the belief that their views shall represent views of the entire population. Cresswell (2003) further indicates that this form of sampling is used in qualitative research, and that participants and sites are selected should purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem of the study.

According to de Vos et al. (2011:90), sample size depends on what we want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources. A study population is a large pool of targeted respondents from which the researcher draws a sample in order to generalise the findings (Durrheim, Pointer & TerreBlache (2006). According to Bless, Higsonr-Smith & Kagee (2006) population is a set of elements that the research focuses upon, and to which the results obtained by testing the sample

should be generalised. The population selected was drawn in a way that all participants had equal chances to participate in the study. There are 658 public primary schools in Vhembe District. Out of these schools, 6 primary schools were chosen, and 2 of them are in an area which is predominately Tshivenḓa speaking, while the other 2 are in the Xitsonga speaking area, and the last 2 are in the Sepedi speaking area. The following schools within the 3 local municipalities in Vhembe District were selected for the purpose of this study; Tshisahulu Primary School, Tshivhuyuni Primary School (Makhado municipality), Phaphazela Primary School, Mukhomi Primary School (Thulamela municipality), Bonwa Udi Primary school and Beitbridge Primary School (Musina municipality).The 6 schools represent the 3 major African languages spoken in Vhembe District, namely; Tshivenḓa, Xitsonga and Sepedi.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The following instruments were used in data collection: semi-structured interview, open-ended questionnaire and language policy documents analysis.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interview

In qualitative research, interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection (de Vos et al. 2011). Qualitative interviews mostly deal with a small number of respondents with the intent of gathering more and in-depth information about the issue under study (Miller & Brewer, 2003: 79).

Semi-structured interview is an interview which does not strictly follow a formalised list of questions. According to Doyle (n.d.:1), the interviewer may prepare a list of questions but not necessarily ask them all, or touch on them in any particular order. A common practice in semi-structured interviews is to lead with open-ended questions and then spontaneously devise follow-up questions to draw out more specific evidence

(Doyle, n.d.). It uses open-ended questions, some suggested by the researcher, and some may arise naturally during the interview. Mason (2004) is of the opinion that the structure of a semi-structured interview is usually organised around an aide memoire or interview guide. This contains topics, themes, or areas to be covered during the course of interviews, rather than a sequenced script of standardised questions (Mason, 2004). The aim of semi-structured interview is usually to ensure flexibility in how and in what sequence questions are asked, and in whether and how particular areas might be followed up and developed with different interviewees.

This technique is used to collect qualitative data by setting up the interview that allows a respondent time and space to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. The objective is to understand the respondent's point of view rather than make generalisation. The researcher in a semi-structured interview has the opportunity to be flexible in the structure of the interactions with the respondents so as to elicit richer information about their attitude and behaviour towards the broader questions of the researcher (Miller & Brewer, 2003:80). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with educators. A tape recorder was used during interviews to record all information which was then transcribed for data analysis purposes.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

According to Neuman (2011), open-ended questions are a type of survey research questions in which respondents are free to offer any answer they wish to the questions. These are questions in which possible answers are not suggested (unlike in a multiple choice question), and the respondent answers it in his or her own words. For the purpose of this study, open-ended questionnaires were handed to parents who then completed them and handed them back to the researcher.

3.4.3 Language policy documents analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (both printed and internet-downloaded materials). Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006) the use of documents often entails an analytic approach called content analysis, whose major advantage is unobtrusive and non-reactive in that it can be conducted without disturbing the setting. For the purpose of this study, documents that were analysed are; Language Policy of South Africa, Language-in-Education Policy of South Africa and Language Plan Task Group Report of 1996.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The primary principle of research ethics which overrides all other considerations is that no mental or physical harm should come to the respondents as a result of their participation in the investigation (Dőrnyei, 2007:67). Ethics concerns the morality of human conduct. It pertains to doing good and avoiding harm and the latter can be prevented or reduced when doing a research through the application of appropriate ethical principles. The term ethnic implies preferences that influence behavior in human relations, confirming to a code of principles, the rules of conduct, the responsibility of the researcher and the standards of conduct of a given profession (Babbie, 2007: 62, Bless et al. 2006:140, Monette et al. 2006:49). According to de Vos et al. (2011:114), ethical guidelines also serve as standard, and basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate as his/her own conduct. Therefore, principles should thus be internalized in the personality of the researcher to such an extent that ethnically guided decision making, and the humane and sensitive treatment of participants become part of the total lifestyle (Bless et al. 2006:140).

The following ethical considerations have been addressed in this study:

- For approval, the research proposal was submitted to the University's Higher Degrees Committee (UHDC) prior to the commencement of the project. (see Approval from UHDC, Appendix A).
- The researcher applied the ethical clearance certificate from the UHDC and it was granted. (Appendix B).
- The researcher asked permission to conduct research in schools in Vhembe District from the Department of Basic Education in Vhembe District. (see Application letter, Appendix C).
- The researcher obtained permission form the District Senior Manager of Department of Education, Vhembe District to conduct research in schools around Vhembe Municipality. (see Approval letter from the District Senior Manager, Department of Education, Vhembe District, Appendix D).
- The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the research in order to obtain consent from prior conducting research. (see Consent Form, Appendix E).
- Respondents were informed about the principle of voluntary participation.
- Participants were informed about privacy and confidentiality.
- The researcher received evidence from the visited schools (Appendix H).
- The findings of the study have been made available to the general public.

3.8.1 Informed consent

The most salient and most often discussed aspect of research ethics is the issue of informed consent (Dőrnyei, 2014:69). According to Flick (2009), the principle of informed consent is used as a precondition for participation. Informed consent according to Mack et al. (2005: 9) is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a

conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate. The following criteria put forward by Flick (2009) must be taken into consideration:

- Consent should be given by someone competent to do so.
- The person giving the consent should be adequately informed.
- The consent is given voluntarily

In this study, all participants were verbally informed of the purpose of the research and their consent obtained in writing before carrying on with the data collection processes. The District Manager of Department of Education in Vhembe District and the school principals were also informed of the study, and their consent obtained in order to conduct research in the selected schools.

3.8.2 Privacy and confidentiality

It is a basic ethical principle that the respondent's right to privacy should always be respected and that respondents are within their rights to refuse to answer questions or to withdraw from the study completely without offering any explanation (Dőrnyei, 2014:68) According to Flick (2009), the issue of confidentiality becomes problematic when research is done with several members at the same setting. Flick (2009) contends that readers of the report should not be able to identify which persons took part in the study. Participants were guaranteed that their identities would not be revealed when reporting on the study to ensure the privacy and confidentiality. Codes were used to represent schools and participants to avoid identification. Colleagues of participants were not informed about the information provided by the participants. The principal was informed in advance that he would not be informed about the views of the educators and parents. The recordings, transcripts and field notes are stored in a safe place to protect the identity and views of participants.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents data and the analysis in two sections. The first section presents the data collected from educators and parents while the second section gives and analysis of the collected data. The schools and the sampled respondents were coded as follows:

School Name	Code for schools	Codes for educators	Codes for parents
Tshisahulu Primary School	A	E1 E2	P1 P2
Tshivhuyuni Primary School	B	E3 E4	P3 P4
Phaphazela Primary School	C	E5 E6	P5 P6
Mukhumo Primary School	D	E7 E8	P7 P8
Beitbridge Primary School	E	E9 E10	P9 P10
Bonwa Udi Primary School	F	E11 E12	P11 P12

4.1 SECTION 1: DATA PRESENTATION

Data collected from interviews are presented and discussed in this section. The data solicited from the interviews and data analysis are presented under each question.

4.1.1 Data collected from educators through interviews

4.1.1.1 What is your home language?

In response to this question, respondents E1 and E2 from school A, E3 and E4 from school B, E9 from school E, and E12 from school F, said that their home language is Tshivenḓa; while respondents E5 and E6 from school C, E7 and E8 from school D, and E10 from School E, stated that their home language is Xitsonga. Respondent E11 from school E, mentioned that her home language is Sepedi.

4.1.1.2 How is your English level of proficiency?

In response to this question, respondents E1 and E2 from school A, E6 from school C, and E7 from school D, E12 from school F, pointed out that their English level of proficiency is very good. Respondents E3 and E4 from school B, said that their level of English proficiency is fair. Respondent E5 from school C, stated that she is not that good in English because she still makes some grammatical mistakes. Respondent E8 from school D, mentioned that his English level of proficiency is low. Respondents E9 and E10 from school E, and E11 from school F, said that their English level of proficiency is good.

4.1.1.3 In which language(s) do you prefer to read newspapers and why?

In addressing this question, respondents E1 and E2 from school A, and E9 from school E, said that they prefer reading newspapers written in English. Since English is the medium of instruction, they want to improve their English level of proficiency. Respondents E2 from school A, E3 and E4 from school B, E5 and E6 from school C, E8 from school D, E10 from school E, and E12 from school F, said that they prefer reading newspapers written in English as they understand news written in English

better than those in their home languages. Respondent E7 from school D, said that she prefers reading newspapers written in English since there are always available unlike those in her home language.

4.1.1.4 Which language(s) is/are used by learners during break at your school and why?

In responding to this question, respondents E1 and E2 from school A, E3 and E4 from school B, said that learners use Tshivenḓa when playing at school during break since it is the language they understand very well. Respondents E5 and E6 from school C, E7 and E8 from school D, stated that learners use Xitsonga when playing during break as it is their home language. Respondents E9 and E10 from school E, pointed out that learners use Sepedi when playing during break as they feel comfortable using it. Respondents E11 and E12 from school F, indicated that learners use their home languages (Tshivenḓa and Sepedi) since both languages are their home languages.

4.1.1.5 Do you have a library at your school and how is it helping learners to access English?

In response to this question, all respondents indicated that there are no libraries at their schools. Furthermore, they mentioned that leaners do not access English reading materials at the library since there are no libraries at their schools.

4.1.1.6 Do learners read newspapers, magazines and story books in English at your school?

Responding to this question, all educators stated that learners do not read newspapers, magazines written in English at their schools. All respondent indicated that there are no newspapers and magazines at their schools.

4.1.1.7 Do you have television set at your school and do learners watch English programmes?

In response to this question, respondents E1 and E2 from school A, E5 and E6 from school C, E7 and E8 from school D, E9 and E10 from school E, E11 and E12 from school F, said that there are televisions at their schools but learners do not watch English programmes. Respondents E3 and E4 from school B stated that there is no television at their school. In other words all respondents mentioned that learners do not watch English programmes on the television at their schools.

4.1.1.8 Which language(s) do you use when talking to learners outside the classroom and why?

Respondents E1 and E2 from school A, E3 and E4 from school B, and E9 from school E said that they talk to learners in Tshivenḓa since leaners do not understand English. Respondents E5 and E6 from school C, E7 and E8 from school D, said that they use Xitsonga when talking to learners because it is the language they understand very well. Respondent E10 from school E, mentioned that she talk to learners in Sepedi as it is the language well known by leaners. Respondents E11 and E12 indicated that they use Tshivenḓa and Sepedi since their area is a diverse environment.

4.1.1.9 Which language(s) is/are used when making announcements at your school and why?

In responding to this question, respondents E1 from school A, E3 and E4 from school B, said that announcements are made in Tshivenḓa. Respondents E5 and E6 from school C, and E7 and E8 from school D, indicated that the language of announcement is Xitsonga. Respondents E9 and E10 from school E, stated that Sepedi is used as the language of announcements. Respondents E11 and E12 from school F, indicated that the languages of announcements are Tshivenḓa and Sepedi.

4.1.1.10 When learners do not understand what you are saying in English, do you translate into a home language?

Responding to this question, respondents E1 and E2 from school A, E3 and E4 from school B, said that they translate into Tshivenḓa when learners do not understand what they said in English. They further mentioned that this is due to the fact that learners do not understand English well. Respondents E5 and E6 from school C, E7 and E8 from school D indicated that they translates into Xitsonga because learners do not understand English. Respondents E9 and E10 from school E, said that they translate into Sepedi since very few leaners understand English. Respondents E11 and E12 from school F, indicated that they translate from English to Sepedi and Tshivenḓa as they want learners to understand better in their home languages.

4.1.1.11 Do learners have access to the internet at your school?

In responding to this question, all educators stated that there is no internet at their schools. Therefore, learners do not have access to the internet at their schools since it is not available.

4.1.1.12 Do you think English is well accessed by learners at your school? Explain.

In responding to this question, all educators indicated that English is not well accessed by learners at their schools. They mentioned lack of libraries, English reading materials like newspapers, magazines etc. Leaners do not compete in English debate. They further mentioned that leaners do not watch English programmes on television at their schools. Educators do not talk to leaners in English as they prefer to use the home languages of the learners.

4.1.1.13 What do you think should be done to improve the accessibility to English at your school? Explain in detail.

Respondent E1 from school A, said that educators should use English when talking to learners in and outside the classroom, and stop translating into Tshivenḓa. She stated that there is a need of a library at her school. Respondent E2 from school A, stated that English should be the medium of instruction from Grade R. Announcements should be in English at the school and learners should use English during breaks when playing. Respondent E3 from school B, indicated that there should be more English reading materials at school and learners should be encouraged to read them. Respondent E4 from school B, indicated that children should communicate only in English at school and not allowed to speak in their home languages. Respondent E7 from school D, said that educators should communicate with learners in English only. Respondents E8 from school D and E9 from school E, stated that learners should watch English programmes on television at school. Respondent E10 pointed out that there should be English debate at their school. Respondent E11 from school F, mentioned that educators shouldn't code switch or translate into home languages when communicating with learners. She stated that the school needs to come out with a policy which compels all educators and learners in English. Respondent E12 from school F, stated that the school should conduct spelling games in English.

4.1.2 Data collected from parents through questionnaire

Parents were asked questions translated from English into their home languages, i.e. Tshivenḓa, Xitsonga and Sepedi, and they responded in their home languages. This was done to make them answer questions freely without a language barrier.

4.1.2.1 What is your home language?

Tshivenḓa: Luambo lwavho lwa hayani (ḓamuni) ndi lufhio?

Xitsonga: Hi rihi ririmi ra wena ra le kaya?

Sepedi: *Naa leleme la gago la gae ke lefe?*

In responding to this question, respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, P9 and P10 from school E, stated that their home language is Tshivenḓa while respondents P5 and P6 from school C, P7 and P8 from school D, mentioned that their home language is Xitsonga. Respondents P11 and P12 stated that their home language is Sepedi.

4.1.2.2 How is your English level of proficiency?

Tshivenḓa: *Vhukoni havho ha luambo lwa Tshiisimane vhu hani?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vuswikoti bya wena bya Xinghezi byi fika kwihi?*

Sepedi: *Boemo bja gago bja Seisemane ke bjo bokaakang?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

In response to this question, respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, and P10 from school E stated that:

Vhukoni hanga ha Tshiisimani vhu vhukati.

(My English level of proficiency is average).

Respondent P9 from school E stated that:

Vhukoni hanga ha Tshiisimane vhu fhasi.

(MY English level is low).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents E5 and E6 from school C, mentioned that:

A ndzi swi koti ku vulavula Xinghezi.

(I cannot speak English).

Respondents P7 and P8 from school D, and P10 from school E stated that:

Ndza swi twa nyana loko munhu a vulavula.

(I hear a bit of it when someone is speaking).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F stated that:

Ga ke kgone Seisemane.

(I do not know English).

4.1.2.3 In which language(s) do you prefer to read newspapers, and why?

Tshivenḓa: *Vha takalela u vhala gurannḓa dzo ṅwaliwaho nga luambo lufhio, nahone ndi ngani?*

Xitsonga: *Hi rihi ririmi leri u ri tirhisaka ku hlaya maphephahungu, nakona hikokwalaho ka yini?*

Sepedi: *Naa o rata go bala kuranta ka leleme lefe, le gona ka lebaka lefe?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

In response to this question, respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B and P10 from school E stated that:

Lwa Tshivenḓa, ndi lwone luambo lune nda lu pfesesa.

(In Tshivenḓa, as it is the language I understand well).

Respondent P9 from school E stated that:

A thi vhali gurannḓa sa izwi ndi sa koni u vhala na u ṅwala.

(I don't read a newspapers, as I can neither read nor write).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, and P7 and P8 from school D, stated that:

Hi ririmi ra Xitsonga, hi ku ni na vuswikoti.

(In Xitsonga, since I know it very well).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F mentioned that:

Ke kgetha go bala kuranta ka Sepedi ka lebaka la gore ke kwešiša polelo ye bokaone.

(I prefer to read newspapers in Sepedi as I can understand the language well).

4.1.2.4 Which language(s) is/are used by children when playing at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Ndi dzifhio nyambo dzine vhana vha amba ngadzo musi vha tshi khou tamba hayani?*

Xitsonga: *Hi rihi ririmi leri vana va ri tirhisaka loko va tlanga ekaya?*

Sepedi: *Ke di poleleo dife tšeo di šomišwago ke bana ge ba raloka kua gae?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

Respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 form school B stated that:

Tshivenḓa, ngauri ndi lwone luambo lwavho lwa ḓamuni vho ḓowelesa lwone.

(Tshivenḓa, since it is their home language and are used to it).

Respondent P9 from school A stated that:

Vha shumisa Tshivenḓa, fhedzi vha ṱoḓa ṱhuṱhuwedzo ya vhabebi uri vha shumise Tshiisimane.

(They use Tshivenḓa only, but they need to be encouraged by their parents to use English).

Respondent P10 from school E stated that:

Vhana vha tamba vha tshi khou amba nga luambo lwa ḓamuni lwa Tshivenḓa ngauri ndi lwone luambo lune vha lu pfesesa.

(Children speak in their mother tongue (Tshivenḓa) when playing as it is the language which they understand well).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, and P7 and P8 from school D, stated that:

Loko va ri ekaya va tirhisa Xitsonga.

(When at home they use in Xitsonga).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F stated that:

Bana ba šomiša Seisemane ge ba bapala kua gae.

(Children use Sepedi when playing at home).

4.1.2.5 Do you have a library in your community?

Tshivenḓa: *Kha vhupo ha havho hu na ḽaiburari naa?*

Xitsonga: *Xana yi kona layiburari laha mi tshamaka kona?*

Sepedi: *Naa le na le bakgobapuku ga gabo lena?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

In response to this question, respondent P1 from school A stated that:

Hai, a hu na. Arali yo vha i hone zwo vha zwi tshi ḓo thusa vhabebi vha sa koni u renga imagazini na gurannḓa.

(No, there is none. If there was a library it was going to help parents who cannot afford to buy magazine books and newspapers).

Respondents P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, P9 and P10 from school E stated that:

A hu na ḽaiburari kha vhupo vhuno.

(There is no library in this area).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, P7 and P8 from school D stated that:

Layiburari a yi kona vana va kuma tibuku e xikolweni.

(There is no library and learners get books at school).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 mentioned that:

Ga gona bokgobapuku gae le gona bana ba bala dipuku sekolong fela.

(There is no community library and learners read books only at school).

4.1.2.6 Do children read newspapers, magazines and story books written in English at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Vhana vha a vhala gurannḓa, imagazini kana bugu dza nganetshelo dzo ṅwaliwaho nga Tshiisimane musi vhe hayani naa?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vana va hlaya maphephahungu, timagazini na tibuku ta switori leswi swi nga tsariwa hi Xinghezi ekaya?*

Sepedi: *E ka ba bana ba bala kuranta, kgatišebaka le dipuku tša kanegelo tše di ngwadilego ka Seisemane ka gae?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

In response to this question, respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P9 and P10 from school E stated that:

Hai, a vha vhali sa izwi dzi siho.

(No, they do not read as they are not available).

Respondents P3 and P4 from school B, stated that:

Hai, a vha koni u dzi wana.

(No, they cannot access them).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, P7 and P8 from school D stated that:

Ku hava. Hi swona swi endlaka leswaku va nga ti fikeleli.

(They are not available. That is why they cannot access them).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F mentioned that:

Bana ga ba bale dikgatisobaka le dikuranta gae.

(Children do not read magazines and newspapers at home).

4.1.2.7 Do you have television set at home and do children watch English programmes?

Tshivenḓa: *Naa vha na theḽevishini hayani, nahone vhana vha a vhona mbekanyamushumo dza Tshiisimane?*

Xitsonga: *Xana yi kona theḽevixini ekaya, nakona vana va languta minongonoko ya Xinghezi ke?*

Sepedi: *Na le na le thelebišene ka gae le gona eka ba baithuti ba lebelela mananeo ao a gašwago ka Seisemane?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

Respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, P9 and P10 from school E stated that:

Ee, i hone fhedzi vhana a vha vhoni mbekanyamushumo dza Tshiisimane.

(Yes, television is available but children do not watch English programmes)

Respondent P3 from school B stated that:

A hu na, yo vha i hone yo tou tswiwa.

(There is no television, it was stolen).

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Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, P7 and P8 from school D, indicated that:

> *Ina, yi kona makaya ntsena vana a va yi languti minongonoko ya Xinghezi.*
> (Yes, there is television at home but children do not watch English programmes).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F stated that:

> *Thelebišene e a hwetšagala ka gae fela bana ga ba lebeleli mananeo a Seisemane.*
> (Television is available at home but children do not watch English programmes).

4.1.2.8 Do children have access to the internet at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Naa vhana vha a swikelela inthanethe hayani?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vana va fikelela ku tirhisa ithanete emakaya?*

Sepedi: *Naa bana ba kgona go fihlelela intanete ka gae?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

In response to this question, respondents P1 and P2, from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, P9 and P10 from school E, stated that:

> *Hai, a hu na inthanethe hayani.*
> (No, there is no internet at home).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, P7 and P8 from school D, stated that:

> *Ku hava inthanete.*
> (There is no internet).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F, stated that:

Bana ga ba fihlele ithanete kua gae.

(Children have no access internet at home).

4.1.2.9 Do you think English is well accessed by children at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Na vha vhona Tshiisimane tshi tshi khou swikelelwa nga vhana hayani?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vana va kota ku fikelela Xinghezi loko va ri ekaya?*

Sepedi: *Naa o gopola gore bana ge bale ka gae ba kgona go fihlelela polelo ya Seisemane?*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

Respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, P9 and P10 stated that:

Hai, a vha tshi swikeleli ngauri a hu na ḽaiburari, nahone vhabebi vhavho a vha koni u tshi amba.

(No, it is not accessible as there are no libraries, and their parents cannot speak English).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondents P5 and P6 from school C, and P8 from school D, stated that:

A va ri fikeleli hi vuenti.

(They do not access it well).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondents P11 and P12 from school F mentioned that:

Seisemane ga se fihlelelwa gabotse ke bana gae.

(English is well accessed by learners at home).

4.1.2.10 What do you think should be done to improve the accessibility to English at home? Explain in detail.

Tshivenḓa: *Hu nga itiwa mini u khwinisa u swikelelwa ha Tshiisimane hayani? Kha vha ṱalutshedze.*

Xitsonga: *Xana hi swihi leswi nga endliwaka ku antswisa ku fikeleriwa ka Xinghezi ekaya? Hlamusela hi vuenti.*

Sepedi: *Naa o nagana gore go swanetše go dirwe eng go kgonagatša phihlelelo ya polelo ya Seisemane ka gae? Tlhalosa ka botlalo.*

Responses in Tshivenḓa:

Respondents P1 and P2 from school A, P3 and P4 from school B, stated that:

Hu tea u fhaṱiwa ḽaiburari uri vhana vha kone u ya u vhala hone bugu, gurannḓa na magazini dzo ṅwaliwaho nga Tshiisimane.

(There should be libraries so that children could go and read books, newspapers and magazines written in English).

Respondents P9 from school E, indicated that:

Vhana vha tea u ṱuṱuwedzwa u amba nga Tshiisimane musi vha tshi khou tamba hayani.

(Children need to be encouraged to speak in English when playing at home).

Respondent P10 from school E, stated that:

Vhana vha fanela u vhona mbekanyamushumo dza Tshiisimane kha theḽevishini.

(Children must watch English programmes on the television).

Responses in Xitsonga:

Respondent P5 from school C, stated that:

Vana va fanela ku hlaya tibuku ta Xinghezi mikarhi hinkwayo.

(Children must always read English books).

Respondent P6 from school C indicated that:

Vana va fanela ku vulavula Xinghezi na le kaya.

(Children should speak in English at home as well).

Respondents P7 and P8 from school D, stated that:

Vana va fanela ku vulavula hi Xinghezi loko va tlanga na van' wana ekaya.

(Children could speak in English when playing at home).

Responses in Sepedi:

Respondent P11 mentioned that:

Bana ba swanetše go bala dibuka tša Seisimane ka gae.

(Children should read books in English at home).

Respondent P12 stated that:

Bana ba swanetše go bolela Seisemane ka gae.

(Children should speak in English when playing).

4.2 SECTION 2: DATA ANALYSIS

The aim of data analysis is to transform information or data into an answer to the original research question. According to Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh (2006:490), qualitative data analysis involves attempts to comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesise information and explain relationships, theorise about how and why the relationships appear as they do, and reconnect the new knowledge with what is

already known. The analysis process involved interpreting responses of the participants in relation to the interview questions.

4.2.1 Data collected from educators through interviews

4.2.1.1 What is your home language?

Data collected from this question indicates that languages of all the educators are Tshivenḓa, Xitsonga and Sepedi. Not even a single educator mentioned English as his/her home language among themselves. This means that they do not use English when communicating, and this can also have effects on the language they use when communicating with learners.

4.2.1. 2 How is your English level of proficiency?

Responses of the respondents in this question show that the English level of proficiency of the majority of the educators is good but their home languages are African languages. Although they might be good in English, they do not communicate in English among themselves. This, i.a. does not motivate learners to use any other language apart from their home language.

4.2.1.3 In which language(s) do you prefer to read newspaper and why?

In responding to this question, all educators prefer reading newspapers written in English. Reading newspapers written in English can improve one's level of English proficiency. Although educators stated that they prefer to read newspapers written in English as they want to improve their level of proficiency, they do not communicate in English with learners outside the classroom. Learners as a result, may consider English as the language spoken only in the classroom.

4.2.1.4 Which language(s) is/are used by learners during break at your school and why?

Data solicited from this question reveals that learners use their home languages when playing as they are not competent to speak in English. Lack of English proficiency is the reason why learners do not use English outside the classroom when playing. Because of this, learners may not improve their English competence as their home languages are dominant. When learners play, they constantly use their languages freely. If leaners may use English when playing, they would communicate freely and with confidence without fear of making mistakes.

4.2.1.5 Do you have a library at your school and how is it helping learners to access English?

Data solicited from this question from educators, shows that all schools do not have libraries. Lack of libraries is an indication that learners do not access English through reading materials at their schools. In the library, learners access a variety of media and select the best media for their context and message when sharing learning with their peers and educators. This view is supported by Udoh-Ilomechine (2008), pointing out that a school library is an academic point that supports school programmes as well as the teaching and learning process. School library serves learners by providing them with materials to meet their various needs and encouraging reading.

4.2.1.6 Do learners read newspapers, magazines and story books in English at your school?

Since data reflects that learners do not have access to newspapers and magazines at their schools, it is important to note that lack of reading materials like newspapers and magazines written in English shows that learners do not access English well at their schools. Reading newspapers, magazines and story books in English exposes

learners to new English vocabulary and improves proficiency as pointed out by Freedman-de Vito (2004) that reading enhances the development of language skills, and the ability to express oneself verbally. According to Criscuolo (1981), educators have long recognised the value of using the newspaper to reinforce reading and communication skills. Criscuolo (1981) further points out that, books and numerous magazine articles have been published on the practicality of the newspaper in the classroom, and the daily newspaper leads to many interesting and effective activities in the classroom.

4.2.1.7 Do you have television set at your school and do learners watch English programmes?

Data from respondents shows that televisions are available in some schools but learners do not watch English programmes on television at their schools. It follows therefore that learners do not have the opportunity to learn English through watching television. As most programmes on television are in English and if learners watch them, they would develop the interest of the language as they would like to understand what is being said. Learners always like to imitate what they have seen and heard from the television when playing. By so doing, they improve their English level of proficiency as far as the vocabulary and pronunciation of words are concerned.

4.2.1.8 Which language(s) do you use talking to learners outside the classroom and why?

Responses from the respondents in this question show that educators do not talk with learners in English outside the classroom. This is an indication that learners do not acquire English outside the classroom. Learners are great imitators and they regard their educators as their role models. If they hear their educators speaking with them in English outside the classroom, they would imitate them and speak in English among themselves as well. If they do that, their level of English proficiency could improve

drastically as pointed by Samwiterson (2011) that classroom learning of language has to be supported by learning outside the classroom.

4.2.1.9 Which language(s) is/are used when making announcements at your school and why?

Data solicited from this question shows that announcements are made in home languages of the learners. Making announcement in home languages of the learners is another indication that learners do not to access English well at school. Making announcements in English would expose learners to the language. Therefore, the more learners get exposure to the language of learning and teaching (English), the more they learn the language.

4.2.1.10 When learners do not understand what you are saying in English, do you translate into a home language?

As the data from respondents indicates that educators translate whatever they teach in English into the learners' home languages, this tendency (of translation) if utilised efficiently could bring about the improvement of learners' English. What one is not sure about is whether such translations are done in a more beneficial way. According to Duff (1989), educators and learner use translation in the learning process.

4.2.1.11 Do learners have access to the internet at your school?

Data solicited from this question shows that there leaners do not have access to the internet at their schools. Lack of internet limits access to English at school. Internet is becoming another valuable source of information that can be accessed anywhere whenever needed. If schools could make internet facilities available, learners could access English and their level of English proficiency could improve. This idea is supported by Deore (2012:111) pointing out that internet can be a huge source for

learners who are trying to look for information and it allows learners to have information.

4.2.1.12 Do you think English is well accessed by learners at your school? Explain.

Responses from the respondents in this question reveal that English is not well accessed by learners at their schools. If learners could be offered English from Grade R (Foundation Phase), they would grow up appreciating English as the language for learning and teaching. Now that English is introduced as a language for learning and teaching at Grade 4 (Intermediate Phase), some learners may develop negative attitude towards it since it could be perceived as an obstacle in their learning process. The fact that English is introduced from the Intermediate Phase in public schools can be a demonstration that English is not well accessed by learners at school. Lack of libraries and reading material written in English in public primary schools, shows that English is not well accessed by learners at their schools.

4.2.1.13 What do you think should be done to improve the accessibility to English at your school? Explain in detail.

Data solicited in this question from the educators indicates that all schools need libraries. Lack of school libraries denies learners to access reading materials like newspapers, magazines and story books written in English. Educators need to speak in English with learners. If educators do not speak with learners in English, it shows that learners could not access English at school. When educators communicate with learners in English, learners would also respond in English as well. Learners must watch television at school. Watching television can help learners to improve their English level as many programmes are in English. Announcements should be made in English in order to expose learners to the language. The more learners hear the language, the more they become familiar with the language. Learners should compete in English debates at their schools. Debating in English makes learners improve their

language proficiency and vocabulary. For one to be regarded as the best learner in English debate is a motivation to learn the language. Prices can be awarded to learners who perfume well in English debates. The government should prescribe English textbooks to be used in all the schools, and not leave it to the schools to choose their English textbooks. Schools need to develop a language policy which compels all educators and learners to communicate in English at their school.

4.2.2 Data collected from parents through questionnaire

4.2.2.1 What is your home language?

Data solicited from this question indicates that parents' home languages are Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi. Since the home languages of the parents are African languages, chances of them speaking with their children in English are not there at their homes. Subsequently, parents may not in any way stimulate the interest of learning and speaking English with their children at their homes. In this way children find English inaccessible in their communities.

4.2.2.2 How is your English level of proficiency?

Responses from parents in this question show that English level of proficiency of the majority of parents is not good. The low level of English proficiency makes parents not to communicate with their children in it at home. If children only access English in the classroom situation, their cognitive and emotive language development could be hampered. As it has been demonstrated by the data collected, parents whose level of English proficiency is low, may not contribute towards the acquisition of English by their children. Therefore, the accessibility to English by their children remains a problem.

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4.2.2.3 In which language(s) do you prefer to read a newspaper and why?

Data solicited from the respondents in this question reveals that parents prefer to read newspapers written in their home languages. Since parents do not read newspapers written in English, their level of English proficiency remain low. Therefore, the chances of parents communicating with their children in English at home are impossible.

4.2.2.4 Which language(s) is/are used by children when playing at home?

As data from parents in this question shows that children use their home languages when playing with friends at home, learning English can be really enjoyable when the approach to learning is geared towards playing games. Play is one of the main ways in which children learn a language. It helps to build confidence by giving children a sense of their abilities and to feel good about themselves. Because it's fun, children often become very absorbed in what they are doing. In turn, this helps them to access the language.

4.2.2.5 Do you have a library in your community?

Lack of community libraries leads to poor access to English materials that otherwise would assist in the acquisition of English vocabulary and knowledge. English materials, like newspapers, magazines, story books etc. are always of interest to children. After school, during weekends and school holidays, children would frequent their community libraries to read stories that are of interest to them. That would increase not only their desire to read English but to develop the understanding of language as well. Since there are no community libraries, children are deprived of these opportunities.

4.2.2.6 Do children read newspapers, magazines and story books written in English at home?

Since children, according to data solicited from parents do not read newspapers, magazines and story books at home, their access to English is limited. If children would read newspapers, magazine and story books written in English at their homes, they would in no doubt broaden their English vocabulary, increase general knowledge and a better understanding of English. This has also been observed by Freedman-De Vito (2004) who found out that reading newspapers, magazines and story books exposes children to new vocabulary and enhances the development of their language skills. According to Criscuolo (1981), the use of newspaper should not be restricted to the classroom only as there are many appropriate activities which parents can conduct at home with their children.

4.2.2.7 Do you have television set at home and do children watch English programmes?

Data solicited from parents shows that children do not watch English programmes on television at their homes. Watching English programmes would not only help in the development of vocabulary, but also in building proper English sentences as well. Good command of English would be acquired through the watching of programmes that are in English especially those that children would identify themselves with.

4.2.2.8 Do children have access to the internet at home?

The fact that children do not have access to internet at school their respective homes should be perceived as one of the obstacles towards the acquisition of English. If children are to access it, at least some English skills would be acquired. Indeed, lack of access to internet, to a certain extent would jeopardise their chance for learning English.

4.2.2.9 Do you think English is well accessed by children at home?

As parents pointed out that their children do not have access to English at their homes, they need to have access to the libraries that could help them access English materials like newspapers, magazines and story books written in English. They need to watch English programmes on the television that may improve their English level of proficiency. Parents pointed out that educators should encouraged children to speak in English when playing at home.

4.2.2.10 What do you think should be done to improve the accessibility to English at home? Explain in detail.

Since parents indicated that children do not access English at their homes, they stated that community libraries could help children to access English, and improve their fluency in English. Since there are no libraries in their communities, if children could be given story books to read at home, it could help them to develop their language proficiency. Watching English programmes on the television could help children to access English at their homes. Reading English materials like newspapers, magazines, story books etc. could help children to help children in acquiring English at home. If children could speak in English at home when playing they could develop confidence in speaking in English. Furthermore, if children may have access to the internet, they could access English at home and develop the interest of reading as they would like to get more information online.

4.2.3 Language policy documents analysis

4.2.3.1 Language Policy of South Africa

In terms of core principles stipulated in Chapter 1, Section 3 of the Constitution of South Africa, the goals of language policy in South Africa are summarized as follows:

- to entrench democracy, which includes the protection of language rights;

- to promote multilingualism;
- to promote respect for and tolerance towards linguistic and cultural diversity; and
- to further the elaboration and modernization of the Africa languages.

The norms and standards regarding language policy published in terms of Section 6(1) of the South African School Act of 1996 are:

- the protection, promotion, fulfillment and extension of the individual's language rights and means of communication in education;
- the facilitation of national and international communication through promotion of bi- or multilingualism through cost-efficient and effective mechanisms; and
- to redress the neglect of the historically disadvantaged languages in school education.

According to the South African School Act of 1996, the SGB of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Although the Act mandates the school governing bodies to choose the language of learning and teaching, it does not indicate how the government is going to assist in the accessibility of the chosen language. It is a known fact that English is the most preferred language of learning and teaching in Vhembe District, but the Act does not indicate how the LOLT is made accessible to the learners as it is not their home language.

4.2.3.2 The Language-in-Education Policy of South Africa

According to the LiEP of South Africa (Act 22 of 1996), the main aims of the Ministry of Education's policy for Language-in-Education are:

- to pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth amongst learners, and hence to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education;
- to promote and develop all the official languages;
- to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required at learners or used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purposed, languages which are important for international trade and communication;
- to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home language and language of learning and teaching; and
- to develop the programmes for the redress of previously disadvantages languages.

The Language-in-Education Policy Act states that parents exercise the language choice on behalf of the minor learner. Learners (i.e. their parents) must choose learner's language of teaching upon admission to a school. Governing bodies of schools must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning and teaching, and/or by offering additional languages as fully-fledged subjects, and/or applying special immersion or language maintenance programmes, or through other means approved by the head of the provincial educational department. Interestingly, parents in Vhembe District, chose English, and not Home languages to be utilized as MoI. This often happens as English, according to the survey conducted by Phaswana (1994) is considered to be:

- An international language.
- A language that prepares students for their future careers.
- A language in which most books are published.
- A language in which students will be able to compete internationally.
- A language which is already generally accepted as the medium of instruction at all levels in many African countries.

- A language in which by far the most publications, certainly the most important and influential ones, for all subjects (other than particular languages) are in English.
- A language that will make students not to be disadvantaged when they leave South Africa.

4.2.3.3 Language Plan Task Group Report of 1996

The Language Plan Task Group was established in 1995 to be responsible for language matters on devising a coherent National Language Plan (NLP) for South Africa. The NLP was to be a statement of South Africa's language related needs and priorities and that it should therefore set to achieve at least the following:

- All South Africans should have access to all spheres of South African society by developing and maintaining a level of spoken and written language which is appropriate for a range of contexts in the official language(s) of their choice.
- All South Africans should have access to learning of languages other than their mother tongue.
- The African languages which have been marginalised by the linguicist policies of the past should be elaborated and maintained.
- Equitable and widespread language facilitation services should be established.

Certain fundamental assumptions, which had gained wide currency among language practitioners in South Africa, guided the Task Group to investigate and inform the entire report. These can be stated briefly as follows:

1. Language is a resource, not a problem

In a multilingual society, knowledge of more than one language is on asset in immediate economic sense (e.g. at workplace) and as a nation-building and pro-

democracy practice. In the modern world, multilingualism is the norm, not the exception, and South Africa is well endowed in this respect.

2. Language is a fundamental human right

No person should be prevented from the use of the language of his or her choice within the bounds of reasonableness. The democratic State is duty bound to protect this right and to assist the citizens if impediments to the exercise of their right arise through no fault of theirs.

4. The State has to facilitate, co-ordinate and initiate strategies geared to the promotion and protection of the language rights of the citizens of the country.

This is particularly so in South Africa where the legacy of apartheid has to be broken down by means of the special promotion of the African languages and other marginalised languages. The elaboration, modernisation and development of these languages constitute the precondition for the attainment of social, and not merely judicial, equality for the languages of the vast majority of the people of South Africa.

5. No language is superior to any other

Historical development and previous social struggles, including the defining facts of colonial conquest, radical discrimination and apartheid, have made it possible for English and Afrikaans to become the dominant languages of power in South Africa.

The Task Plan Group felt that there should be a great awareness of the right to mother tongue education. In regard to dominance of English, it there should be an equitable balance between access to English for those who want to use it, to ensure that those who do not know English do not suffer in the process. The Report further states that while most people favour English because of its importance as an international

language, there is also a feeling that the other languages of South Africa should be fostered, especially as subjects at school, and fro expression in the arts.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, RECOMMEMNDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate the accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District. Chapter One of this study provided the historical background of the Language-in-Education Policy in the South African schools and in other countries. Most public primary schools in South Africa are still using English as the language of learning and teaching. During the apartheid government, the National Party imposed the use of Afrikaans along English as languages of learning and teaching on a 50-50 basis. This lead to the students' uprising on 16 June 1976, against having to learn through Afrikaans in public schools, and as a result, the apartheid government had to withdraw its policy. The promotion of African languages in public primary schools as media of learning and teaching beyond Grade 4 was perceived by blacks as part of the Afrikaner's divide and rule policy during the apartheid government. Since the South African democratic government came into power, the South African Schools Act of 1996 mandated the SGBs to choose the language of learning and teaching in public schools. However, the majority of public schools in Vhembe District, stll prefer English as the language of learning and teaching, disregarding the African languages. Although English is being preferred as the language of learning and teaching, the issue regarding its accessibility to English has never been raised or addressed.

In some African countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya and Ethiopia, English is the language of education. English is highly priced as a language which may offer access to higher education and international opportunities, but as it is the case in South Africa, it is known and used only by small minority of the educated and political

elite. In Asian countries such as Hong Kong, India, and China, English is making inroads as the language of learning and teaching. China did not have to depend on English as the medium of instruction, but English was made compulsory in primary schools from Grade 3 in 2001. In Malaysia, on the other hand, the medium of instruction in most schools is Malay. However, there are Chinese and India schools serving the respective communities which allowed Mandarin and Tamil respectively as medium of instruction, though Malay is still required to be taught as a subject.

In some European countries such as Russia, Slovakia and Finland, English, is not the only preferred language of learning and teaching. In Slovakia, for example, the medium of instruction in higher, technical, and vocational education is Hungarian. In Finland on the other hand, Finish is the language most used in schools, but Swedish, which is also an official national language is used in a number of schools. In Scotland, education authority introduced bilingual primary education by recognizing Gaelic language with equal respect with English. In Australia, Canada and America, almost all schools use English as the language of learning and teaching. Although English is used as the medium of instruction in these countries, in some American schools, Spanish, French, Hawaiian and local Native Indian languages are used as medium of instructions as well.

Chapter Two presented a review of the literature. The literature reviewed in this chapter focused on medium of instruction issues, mother tongue-based education, South Africa's Department of Basic Education language policy, Language-in-Education Policy in South Africa and the Status of LOLT in South African public schools. Most South African public primary schools offer mother tongue instruction in the first three grades of schooling with transition to English as the LOLT from the fourth grade onwards. English is preferred as the medium of instruction because it is well developed, and richer in materials far more than African languages. Second language like English is adhered to as a medium of instruction because it is much richer and has

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more written materials available than the first language (Harlech-Jones, 1987). The use of English as the medium of instruction affects the status of African languages that are perceived as languages of lower functions. This is supported by McDermont (1998) who argues that the attitudes where English is observed as an instrument for entering international areas, and its 'superiority' as the medium of instruction, economic development, political development, etc. are no more than linguistic colonialism, and ultimately are denial of basic human right – the right to use one's mother tongue.

Some scholars perceived English as the language of the oppressor because of its superiority as the best language to an extent that Africans want to get rid of their African languages which are so undermined and devalued by the colonial machine. Whereas no one is in disagreement that learners learn netter in their home language as when they start going to school, they have already mastered it. When it seems reasonable that learners should be able to receive education in their home languages, there are some worrying real difficulties in the implementation of the ideal of mother tongue education in South Africa. Most researchers suggest that learners entering school are able to learn but through their mother tongue, and that English is more easily acquired if the learner already has a firm grasp of the home language. However, for years now, educationists have proposed that African language learners should be taught ij their mother tongue for at least the first three years of the school before switching over to English. Despite a growing awareness that mother tongue education is more effective that second language medium instruction (Heugh, 2000), English as a second language has become the dominant medium of instruction in Southern Africa (de Klerk, 2002). African languages based education in South Africa

African languages based education is South Africa is perceived as the promotion of the apartheid system of divide and rule. The situation in the post-apartheid and democratic South Africa, places children who enjoy mother tongue education from primary school to the secondary and beyond as first language first language speakers of English and

Afrikaans. On other words, children whose home languages are African languages are still disadvantages because they have to learn through English which to them is the second language.

The South Africa's Department of Basic Education language policy is guided by the principles derived from the Construction of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the South African School Act of 1997. The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the South African Schools Act to provide a strong foundation for the protection, and advancement of the country's diverse languages. According to the Department of Education's Language Policy, pupils have the right to be taught in a language of their choice, and they should inform the school which language they wish to be taught in when applying for admission.

The underlying principle of the Language-in-Education Policy is to maintain the use of home language as the language of learning and teaching especially in the early years of learning, while providing access to an additional language(s). though it offers the opportunity to choose the language of learning and upon application for admission to a particular school, there should be a reasonable number of learners to be taught in that language. Th3e status of language of learning and teaching in South African public schools is embraced in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the South African School Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), the National Curriculum Statement of 2002, and the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement of 2010.

Chapter Three of this study presented the research design and the research methodology. Three methods were used in data collection in this study. Although semi-structured interview was adopted as the main method for data collection, additional evidence for the accessibility to English was solicited using questionnaire and language policy documents analysis.

Chapter Four of this study presented the findings and analysis of the collected data. Data analysed in this chapter reflects that English is not well accessed by learners who attend public primary schools of Vhembe District. Instead of the SGBs opting for the home language of learners as the medium of instruction, most schools prefer English as the medium of instruction. Therefore, data collected through interviews and questionnaire revealed that English is not well accessed by learners in public primary schools of Vhembe District at home and at their homes. It is evident that data collected in this study revealed that learners in public primary schools in Vhembe Districts do not access English well at their homes and their schools. It is therefore, not surprising that some learners do not maximize their educational potential, because of the language barrier. It is also amazing that the SGBs are doing nothing as far as the accessibility of the chosen language (English) in public primary schools in Vhembe District.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Since English is the preferred language of learning and teaching in public primary schools, the issue of its accessibility needs to be addressed. In order to make English accessible to public primary schools learners at their schools and their homes, all stakeholders must take part in making sure that this issue is properly addressed. Learners depend on their educators and active participation of parents in assisting them to acquire quality education. Since language plays an important role in learning and teaching, it should be given serious consideration.

In light of the limited scope of this study, it merits further research. This study focused on the accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected primary schools of Vhembe District. As English is introduced as the medium of instruction from primary schools in Grade 4 (Intermediate Phase), further studies can include secondary schools as well. Since the researcher's study was conducted at six primary schools, this study can be replicated at other primary schools. A comparison

can be done between rural public primary schools and independent primary schools or suburban primary schools. Furthermore, this study was conducted using the qualitative method only, more research can be conducted on both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to develop the research data which will avoid generalisation of the results.

The following recommendations regarding the accessibility of English as the language of learning in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District:

1. *Learners should be encouraged to read English books at home. They may ask for assistance from adult members of their families who are conversant with English. Reading is not a classroom activity only, but also one that can be carried out anywhere at any given time.*

2. *Children should be encouraged to also speak English when playing with their friends. This will enhance their English proficiency and confidence when speaking in English.*

3. *The government should build schools and public libraries. Learners should use school libraries and public libraries after school, during weekends and school holidays. There should be books or literature written in English for learners to access English language. These libraries will help children to develop interest in reading books, newspapers and magazines written in English and enhance their English level of proficiency.*

4. *Learners should be encouraged to watch English programmes on television in schools and homes, but this must be monitored by both educators at schools and by parents at home.*

5. *Learners should access internet at their schools and at their homes. The internet is a powerful tool to assisting learners and educators with information. The internet is a way of life for the civilised society nowadays. Using the internet*

in the classroom is one of the best and fastest ways to help learners to access information, and subsequently, English.

6. *Learners should be provided with learning materials written in English such as story books, newspapers and magazines. Learners should be encouraged to read learning materials written in English.*

7. *Learners should be encouraged to also speak in English at their schools. Although they have the right to use any language for communication purposes, they should be encouraged to use include English in their conversations.*

8. *English debates should be introduced in public primary schools. Learners should be given topics to prepare for a debate. Awards should be awarded to learners who performed well in the debate to motivate others to take part.*

9. *Learners should be encouraged to read English materials independently. Independent reading reflects the reader's personal choice of the material to be read as well as time and place to read it. The amount of independent reading done outside schools could bring absent about growth in vocabulary, reading comprehension, verbal fluency, and general information.*

10. *Schools need to employ educators who specialised in English at the University level to teach English. It is believed that learners who are taught language by competent educators, end up being competent in that language as well.*

11. *A further study should be conducted to investigate the impact of inaccessibility to English as the preferred LOLT in public primary and secondary schools of Vhembe District and/or beyond.*

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Although the SGBs are mandated to choose the languages of learning and teaching in schools, English remains the dominant language of learning and teaching in almost all schools in Vhembe District. It is surprising that none of the SGBs preferred language of learning and teaching to be the home languages of learners.

Gough (2009) made similar observation when he says that English is established throughout South African society, amongst individuals from a variety of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds (although less so in the rural than the urban areas, and amongst the working class). Amongst the educated, English functions as the *lingua franca,* and a primary language for government, business, and commerce. He further indicates that educationally, it is a compulsory subject in all public schools, and the preferred medium of instruction in most of the public schools with the only other medium of instruction at advanced levels, and at present, being Afrikaans (Gough 2009:02).

The South African School Act of 1996 only mandates the SGBs to choose a language of learning and teaching, but it is silent about what should be done to make sure that the language chosen is well accessed by learners. Looking at the history of language in education policy of the past, the accessibility to English should be the major issue, particularly in the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Since the majority of the South Africans prefer English as the language of learning and teaching, drastic measures need to be done to make it (English) well accessible by learners at their schools and homes.



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APPENDIX A: UHDC PROROSAL APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC

TO : MR/MS SE MADIMA

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

FROM: PROF J.E. CRAFFORD

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC

DATE : 16 APRIL 2015

DECISIONS TAKEN BY UHDC OF 15TH APRIL 2015

Application for approval of Master's research proposal in Human and Social Sciences: **S.E Madima 11641205**

Topic: "The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District."

Supervisor:	UNIVEN	Dr. N.E Phaswana
Co-supervisor:	UNIVEN	Dr. E.K Klu

UHDC approved Master's proposal

Prof J.E. CRAFFORD

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr E Madima

Student No:
11641205

PROJECT TITLE: The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District.

PROJECT NO: SHSS/15/COM/01/2007

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr NE Phaswana	University of Venda	Supervisor
Dr E Klu	University of Venda	Co-Supervisor
Mr E Madima .	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: July 2015
Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted
Signature of Chairperson of the Committee: .....
Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse

University of Venda
PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9060
"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

APPENDIX C: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

PO Box 27
Thohoyandou
0950
16 April 2015

The District Senior Manager
Vhembe District
Thohoyandou

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Shumani Eric Madima, presently registered student studying towards Master of Arts in Linguistics degree at the University of Venda, Department of Communication and Applied Language Studies under the supervision of Dr NE Phaswana. My research topic is: THE ACCESSIBILITY TO ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF VHEMBE DISTRICT.

I would like to conduct interviews with learners, educators, members of SGBs and parents from selected schools within Vhembe District. Every effort will be done not to disrupt the daily functioning of the school. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be maintained at all levels of this research project.

I am confident that my request will be viewed favourable.

With regards

.....

SE Madima – student No. 1161205

APPENDIX D: PEMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VHEMBE DISTRICT

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

VHEMBE DISTRICT

REF: 14/7/R
ENQ: MATIBE M.S
TEL: 015 962 1029

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT
27 -05- 2015
PRIVATE BAG X 2250 SIBASA 0970
TEL : 015 962 1313/6 FAX 015 962 0039
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

MR MADIMA S.E
PO BOX 27
THOHOYANDOU
0950

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above matter refers.
2. You are hereby informed that your application to conduct a research on the topic "The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected Public Primary Schools of Vhembe District has been granted.
3. Kindly inform the circuit managers and principals of selected schools prior to your visits.
4. We are pleased to learn of your Commitment to adhere to research ethics, particularly those relating to confidentiality, informed consent and anonymity of participants.
5. Wishing you the best in your academic endeavours.

DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

2015-05-27
DATE

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Shumani Eric Madima from the University of Venda. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about 'THE ACCESSIBILITY TO ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF VHEMBE DISTRICT'.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. Managers from my school will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
6. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: ..... Date: .....

Researcher's signature: ..... Date: .....

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONS ASKED EDUCATORS

1. What is your home language?
2. How is your English level of proficiency?
3. In which language(s) do you prefer to read newspapers and why?
4. Which language(s) is/are used by learners during break at your school and why?
5. Do you have a library at your school and how is it helping learners to access English?
6. Do learners read newspapers, magazines and story books in English at school?
7. Do you have television sets at you school and do learners watch English programmes?
8. Which language(s) do you use when talking to learners outside the classroom and why?
9. Which language(s) is/are used when making announcements at your school and why?
10. When learners do not understand what was said in English, do you translate into a home language?
11. Do learners have access to internet at school?
12. Do you think English is well accessed by learners at your schools? Explain.
13. What do you think should be done to improve the accessibility to English at school? Explain in detail.

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONS ASKED PARENTS TRANSLATED INTO TSHIVENḐA, XITSONGA AND SEPEDI

1. What is your home language?

Tshivenḓa: *Luambo lwavho lwa hayani (ḓamuni) ndi lufhio?*

Xitsonga: *Hi rihi ririmi ra wena ra le kaya?*

Sepedi: *Naa leleme la gago la gae ke lefe?*

2. How is your English level of proficiency?

Tshivenḓa: *Vhukoni havho ha luambo lwa Tshiisimane vhu hani?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vuswikoti bya wena bya Xinghezi byi fika kwihi?*

Sepedi: *Boemo bja gago bja Seisemane ke bjo bokaakang?*

3. In which language(s) do you prefer to read newspapers, and why?

Tshivenḓa: *Vha takalela u vhala gurannḓa dzo ṅwaliwaho nga luambo lufhio, nahone ndi ngani?*

Xitsonga: *Hi rihi ririmi leri u ri tirhisaka ku hlaya maphephahungu, nakona hikokwalaho ka yini?*

Sepedi: *Naa o rata go bala kuranta ka leleme lefe, le gona ka lebaka lefe?*

4. Which language(s) is/are used by children when playing at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Ndi dzifhio nyambo dzine vhana vha amba ngadzo musi vha tshi khou tamba hayani?*

Xitsonga: *Hi rihi ririmi leri vana va ri tirhisaka loko va tlanga ekaya?*

Sepedi: *Ke di poleleo dife tšeo di šomišwago ke bana ge ba raloka kua gae?*

5. Do you have a library in your community?

Tshivenḓa: *Kha vhupo ha havho hu na ḽaiburari naa?*

Xitsonga: *Xana yi kona layiburari laha mi tshamaka kona?*

Sepedi: *Naa le na le bakgobapuku ga gabo lena?*

6. Do children read newspapers, magazines and story books written in English at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Vhana vha a vhala gurannḓa, imagazini kana bugu dza nganetshelo dzo ṅwaliwaho nga Tshiisimane musi vhe hayani naa?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vana va hlaya maphephahungu, timagazini na tibuku ta switori leswi swi nga tsariwa hi Xinghezi ekaya?*

Sepedi: *E ka ba bana ba bala kuranta, kgatišebaka le dipuku tša kanegelo tše di ngwadilego ka Seisemane ka gae?*

7. Do you have television set at home and do children watch English programmes?

Tshivenḓa: *Naa vha na theḽevishini hayani, nahone vhana vha a vhona mbekanyamushumo dza Tshiisimane?*

Xitsonga: *Xana yi kona theḽevixini ekaya, nakona vana va languta minongonoko ya Xinghezi ke?*

Sepedi: *Na le na le thelebišene ka gae le gona eka ba baithuti ba lebelela mananeo ao a gašwago ka Seisemane?*

8. Do children have access to the internet at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Naa vhana vha a swikelela inthanethe hayani?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vana va fikelela ku tirhisa ithanete emakaya?*

Sepedi: *Naa bana ba kgona go fihlelela intanete ka gae?*

9. Do you think English is well accessed by children at home?

Tshivenḓa: *Na vha vhona Tshiisimane tshi tshi khou swikelelwa nga vhana hayani?*

Xitsonga: *Xana vana va kota ku fikelela Xinghezi loko va ri ekaya?*

Sepedi: *Naa o gopola gore bana ge bale ka gae ba kgona go fihlelela polelo ya Seisemane?*

10. What do you think should be done to improve the accessibility to English at home? Explain in detail.

Tshivenḓa: *Hu nga itiwa mini u khwinisa u swikelelwa ha Tshiisimane hayani? Kha vha ṱalutshedze.*

Xitsonga: *Xana hi swihi leswi nga endliwaka ku antswisa ku fikeleriwa ka Xinghezi ekaya? Hlamusela hi vuenti.*

Sepedi: *Naa o nagana gore go swanetše go dirwe eng go kgonagatša phihlelelo ya polelo ya Seisemane ka gae? Tlhalosa ka botlalo.*

APPENDIX H: VISITED SCHOOL - TSHISAHULU PRIMARY SCHOOL

TSHISAHULU PRIMARY SCHOOL

Enq: Mulaudzi N.S
Cell: 072 5499 340
083 257 3072
Email: tshisahulu@gmail.com

P.O. Box 395
SHAYANDIMA
0945

EMIS NO: 930320162

The Director
Research and Innovation
University of Venda
Private Bag x 5050
Thohoyandou
0950

CONFIRMATION OF THE VISIT BY THE RESEARCHER MR MADIMA E OF STUDENT NO 11641205

1. This serves to confirm that the researcher whose particular appear above visited TSHISAHULU PRIMARY SCHOOL on Tuesday 19 January 2016 to collect data on the topic: The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District.

2. During his visit he interviewed two (2) learners and two (2) educators. He also collected two (2) questionnaires which were answered by parents who have learners in the school as well as two (2) SGB members.

3. We hope that the researcher`s work will help in identifying and addressing the barriers affecting accessibility to English as the language of teaching and learning in the specified district.

4. The selection of our school for the purpose of his work is appreciated.

Acting Principal

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TSHISAHULU PRIMARY SCHOOL
EMIS NO: 930320162
19 JAN 2016
P.O. BOX 395, SHAYANDIMA, 0945
CELL NO: 072 549 9340/ 083 257 3072
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

APPENDIX I: VISITED SCHOOL - TSHIVHUYUNI PRIMARY SCHOOL

TSHIVHUYUNI PRIMARY SCHOOL

P.O.BOX 2749
SHAYANDIMA
0945
2016-01-29

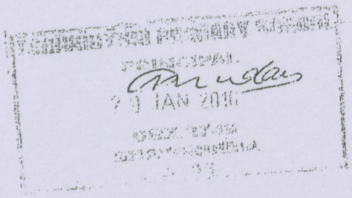
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that MADIMA. S.E came on 28 January 2016 to collect Research data on ACCESSIBILITY TO ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF VHEMBE DISTRICT.

Thanking you in anticipation

Mudau. C.T. school principal

Mudau



APPENDIX J: VISITED SCHOOL - PHAPHAZELA JP SCHOOL

PHAPHAZELA
JUNIOR PRIMARY SCHOOL
EMIS : 911360757
Ref.: SGB
Enquiries: Ramovha N.J.
Cell : 0727610758
Fax No : 071 699 5271
phaphazelajpschool@gmail.com

P.O. Box 1239
MALAMULELE
0982

20 January 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Management of the above-mentioned school hereby inform your office that Mr Madima E, student no: 11641205, visited our school on the 20th of January 2016 to conduct a research on: The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District.

Hoping that you will find this in order.

Yours Faithfully

School Manager

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PHAPHAZELA J.P. SCHOOL
Office of the Deputy Principal
20 -01- 2016
P.O. BOX 1239, MALAMULELE, 0982
EMIS NO: 911360757
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

P.O. Box 1239, Malamulele West Circuit, Malamulele, 0982
Email address: phaphazelajpschool@gmail.com
Website: www.phaphazelajpschool.co.za

APPENDIX K: VISITED SCHOOL - MUKHOMI JP SCHOOL

MUKHOMI J.P SCHOOL

Mukhomi village
Stand NO: 38
P.O.BOX 1238
Malamulele 0982

Enquiries
SHILENGE M.J
Cell: 0731490276
mukhojp@gmail.com
EMIS NO: 911360696

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We certify that Mr E Madima student no 11641205 has visited our school to do research project titled : the accessibility to English as the language of Learning and teaching . The participation involved SGB members , parents and learners. The activity has been successfully conducted to achieve the expected outcomes. The project itself is vital because our learners are affected when it comes to learning and teaching where African languages are used.

Hoping for success in his studies.

Shilenge (0731490276)

PRINCIPAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
2018 -01- 21
P.O. BOX 1238
MALAMULELE, 0982

APPENDIX L: VISITED SCHOOL – BEITBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

BEITBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Governing Body
P.O. Box 1278
Musina
0900

Sofasonke Street Phase 3
Stand no. 2856

Cell. no.: 083 237 6559
Ref. no.: 993304403
Breakthroughs through education

The University of Venda
School of Human and Social Sciences
Thohoyandou

Dear Sir / Madam

The following letter bears reference:

This serves to confirm that your student Mr **Madima SE**, student number **11641205**, conducted interviews with educators and learners of the above-mentioned school. The SGB and parents were handed questionnaires which were completed and handed back to Mr Madima.

His research topic is: **The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of Vhembe District.**

We wish him the best in his chosen field

BEITBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 1278, MUSINA, 0900
25 JAN 2016
STAND NO: 2856 SOFASONKE STR

Yours faithfully

Mphahlele A
(Principal)

APPENDIX M: VISITED SCHOOL - BONWA UDI PRIMARY SCHOOL

BONWA UDI PRIMARY SCHOOL
P O BOX 330
MUSINA
0900
TEL/FAX:0155331577

The University of Venda

School of Human and Social Sciences

Thohoyandou

Sir/Madam

This serves to confirm that your student Madima **SE**, student number **11641205**, conducted interviews with educators and learners of the above-mentioned school. The SGB and parents completed questionnaires that were handed to them by Mr Madima.

His research topic is: ***The accessibility to English as the language of learning and teaching in selected public primary schools of vhembe district.***

We wish him the best in his chosen field.

Yours truly

Dr Maila NL (principal)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BONWA-UDI PRIMARY SCHOOL
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL 1
2016 -01- 25
P.O. BOX 330 MUSINA 0900
TEL : 015 633 1577
LIMPOPO PROVINCE