THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS MEDIA OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MOPANI DISTRICT (LIMPOPO PROVINCE): A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

By

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THESIS

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DECLARATION

I, **SITHOLE KATEKO LUCY**, hereby declare that the thesis entitled: **THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS MEDIA OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MOPANI DISTRICT (LIMPOPO PROVINCE): A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SITHOLE, K.L.

SIGNATURE …………….………………………………..DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved late husband Khazamula Freddy Sithole and my last born son, Kateko.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigated the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The study was guided by a qualitative approach. A total of 30 educators from five primary schools participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Interviews were used as a tool for data collection. Data from the interviews was analysed by means of thematic method of data analysis, and was presented in the form of themes.

The results revealed that African languages are admired by most educators. The findings of this study revealed that it is possible to introduce African languages as media of teaching and learning in South Africa, but it will require an extensive preparation, which involves effective training of teachers and the acquisition of teaching and learning materials in African languages. The study also revealed that the current use of English and Afrikaans as media of teaching and learning contributes to poor academic performance of learners. The findings of the study have important implications for both learners and educators. The study will provide the National Department of Education with information it might need to review its language policy with regard to instructional languages. The study will also contribute towards knowledge of African languages as media of instruction, and will help school administrators and policy makers to understand challenges associated with the current medium of instruction and learner performance in schools in South Africa. All education stakeholders might be able to identify the causal factors of language failure rate in grade 12.

Key words: African languages, mother tongue, curriculum, instruction, media of teaching and learning, educators, learning, academic performance, learners.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

OBE: Outcomes-Based Education

PANSALB: Pan South African Language Board

ESL: English Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LoLT: Language of Teaching and Learning

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Throughout the world, language is known as a crucial means of communication and gaining access to important knowledge and skills. It is the key to cognitive development and can promote or impede scholastic access (Ovando & McLaren, 1999:02). The effectiveness of languages, however, depends upon language policies of various countries. In multilingual societies, language diversity and language policies designed to manage diversity in education exert a powerful influence on the content, instructional methods and outcomes of schooling and on life outcomes (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:225). Language diversity is, therefore, a major challenge in many multilingual countries. This is particularly pertinent to South Africa, where at least twenty-four African, Asian and European languages co-exist. These languages include English, Xitsonga IsiZulu, Tshivenḓa, Afrikaans, Setswana, Northern Sotho, isiXhosa, Southern Sotho, siSwati, Isindebele, Khilobedu, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Yiddish, Italian, Dutch, French and German (Reagan, 2001:421). South Africa's former apartheid government discriminated against indigenous and minority language groups by decreeing a language policy that gave recognition only to Afrikaans and English (Tshotsho, 2013:39). Following South Africa's transition to democracy, the ANC government sought to reverse this form of discrimination by initiating a multilingual language policy as stipulated in the constitutional framework (Madiba, 2005).

In the democratic South Africa, transformation has included important changes in the national language policy and language planning. The most important is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which grants equal status to eleven languages as official languages, namely; Sepedi, Tshivenḓa, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiZulu, siSwati, Xitsonga, isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans (Republic of South Africa, 1996). As South Africa lies at the bottom (southern part) of Africa, scores of other languages are spoken. For example, Chishona, Chewa, Chibarwe, Kalanga, Koisan, Ndau and Nambya, Kgalagadi, Mbukushu and Tshwa are some of the languages spoken in the southern part of Africa. The

government is committed to promoting multilingualism and the development of previously marginalised languages through initiatives such as the National Language Policy Framework, National Curriculum System and the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) (Republic of South Africa, 2008:02). Although the political control of apartheid has dissipated, issues related to the redress of inequality in all spheres of life are still in flux. Many learners have not yet enjoyed the promise of equal and quality education for all as encapsulated in various legislative documents, such as the National Constitution and South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1996). Due to the partial implementation of the policy, South African educators face challenges of large numbers of English Second Language learners in their classes. However, the multilingual context severely complicates the provision of education in South Africa. The majority of learners in South Africa are bilingual or multilingual and receive education in a language that is not their first language (Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), 2000).

In South Africa, English is the dominant medium of instruction in education, but it is the mother tongue of only 8.2% of the population (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:119). English and Afrikaans-speaking learners in South Africa are currently able to complete their entire schooling in their mother tongue, while speakers of African languages are less fortunate (Evans & Cleghorn, 2014). English is the language most widely understood and a second language of the majority of South Africans. This creates logistical difficulties which, together with the widespread preference for education in English, result in the language policy only being partially implemented. The language policy uses an additive approach to bilingualism and multilingualism, whereby the first language is maintained and used as a basis for the learning of another language (Chick & McKay, 2001). This approach has benefits for the learner as "continued development of both languages into literate domains is a precondition for enhanced cognitive, linguistic and academic growth" (Cummins, 2000:37). The official additive bilingualism policy determines that state schools offer mother-tongue instruction (an African language) for the first three years of formal schooling, with gradual and well-planned introduction of an additional language, usually English. Grade 4 learners are then subjected to an abrupt switch to English as a medium of instruction. This happens in all schools in the township and rural areas, implying that

parents do not have the freedom to choose mother tongue instruction for their children. This is the case despite the fact that those in rural areas have very little daily exposure to English, resulting in serious delays in reading for understanding (Wolfaardt, 2005). These schools remain seriously disadvantaged in terms of resources and quality teaching (Bloch, 2009).

This preference for English as Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) is motivated by several factors such as lack of scientific terminology and textbooks in African languages. According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010:226), a clear preference for English as Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) emerged during the liberation struggle in the 1980's. Furthermore, strong pragmatic incentives function amongst parents of learners as a result of the socio-economic mobility associated with English, and its traditional place in the world of commerce. In South Africa, English is also considered to be the most acceptable lingua franca and plays an important role in the process of nation building in a historically divided nation (Orman, 2008:47). English has escaped the stigma which has been attached to it elsewhere in Africa as part of the colonial heritage, and has emerged in South Africa not only as a language of liberation, but also as a language in which the new order has been negotiated (Chick, 1992:45). Therefore, the learning of English in schools is regarded as a priority amongst Africans. However, much international and local research has indicated that without sufficient support for the learning of English in the school and at home, English Second Language (ESL) learners plunged too quickly into mainly English or English-only education will perform poorly academically (Cummins, 1981; MacDonald, 1990; Baker & Garcia, 1996; Baker, 2006; Heugh, 2008). Furthermore, according to Cummins (1981), poor development of first language (L1) has a detrimental effect on the acquisition of a second language (L2) and vice versa, a phenomenon called "subtractive bilingualism" by Cummins. This is confirmed by a study conducted in South Africa by Macdonald (1990), which revealed that poor development of first language (L1) has a detrimental effect on the acquisition of a second language. Lack of exposure to English among black learners was caused by several factors, one which is the history of racial segregation which led to ethnically and linguistically differentiated residential areas, poor language teaching in black schools and

rural-urban differences in the prevalence of the use of English (Heugh, Diedericks, Prinsloo & Herbst, 2007). Consequently, many South African learners perform poorly academically because of lack of English proficiency. Heugh (2002:42) argues that the overall poor matriculation results of African learners in South Africa since 1994 are because of language barriers.

Many language experts, for example, Alexander (2010), Lemmer and van Wyk (2010) and Madiba (2005) strongly advocate for the need to shift from English to a mother-tongue based educational system. According to Alexander, "If the language of teaching at school is the same as the language at home, there is a very natural continuity between the home and the school, and in some ways, the good teacher can genuinely take the place of the parent" (Department of Education, 2010:07). It is therefore, necessary to investigate why African languages are not used as a medium of instruction and the possibility of using them as a medium of instruction in South Africa.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Throughout the world, language is a very important tool for communication and therefore, effective teaching and learning can only take place when an appropriate language is selected and used as a medium of instruction in schools. Consequently, if a non-familiar or foreign language is used as a medium of instruction, it becomes a barrier to effective teaching and learning. This view is supported by Brock-Utne (2000), Prah (2000) and Ngugi (1986), who claim that children learn better when the language used for instruction in the teaching and learning process is a familiar language which people speak in their everyday lives, and this facilitates the acquisition of other languages easily. However, in South African schools, African learners use English as a medium of instruction, although there are other nine African languages spoken in South Africa. English is the preferred medium of instruction in schools because some language experts believe that African languages do not have the linguistic complexity to enable them to be used in technical and scientific contexts (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227; Kamwangamalu, 2000:12; Tshotsho, 2013:13). Moreover, many parents chose English as the language of teaching and learning because they see that it has a cultural capital that will ensure jobs for their children (Van Heerden, 1996:04).

Thus, the main problem of this study is the use of English as a medium of instruction in South Africa of which, according to Tshotsho (2013:39), the majority of learners do not have good grounding in. The general practice in black schools is the use of the first language in Grade 1 to 3, with English introduced as an additional language in Grade 1 or 2 (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010: 233). Grade 4 marks a transition to English as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) for their entire stay at primary school. Learners are expected to continue to study the first language (L1) as a school subject until Grade 12. The main problem experienced in Grade 4 is the disparity between the children's English proficiency and the proficiency required of them in order to master the new academic content in English. A study conducted by MacDonald (1990) revealed that neither black learners nor their teachers cope with the transition to English in their fifth year of schooling. Many studies revealed that most Black African learners in South Africa are disadvantaged by the medium of instruction (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227; Senadeera, 2010:01; Kamwangamalu, 2000:12; Tshotsho, 2013:13). According to the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEQ) 11 Project which was conducted in fifteen Southern and Eastern African Countries in 2002, only 36.7% of South African learners reached minimum levels of mastery in reading in their Grade 6 level. Less than 10% of the learners reached minimum levels with regard to interpretive reading, inferential reading and critical reading skills (Moloi & Strauss, 2005). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) revealed that Grade 4 and 5 learners in South Africa came last in a study of forty countries in 2006 (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2006).

In rural schools, the situation is worse because schools do not have resources. In terms of a second language learning environment, English is primarily an urban language because both teachers and learners in rural schools lack sufficient exposure to English in the broader community as well as the opportunity to practise English, which in effect functions as a foreign language rather than a second language (King & Van den Berg, 1993:49). Mass media such as television and radio are the only opportunities for learners to hear English. Moreover, learners only speak, read and write in English only in the classroom. Furthermore, many black teachers are unable to teach effectively in English

as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) due to the lack of English proficiency; they resort to rote learning, drill and the use of more than one language to teach (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:234). Black learners experience problems because they cannot study in their first language (Van Heerden, 1996:04). These learners are not fluent in English, the tuition medium of their choice. They lack a sufficient command of English to succeed at school. This leads to problems regarding effective comprehension of the content of academic material, analysis of questions and presentations of answers. For example, most Grade 12 learners struggle to communicate in English. As a result, they are at a disadvantage because English is the language used to respond to questions in examinations (Lemmer, 1995:94).

In an examination or a test, a learner might know the answer but could lack the adequate vocabulary and positive attitude to present his or her answers (Lemmer, 1995:94). Most learners who struggle in the Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT) will, in all probability, also be under-achievers. Students' level of academic achievement is affected when they are instructed in a language that is not their first language or vernacular. The use of a foreign language as the language of teaching and learning across the curriculum raises concerns about the possible impact on student achievement throughout their school career. According to Cummins (1981), to achieve academic success, a more sophisticated command of language is necessary. Learners must be able to grasp concepts, establish relationships between concepts or information sets, analyse, synthesise, classify, store and retrieve information, and articulate information processed in oral and written forms (Cummins, 1992). In addition, since language can empower or exclude students from the learning process, valid questions arise with respect to equity and access for students who have limited competence in the language in which they are instructed in every area of the school curriculum (Alexander, 2000).

In 1999, when the Minister of Education introduced the awarding of extra-marks as compensation to matric candidates writing their examination in a second language, she was directly acknowledging the failure of English as a second language and a medium of instruction for black candidates (Masitsa, 2004:36). While the Language-in-Education

Policy (Department of Education, 1996) grants parents and school governing bodies a significant role in the choice of the language of the school, more needs to be done to make parents aware of the benefits of mother tongue education. Currently, there are arguments that mother tongue should be the basis of all teaching because children learn better when they are taught through a language they know well (Lemmer, 1995:94). According to Pflepsen (2011:01), mother tongue instruction improves access to education, facilitates learning a second or foreign language, improves internal educational efficiency, improves children's self-concept and identity and supports local culture and parental involvement. This research, therefore, explores the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools.

1.3 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The key concepts that underpin the study are defined in this section in order to enable the reader to understand the contexts in which they will be used.

(a) African Languages

The concept "African languages" refers to thousands of indigenous languages spoken in Africa. There are 2100 (Heine & Heine, 2000) and by some counts over 3000 languages spoken in Africa, in three large language families, namely; Afroasiatic, Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Congo (Epstein & Kole, 1998). In every African country, there are more than a dozen African languages spoken and Nigeria alone has over 500 languages (Paul, Simons & Fenig, 2015). African languages spoken in Angola are Umbundu, Nyemba and Chokwe, and in Ghana they are Twi, Ga, Ewe, Dagari and Dagbani. African languages of South Africa are IsiSwati, Isindebele, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenḓa and Xitsonga.

(b) Mother tongue

The term "mother tongue" refers to the first language that the child acquires and uses at home before attending school (Moyo, 2009:02). It is used in the research literature in various ways, for example, it may denote "first language", "native language", "heritage language", "home language" and sometimes "best language" (Ball, 2010:10). For the

purpose of this study, the term "mother tongue" is used to refer to all these elements. This study seeks to explore the reasons why an African language, as a "mother tongue", "first language", "native language", "heritage language", "home language" or "best language" is not used in teaching and learning in South Africa.

(c) Curriculum

The term "curriculum" is derived from a Latin word "currere", which means "to run"; the concept has been taking place in stages or phases, and over the years, it has been interpreted to mean "course of study" (Billings & Halstead, 2012:78). However, many scholars have given the word a variety of definitions depending on whether they view it as a plan, an educational programme or a learning experience. Tanner and Tanner (1975), for example, hold the view that curriculum means planned instructional programme designed to help learners develop and extend individual capability. Grundy (1987), on the other hand, regards curriculum as a cultural and social construction. Marsh and Stafford (1984:2) and Ross (2000:08) among many authorities on the subject, developed the definition of curriculum as "a course of study", or "what is to be learned" (Duminy & Songhe, 1980:04).

(d) Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)

This is an approach to teaching which focuses on "how" to teach. The OBE approach focuses not only on *what* one learns, but also *how* one learns. In other words, the process of learning becomes just as important as what one learns. A fairly universal definition of Outcomes-Based Education is coined by Towers (1996:67) who states:

"Education that is outcomes-based is learner-centred, results in an orientated system founded on the belief that all individuals can learn. In this system

(i)   what is to be learnt is clearly defined;

(ii)   learners' progress is based on demonstrated achievement;

(iii)   multiple instructional and assessment strategies are available to meet the needs of the learners; and

(iv)   time and assistance are provided for each learner to reach maximum potential."

Outcomes-Based Education encourages teachers to translate the learning programmes into something achievable. There is a shift away from content-based programmes where teachers aim to cover the curriculum in a predetermined amount of time (Department of Education, 1997:09). OBE's aim to produce measurable outcomes testifies to its focus on objectification, which regards the world as an object detached from the self-understanding of people (Taylor, 1985:174).

Gultig, Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind (1998:24) assert that "Outcomes-Based Education means focussing and organising an education system around that is essential for all the students to be able to succeed at the end of their learning experience". Gultig, Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind (1998:03) define Outcomes-Based Education as "*education that is not planned around certain prescribed subject matter that students ought to learn, but is geared instead towards the students being able to show signs of having learnt valued skills, knowledge and educational outcomes*".

(e) Educator

An educator is a person whose work involves educating others at all levels of education, in any type of education or training contacts, including formal and informal, for example, teacher, lecturer, parent and youth counsellor (Department of Education, 1997:VI). According to the National Education Policy Act, Act No. 27 of 1998, "educator" refers to "*any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at any institution or assists in rendering educational services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department.*"

(f) Instruction

There are various definitions of the word "instruction". Smith (2002:5) gives a comprehensive definition that is more specific to education, which is, "use of learning aims and objectives, subject materials, equipment, methodology, evaluation mechanisms and facilities in an instructional plan whose presentation enables learners to make progress towards specified educational goals". Websters' College Dictionary concurs with this definition by defining instruction as the act of instructing, teaching or education,

knowledge or information imparted or an item of such knowledge or information (Dictionaries, 2010:1375). In this study, the concept instruction will be used to refer to literacy teaching in the foundation phase.

(g) **Literacy**

Literacy is defined by Soanes (2002:526) as the ability to read and write, and the inability to read and write is called illiteracy or un-alphabetism. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESO) defines literacy as "the skill to recognise, understand, translate, create, exchange information and compute, use printed word and written materials associated with varying contexts." Literacy entails a continuous process of learning in enabling individuals to attain their objectives, to develop their knowledge and skills and to participate fully in their community and wider community (UNESCO, 2004). This definition implies that literacy is a complex set of abilities to understand and use symbol systems of culture for personal and community development and critical interpretation of written words. Literacy is thought to have first emerged with the development of numeracy and computational devices as early as 8000 BCE in Mesopotamia (Chrisomalis, 2009).

Literacy is today considered to be a learner's key to the mastery of the education curriculum, but a factor pivotal to the development of learners' literacy proficiency appears to be the strategies that teachers initiate to assist in the growth of learners' reading competency. Literacy enables learners to think creatively, critically and reflectively, and to retrieve, process and share knowledge while building the foundations for a range of additional literacies. Literacy competences include listening, speaking, reading, writing, thinking, reasoning, language structure and use. As indicated in section 1.2 above, the development of learner literacy in South Africa as a developing country is underpinned by numerous challenges. The specific challenges that the South African education system and therefore those organisations that train pre-service teachers currently face are how to promote learners' overall literate language abilities, and to promote learners' English literacy to such a level that they can continue learning in this language medium after the Foundation and Intermediate Phases of schooling (Department of Education, 1997).

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The following are the aim and objectives of the study:

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To explore contemporary challenges of media of instruction in schools.
- To explore challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in public schools.
- To devise strategies that can be implemented to implement African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to respond to the following main and sub-questions:

1.5.1 Primary question

What is the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province?

1.5.2 Secondary questions

- What are the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in public schools?
- What are the challenges of using African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools?
- What strategies can be taken to implement African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have important implications for both learners and educators, and will promote effective learning in schools. Learners will be in a better position to understand the subject matter, and this will improve their performance. Educators will also

be able to teach the learners. Policy makers at national and provincial levels will be able to review their language policies. The findings of this study might shed some light on the following:

- This study will provide the National Department of Education with information it might need to review its language policy with regard to instructional languages.
- This study will contribute towards the knowledge of African languages as media of instruction, and will help school administrators and policy makers to understand the challenges associated with the current medium of instruction and learner performance in schools in South Africa. All education stakeholders might be able to identify the causal factors of language failure rate at matric level.
- The results of the investigation might bring about changes in policy making. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) might change the strategy and role they are supposed to play in the choice of the most communicative and effective teaching among learners.

1.7 THE SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope and delimitation means establishing the boundaries of the research problem area within which the research will progress (Hoberg, 1999:190). This study focused on the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province in South Africa. The study was conducted in five secondary schools in the district. Figure 1 below illustrates the various districts and municipalities of Limpopo Province, which consists of five district municipalities, namely, Capricorn (Red), Mopani (Purple), Sekhukhune (Yellow), Vhembe (Green) and Waterberg (Blue) and 25 local municipalities.
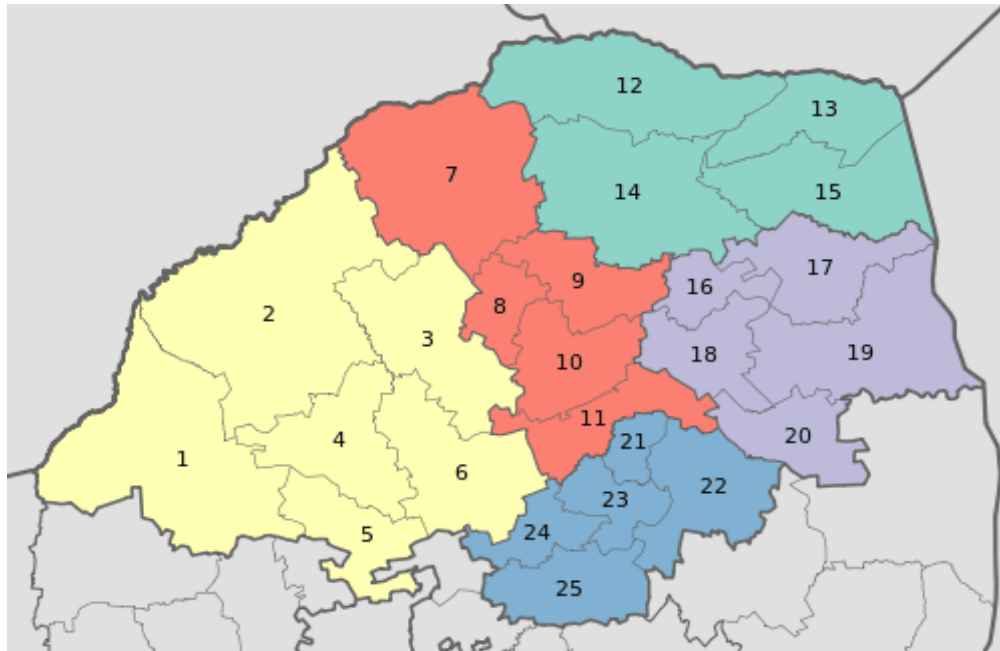
Figure 1. Districts and Municipalities of Limpopo Province

Mopani District is one of the five district municipalities, and consists of five municipalities, namely; Greater Letaba (16), Greater Giyani (17), Greater Tzaneen (18), Ba-Phalaborwa (19) and Maruleng (20) Municipalities (Mopani District Municipality, 2013/14). The head office of Mopani District Municipality is Giyani, and is located adjacent to the Kruger National Park. Its total area is 20, 011 Km^2 with a population of 1,147 356. The racial make-up of the population is 98.4% Black Africans, 0.1% Coloured, 0, 2% Asiatic and 1.3% White (Mopani District Municipality, 2013/14). The majority of the people speak Xitsonga and Northern Sotho. There are twenty-nine circuit offices in Mopani District. One educator was selected from each circuit for this study (Mopani District Municipality, 2013/14).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

In this section, a summary of the research methodology and design used to conduct this study is provided. The research methodology and design used in the study is discussed in detail in chapter three. Research methodology and design include a discussion of the research paradigm, research design and research methodology.

A research paradigm is a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Wahyuni, 2012:69). Two commonly used paradigms are positivist and constructivist paradigms. Positivists believe that different researchers observing the same factual problem will generate a similar result by carefully using statistical tests and applying a similar research process in investigating a large sample (Creswell, 2009). In contrast to positivism, constructivism believes that reality is constructed by social factors and people's perceptions of it (Wahyuni, 2012:71). This study is based on the constructivist paradigm. As indicated above, more details will be provided in chapter three.

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research should be conducted (Dawson, 2002:19). In other words, a research design is a set of guidelines and instructions that must be followed in addressing the research problem or the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing a narrative. This study is based on the phenomenological research design. Research methodology, on the other hand, refers to an application of a variety of relevant methods and techniques in the pursuit of valid knowledge (Mouton, 2002:35). The following research process was utilised in the study:

- Qualitative samples were selected.
- Interviews were conducted.
- Qualitative data were analysed.
- Research findings were analysed, leading to recommendations.

As indicated above, thorough details on research methodology and design are provided in chapter three.

1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE STUDY

In this study, the researcher guarded against any bias and subjectivity in the presentation and analysis of the findings in order to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research findings. Trustworthiness and credibility of the investigation were ensured by:

(a) Spending extensive time in the field

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, the researcher spent several days in the field to explain to the participants about the study and research problem, to provide clarity on what they do not understand about the study, and in the end, conducted the interview. Spending several days in the field enabled the researcher to establish a cordial relationship of trust with the participants. Spending extensive time in the field is supported by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who recommend "prolonged engagement between the investigator and the participants in order for the participants to understand the study and for the researcher to establish a relationship of trust with the participants".

(h) Use of thick description

The researcher also ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of this study by conducting a thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny, namely; the use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning. A detailed description is important in promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations under investigation, and to an extent, the contexts that surround them.

(i) Peer scrutiny of the research instruments

In this study the researcher also ensured trustworthiness and credibility by requesting colleagues, peers and academics to scrutinise the research instruments and provide feedback of their scrutiny to the researcher. Their feedback, questions and observations enabled the researcher to refine the methods, improve the research design and strengthen the arguments in light of the comments made.

(j) Member checking

Guba and Lincoln (1989) consider member checks as the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study's credibility. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), checks relating to the accuracy of the data may take place "on the spot" during the interviews and at the end of the data collection techniques. In this study, the interviewees were asked by the researcher to read the transcripts of dialogues in which they participated. The emphasis was on confirming that their words matched what they actually

intended. The interviewees were also requested to listen to the tape recorder in order to establish whether they had been accurately captured.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Babbie (2001:118), ethics is a matter associated with morality and ethical guidelines serve as standard which form the basis for the research to evaluate one's conduct (Babbie, 2001:118). In this study, the researcher adhered to the following most important ethical standards of research described by Bless and Higson-Smith (2010:100):

(b) Equitable selection
All efforts were made to ensure that the research does not discriminate among individuals in the population by selecting the participants randomly.

(c) Informed consent
The researcher provided complete information about all aspects of the study to all the participants. The participants were, for example, informed about the purpose and importance of the study, and the benefits of participation. All the participants were also requested to sign a consent form. They were assured that the research data would only be used for the stated purposes of the research. As Bless and Higson-Smith (2010:101) assert, the participants ought to be assured that the research data would only be used for the stated purposes of the research.

(d) Voluntary participation
The respondents were informed of their right to participate voluntarily without coercion or deception. They were not pressured to participate in the study so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involved only those who were genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely. The participants were informed that they were free to terminate their participation at any stage without any consequences. The participants were also reminded to be honest throughout the study.

(e) Right to privacy (confidentiality)

The participants were assured of their anonymity, and that their names or identities and the name of the school would not be disclosed. Confidentiality was also ensured by protecting all data gathered and by not making the data available to outsiders where it might have embarrassing or damaging consequences. All the hard data was stored in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed upon completion of the analysis. All electronic data was stored in a computer requiring password access.

(f) Minimisation of risk to participants or protection from harm:

The researcher also assured the respondents that their participation in this research would not cause them any physical discomfort, humiliation and emotional stress. Before the research commenced, the researcher met all the participants to explain the whole research project. In accordance with ethical rules, the researcher arranged the time of interviews with the participants, and ensured that the interviews did not interrupt their normal work.

(g)   Plagiarism

The term *plagiarism* means "not giving credit to an original source of an idea or writing" (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010:489). In order to avoid plagiarism, all materials contained in this dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

1.11 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Chapter One: General Orientation

This chapter focuses on the outline of the background to the problem, the problem statement, research questions, aims and objectives, the significance of the investigation and definition of concepts.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter offers a review of the literature and the theoretical and conceptual background of the investigation. Primary and secondary sources in relation to the topic are reviewed. The literature review concentrates on a wide review of relevant writings

such as the latest articles, journals, and major books on the subject, monographs and dissertations published nationally and internationally.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Design

This chapter focuses on the research design. The methods of investigation, including specific procedures, research population and sampling, instrumentation and data collection are outlined and described.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

This chapter concentrates on data analysis and interpretation of data. In this chapter, the responses of the respondents are presented, interpreted and analysed. The Tesch method of data analysis is used to analyse the data.

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter serves as synthesis of the whole investigation and comprises a summary of each chapter, summary of findings as well as the conclusions or results. Finally, the recommendations for the future research are provided.

1.12 SUMMARY

The aim of the research is to analyse the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, everyone has a right to receive education in the official languages of their choice in the public educational institutions. During the past twenty-one years of democracy, certain trends have been discerned that strongly point to a significant gap between stated language policy objectives and actual language practices in most of the country's educational institutions. A clear language hierarchy has emerged in South African educational institutions, with English at the top and African languages at the bottom. Despite many studies that revealed the disadvantages of learning through a second language, English is the main medium of instruction in South Africa. The study also investigates the challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as a medium of instruction. Strategies that can be implemented to

promote African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa are recommended.

Chapter one focussed on the orientation to the study. The background to the study, the problem statement, research questions, aims and significance of the study, research design and methodology, definition of concepts and the outline of the study were presented. The next chapter focuses on the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one focused on the orientation to the study in which the background of the study, research problem statement, research questions, research aims, research significance, demarcation of the study, research design, research methodology and research framework were presented and discussed. This chapter provides an overview of the literature reviewed on the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. Literature review is an analysis of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge, which helps researchers to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that they are interested in (Mouton, 2002:87). In this section, various literature sources are reviewed in order to learn how other scholars have theorised and conceptualised issues related to the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. The literature review includes the findings and suggestions yielded, and the relevant literature rationalises the framework of the current study.

This chapter commences by describing the theoretical framework of this study and the historical background of the domination of African languages in South Africa. The chapter further describes the South African language policy and the negative perception of multilingualism in South Africa. The chapter is concluded by discussing the advantages of mother tongue instruction and the disadvantages of using a foreign language as language of teaching and learning in schools. The chapter presents a broad review of relevant writings such as the latest articles, journals, and major books on the subject, monographs and dissertations published nationally and internationally.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is foregrounded in the Social Constructivist Theory developed by Lev Vygotsky and the Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura.

2.2.1 The   Social Constructivist Theory (Social Constructivism)

The Social Constructivist Theory was developed by Lev Vygotsky, who shared many of Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, but he placed more emphasis on the social context of learning (Killen, 2000). For Vygotsy, culture and social context give the child the cognitive tools needed for development. The Constructivist Learning Theory states that learning is an active continuous process where learners take information from the environment, construct meaning and make interpretations based on their prior knowledge and experience (Killen, 2000). Since 1997, the South African school curriculum has reference to the Constructivist Theory (Jacobs et al., 2011). This theory, which is sometimes referred to as Socio-Constructivism, is an eclectic theory, which essentially stems from two older theories, namely; Experiential Theory and Behaviourist Theory. Constructivist teaching practices help learners to internalise and reshape, or transform new information (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). According to Vygotsky, learning is distinct in every individual child whereby the knowledge and skills acquired vary from one individual to another (Dahms et al., 2007). According to Vygotsky, the main aim of education is to internalise culture and social relationships through social learning. The importance of past experiences and knowledge in interpreting present experiences is stressed (Dahms et al., 2007).

Constructivism is based on the belief that learners should be helped to construct knowledge that is meaningful and useful in their own lives. What is important is not so much what learners learn, but how they learn. The skills they learn are more important than the content (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). According to the Constructivist Approach, learning is the key feature of constructing meaning (Dunham, Well & White, 2002), and takes place as learners discuss and share problems and solutions in groups or pairs, with authentic tasks given with a meaningful context in order to promote individual learning and encourage learners to be engaged in a task. Learning takes place through collaboration when learners discuss, share problems and solutions (Dunham, Well & White, 2002; Killen, 2000; Ankiewicz & De Swardt, 2001). This implies that the Social Constructivist Theory promotes the learner-centred approach to learning while at the same time encouraging co-operative teaching.

The Social Constructivist Theory also emphasises that language plays an active role in the development of thought. This is confirmed by Vygotsky, who emphasises that language plays an essential role in cognitive development because a child learns how to think through language, and it is through words that a child internalises complex concepts (Dahms et al., 2007). In other words, learning takes place through the use of language, which is transformed into an internal process by an external experience. In this case, speech and language are the main means of communication that promote learning while language leads to higher levels of thinking (Dahms, Geonnotti, Passalacqua, Wetzel, Schilk & Zulkowsky, 2007). Furthermore, Dahms et al. (2007) also explain that according to Vygotsky, two main ways of learning are social interaction and language. Language enables individuals to share experiences, thus, enhancing their ability to participate in social interaction (Dahms et al., 2007). Vygotsky's theory has implications for the language of teaching and learning because in facilitating learning, the teacher must take the cultural context of the learners into consideration. Vygotsky asserts that students' culture, particularly their home surroundings, have a great deal of contribution towards new knowledge and skills that they acquire. Language skills are particularly critical for creating meaning and linking new ideas to past experiences and prior knowledge (Dahms et al., 2007).

2.2.2 The Social Cognitive Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory was developed by Albert Bandura in 1986. Based on the concept called self-efficacy, the Social Cognitive Theory posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment and behaviour. Self-efficacy refers to the level of a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform certain actions. Self-efficacy is unique to Social Cognitive Theory although other theories have added this concept at a later stage. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, the concept of self-efficacy was originally formulated by Bandura (1997) within the context of self-regulatory processes that affect a person's selection and construction of environments. Self-efficacy beliefs affect one's cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1997). Implicit in Bandura's (1997) work is the assumption that efficacy is a situation-specific attitude changing with circumstances

and events. Perceived self-efficacy may be developed by such variables as previously experienced successes in specific tasks and watching others being successful at similar functions. Bandura (1997) argued that "advantageous self-precepts of efficacy which foster active engagement in activities contribute to the growth of competencies in individuals". This implies that, in essence, perceived self-efficacy plays a major role in the amount of effort a person devotes to the accomplishment of a specific outcome because it is related to a person's inherent beliefs of his or her capabilities to accomplish something, regardless of actual competencies.

Emanating from the self-efficacy perspective, teacher efficacy has emerged as an important construct in teacher education. Wheatley (2005) defines the concept of teacher efficacy as "the teachers' beliefs in their ability to actualise the desired outcomes". Teacher efficacy is therefore linked to teacher effectiveness and is capable of influencing learners in their academic achievement, attitude and affective growth. Various scholars indicate that teacher efficacy has positive effects on teachers' efforts and persistence in the face of difficulties, professional commitment, student motivation, openness to new methods in teaching and positive teacher behaviour (Dickie, 2006; Soodak & Podell 1996; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001; Coladarci, 1992; Wigfield, 1994; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999). Moreover, Ghaith and Yaghi (1997) mention that in addition, teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to use student-centred teaching strategies, while low-efficacious teachers tend to use teacher-directed strategies such as didactic lectures and reading from textbooks (Dickie, 2006). Thus, the importance of teacher efficacy is well established and researched. Teachers' sense of efficacy and reforms in curriculum has many common points (Goddard et al., 2000). The changes teachers apply to their practices and adaptation to innovations require that they have a high sense of efficacy. Nevertheless, while both the implementation of reform in teacher education and teacher efficacy beliefs have been studied in depth over the years, there have been few research studies completed on the possible connection between the two. Furthermore, teacher efficacy has also been defined as "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Bernam et al., 1977), or a "teacher's belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be

difficult or unmotivated" (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). Bandura (1997) identifies teacher efficacy as a type of self-efficacy, or a cognitive process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of attainment. These beliefs influence how much efforts are put forth, how long they will persist in the face of obstacles, how resilient they are in dealing with failures, and how much stress or depression they experience in coping with demanding situations (Bandura, 1997).

In the light of the above definitions of teacher efficacy, it is difficult for the researcher to make a logical judgement on how well prepared teachers are in Mopani District to use an African language as a medium of teaching and learning. Therefore, the researcher is motivated by these loopholes or "gaps" to investigate the level of teacher efficacy in respect to the use of African languages or mother tongue as a medium of teaching and learning in Mopani District. The medium of instruction refers to the language used for teaching the basic curriculum of the educational system. A mother tongue refers to the language that one has learnt first; the language one identifies with or a language by which a person is identified as a native speaker of by others; the language one knows best and the language one uses most (UNESCO, 2013). In the next section, the historical background of languages in South African schools is discussed in the context of this study.

2.3 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LANGAUGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

A major factor responsible for the use of foreign languages as media of instruction in Africa is the colonial legacy (Bamgbose, 2011). It is well-known that in Africa colonial powers imposed their language in each territory they governed as the language of administration, commerce and education (Bamgbose, 2011). What is surprising is that even after independence, foreign languages remained official languages in African countries. Scotton (1990:27) indicates that in most African countries, any attempt to empower the majority of the population by raising the status of African languages failed largely because of the monopoly of the language of power by the elites and resistance on their part to extend this jealously guarded power to other groups (Scotton, 1990:27). Raising the status of African languages after independence also failed because policies

and practices from the colonial period continue to determine post-colonial policies and practices in Africa (Gellar, 1973:385). The net effect of the colonial legacy is that the dominance of imported languages which began in the colonial period has persisted until today. The proof of this is found in the statistics of official languages in Africa. According to Bamgbose (2011:30-31), out of 53 countries in Africa, indigenous African languages are recognised as official languages only in 10 countries, Arabic in nine, and all the remaining 46 countries have foreign languages as official languages as follows: French in 21 countries, English in 19, Portuguese in five and Spanish in one country. Additional evidence of the continued dominance of foreign languages is the medium of education, which remains dominant in these languages, particularly at higher primary, secondary and tertiary levels. All this indicates that the languages of the colonial powers are dominant and African languages take a secondary position in status and domains of use.

In order for one to be able to understand the contemporary challenge of the language of teaching and learning in South Africa, it is necessary to look at the historical background of languages in schools in this country (Mestrie, 2002:13). Most written evidence of language in education comes from the arrival of Europeans in South Africa. When the Dutch arrived in the Cape in 1652, language interaction between them and the indigenous Khoisan people started and Dutch was immediately established as a medium of communication and instruction (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227). Later, the slaves and the Huguenots were also assimilated linguistically into the Dutch language (Orman, 2008:80), which later evolved into Afrikaans. In 1806, the Cape Colony was seized by the English, and they immediately introduced English as a medium of instruction (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227). This resulted in the Dutch farmers moving inland away from the Cape (Ross, 2008). The British settlers eventually dominated most of the coastal areas such as the Cape, Natal and some Eastern Cape towns. During the period of British rule at the Cape, the use of English was promoted and deemed to be the official language of communication in South Africa. Meanwhile, the Afrikaners maintained Afrikaans as their medium of communication. Once the Afrikaners settled inland, they mobilised their forces and prepared to take on the British troops. After many attempts between 1910 and 1948, the Nationalist Afrikaner government eventually took control of South Africa in 1948

(Ross, 2008). The entrenched Afrikaner superiority and Afrikaans was now equal in status to English in South Africa. As from 1948, Afrikaans and English were declared official languages and media of instruction in schools. All African languages were ignored in the schools and only received recognition in the Apartheid era in South Africa where the mother tongue was proposed for the first few years in schools. The ruling class, that is the Afrikaners, tried in vain to undo English domination from 1948 to the 1990s by imposing on all citizens the necessity to learn Afrikaans in schools (Frederikse, 2001). The Afrikaner government also enforced apartheid by legislation as a means to promote Afrikaner domination and to suppress the blacks in South Africa (Sieborger, Weldon & Hinton, 1996; Beck, 2000). The Bantu Education Policy of 1953 made mother tongue instruction compulsory in all black schools (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227). English and Afrikaans were taught as subjects from the first year of schooling, thus forcing children to be trilingual. By the 1970's, both English and Afrikaans were declared as media of instruction on a 50/50 basis, which implied that half the school subjects were taught in English and half through Afrikaans. African languages were used for non-examination subjects.

From 1974, the government declared that Mathematics and Social Studies should be studied in Afrikaans only and this led to the Soweto schools riots in 1976 (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227). From 1991, the choice of the medium of instruction was left in the hands of school committees at each black school, which could be English, Afrikaans or an African language. The overwhelming response from the black community was to choose English as a medium of instruction after the fourth year of schooling (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:227). From the beginning, the language in education policy was shaped by political rather than pedagogical considerations, and all African languages were marginalised in schools. Ironically, the black community themselves were against learning through African languages because during that time, the development and use of African languages in schools formed part of the strategy of the apartheid government to retard upward mobility among black people (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:229). It has also been felt that education through the medium of an African language, which was not as yet

sufficiently developed to cope with modern scientific terminology, could be detrimental to advancement in the technological age (Behr, 1980:17).

Since 1994, Afrikaans has been used progressively less than it was during the apartheid era (Statistics South Africa, 1989; 2003) yet English still enjoys the symbolic power afforded to it from the pre-democratic era (Bourdieu, 1991:84; Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991:192). English use has increasingly become widespread in South Africa for ideological reasons. The use of English thus is now an ideological imposition in South Africa, rather than an imperialist imposition (Memela, 2011). One of the reasons of the neglect of African languages in Africa and South Africa in particular, is modernisation (Bamgbose, 2011), which is the quest for rapid technological and industrial development with a view to not being left behind in the modern world. According to Bamgbose (2011), post-independence African leaders were concerned with the idea of modernisation that they were willing to sacrifice the roles formerly occupied by their languages. Hence, modernisation was a strong factor in diminishing the status and roles of African languages. The general belief was that modernisation is best achieved in an imported official language. The reason for this is that such a language is already widely used in science and technology, and hence the experience gained in the use of the language can be copied, particularly through the transfer of technology. What is often ignored in this argument is that only a small part of the populace can be involved in a development strategy based on the use of an imported official language. Besides, it is a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of development to equate it narrowly with physical and economic development. However, the South African government also promotes the use of English in all spheres of its rule, from national government down to the local government (South Africa, 1996).

2.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE POLICY

In 1994, the democratically elected government came to power and ushered in unprecedented changes in the Republic of South Africa (Madiba, 2005). One of the important changes was the adoption of the "Constitution of South Africa" in 1996 by "The

Constitutional Assembly". The language policy for schools in South Africa is guided by the principles from this Constitution and the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Republic of South Africa, 1996). A key constitutional clause pertaining to language in education is found on page 14 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996), which states that: "Everyone has a right to receive education in the official language of his or her choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable."

The government sought to reverse the discrimination of all Black languages in South Africa by initiating a multilingual language policy as stipulated in the constitutional framework (Madiba, 2005). The Constitution declared all the indigenous languages of South Africa as official languages. As from 1996, the official languages of South Africa are Afrikaans, English, IsiSwati, Isindebele, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenḓa and Xitsonga (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In terms of section 3(4) (m) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), of the new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, cultural diversity is a valuable national asset, and the government is committed to protect, preserve and promote multilingualism, the development of all languages, and respect for all languages used in the country, including South African Sign Language (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The new Constitution seeks to stop the dominance of English and Afrikaans and elevate the status of the other nine languages. For example, Section 9 (3) protects against unfair discrimination on the grounds of language, whilst Sections 30 and 31 (1) refer to people's rights in terms of cultural, religious and linguistic participation and differences. In terms of the Constitution, all official languages, including the disadvantaged indigenous languages, must be in parity and be treated equitably. It is therefore evident that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa gives the learners the rights to learn in the language of their choice. However, this right is tempered by the state's inability to practically provide for its implementation.

Section 6 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) prescribes several principles with regard to the determination of language policy in public schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The policy gives all the school governing bodies the authority to determine

the language policy of a school in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and provincial policies (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Although the school governing bodies were given this power, it is very clear that these bodies cannot declare an African language as a medium of instruction because only two languages are recognised by the government as media of instruction, namely; English and Afrikaans. The first language policy of the democratic South Africa, namely; the Language-in-Education Policy of South Africa was adopted in 1997 (Republic of South Africa, 1997). The underlying principle of the policy is to maintain the use of home language as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), while providing access to an additional language (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

The following are the main aims of the Language-in-Education Policy of South Africa:

- All learners shall be offered at least one approved language as a subject in Grades 1 and 2.
- From Grade 3 onwards, all learners shall receive equitable time and resource allocation.
- All learners must choose their Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) upon application for admission and at least one additional approved language as a subject.
- 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 his or her chosen language. The provincial education department must make copies of the request and make it available to all the schools in the relevant school district.
- The provincial education department must keep a register of requests by learners for teaching in a language or medium that cannot be accommodated by the schools.
- It is reasonably practical to provide education in a particular Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) if at least 40 learners in Grade 1 to 6 or 35 learners in Grades 7 to 12 request it in a particular school (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Despite the presence of the Constitution, the government's commitment for multilingualism and Language in Education Policy, the right to choose the Language of

Teaching and Learning is a very controversial issue in South Africa because all African languages are not recognised as media of instruction. In other words, the education sector does not totally reflect the multilingual nature of South Africa. The Pan South African Language Board is mandated by subsection 6(5) of the South African Constitution to promote and create conditions for the development and use of all official languages, but is not capable of implementing the mandate (Fessha, 2008). This view is supported by various scholars who are concerned about the neglect of African languages in South Africa. Fessha (2008), for example, indicates that the Pan-South African Language Board does not have a significant impact on ensuring the implementation of the official languages. De Lange (2010) adds that, despite the above-mentioned constitutional provisions, nothing much has been done by government to regulate the use of all 11 official languages in South Africa (De Lange, 2010). According to Naudé (2010), the government is instead pursuing an equalised South African identity which, in itself, contradicts a pluralistic democratic ideal. Pillay and Yu (2010) and Nel and Müller (2010) similarly report that Higher Education Institutions are only using English as the language of the market and of economic viability for the purpose of matching and feeding the labour market (employment) rather than addressing the political, social and economic complexity of this country. According to Lourens and Buys (2010), the State as well as a significant part of the population is underestimating the importance of language in developing human beings to reach their full potential.

The above contradiction resulted in several African parents opening court cases in relation to the language policy in school. One of the court cases was that of NR Nkosi versus Durban High School Governing Body (Department of Basic Education, 2010). A parent of a Durban High school learner claimed that her son, whose home language is isiZulu, was discriminated against by being taught in isiZulu as a third additional language and not as a medium of instruction (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The court found that offering Afrikaans and English as media of instruction for those learners whose mother tongue is isiZulu constituted an unfair discrimination (Department of Basic Education, 2010). What is surprising is that the court did not order the school to implement isiZulu as a medium of instruction for the learners whose mother tongue is isiZulu.

Instead, the court only remarked that a serious commitment needed to be made by the state to provide the capacity, in terms of its resources, in order to enable every public school in KwaZulu-Natal to be in a position to provide isiZulu at school level.

Another contentious issue is that most parents want their children to rather study in English than in their own languages. The perception is that English opens doors to different economic opportunities. English is still the dominant language at national and provincial levels in South Africa. The medium of instruction in South Africa is mainly English and Afrikaans and for the majority of Black people in South Africa, English is preferable (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

2.5 THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF MULTILINGUALISM

Another factor which contributes to the marginalisation of African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning is the negative perception of multilingualism (Amberg & Vause, 2014:05). When one talks of African languages in Africa, one is referring to many African languages. The African continent is famous for its many languages. Of the roughly 6,900 languages found in the world, just over 2000 or almost 30% are found in Africa, more than 2000 in America, 2250 in Asia, 1300 in Australia, and about 220 in Europe (Amberg & Vause, 2014:05). South Africa is not called a rainbow nation because South Africa has 11 official languages, namely; Afrikaans spoken by 13.5%, English by 9.6%, isiNdebele by 2.1%, isiXhosa by 16%, isiZulu by 22.7%, Sepedi by 9.1%, Sesotho by 7.6%, Setswana by 8%, SiSwati by 2.5%, Tshivenḓa by 2.4% and Xitsonga spoken by 4.5% of the population of 54 956 900 (Statistics South Africa, 2015). African languages are spoken by 80.5% of the population of South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Limpopo Province has a population of 5 726 800 with 96.7% of the population speaking African languages (Statistics South Africa, 2015). In Limpopo Province, three African languages are spoken, namely; Sepedi (52.9%), Xitsonga (17.0%) and Tshivenḓa (16.7%) (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Despite the government's commitment to multilingualism and the promotion of language rights in all

spheres of public life, the medium of instruction in schools does not totally reflect the multilingual nature of South Africa.

According to Amberg and Vause (2014:05), the fact that there are many languages in South Africa is often used negatively to suggest that this is a distinct disadvantage from the point of view of communication and cost. Compared with a single language which is widely spoken, a multiplicity of languages is assumed to be problematic, since it is possible that there may not be a shared language (Amberg & Vause, 2014:05). In South Africa, for example, there are 11 official languages, which include nine African languages. Instead of taking one African language as a Language of Teaching and Learning, English and Afrikaans are recognised as Languages of Teaching and Learning. One would expect that all learners learn in their mother tongues, or one African language is selected as a medium of instruction. This argument, however, ignores the fact that there are languages spoken by millions of speakers, and that there are many people in Africa who speak two or more languages. Hence, bilingualism or multilingualism will indeed aid cross-linguistic communication. Besides, when people talk of a common language that will facilitate communication, they almost always refer to an official imported language which, as is well known, is only truly common to perhaps 10-20% of the population (Amberg & Vause, 2014:05). The argument about cost is that operating in a single language is more economical than operating in several languages. Further, the existence of such a language avoids the problems of translation, interpretation, and production of documents in several languages. While this may be true, the real cost is a comparison between denying a citizen the right to be heard in his or her language as opposed to the so-called economy of operating in a language in which one is not competent. In the South African context, such a language is invariably an imported official language, namely; English.

What can be concluded is that the negative perception of multilingualism serves to diminish the status of African languages, presenting them as a problem rather than an asset. The irony of the matter is that legally, African languages in Africa have been declared official languages, but they are not used as media of instruction. Whatever status may be ascribed to African languages in South Africa, they still rank lower than imported

official languages (Webb, 1996: 143-144). According to Brenzinger, Heine and Sommer (1991), one of the consequences of the negative perception towards multilingualism is language endangerment, a phenomenon that has become a prominent issue in sociolinguistic studies. Brenzinger, Heine and Sommer (1991) further indicate that there are six major characteristics of an endangered language, namely;

- Very few speakers remaining, most of them old.
- No longer used for any meaningful purpose in the community.
- Not being transmitted to the younger generation.
- No orthography or written materials in it.
- Language shift has taken place such that the language has been or is being replaced by another language.
- On the verge of extinction.

Statistics compiled by Brenzinger, Heine and Sommer (1991) reveal that in 1991, there were 54 extinct, 67 near-extinct and 49 dying languages in Africa. When languages are endangered and there is no attempt to take principled action to preserve them, it is logical to conclude that such languages are held in low esteem.

2.6 THE ADVANTAGES OF MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

The main focus of this study is the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction and learning. One of the popular international criteria used to define mother tongue is that it is "the language one thinks, dreams and counts in" (Orekan, 2011). The implication here is that language is very closely related to the mind, it is the means by which we conceptualise and think and normally we cannot think without language. Learning in one's own language has several advantages for the learner, including increased access, improved learning outcomes, reduced chances of repetition and drop-out rates and socio-cultural benefits (World Bank, 2005).

According to Kioko (2015), by using their mother tongue, learners are more likely to engage in the learning process. When learners are proficient in the language of

instruction, it allows them to ask questions, make suggestions, answer questions and create and communicate new knowledge with enthusiasm. It gives learners confidence and helps them to affirm their cultural identity. Furthermore, many linguists argue that when it comes to learning a second language, it is crucial to first have a solid foundation in one's first language. Other linguists, Taylor and Coetzee (2013), indicate that mother tongue instruction gives a better boost to English study later. This implies that several years of mother tongue instruction will lead to a better second language acquisition than being instructed in that second language from the first day of school. This view is confirmed by Bloch (2012), who emphasises that we must appreciate that the brain is not a container with finite space that has two or more distinct compartments for each language; in fact, knowledge and skills are transferred from one language to another.

2.7 THE DISADVANTAGES OF USING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A LANGUAGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Studies indicate that the challenge presented by the South African education system is to provide quality education to the multi-cultural learners in a country where there are 11 official languages (Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull & Armstrong, 2011). Despite the recognition of all 11 languages of South Africa, and the constitutional provision that everyone has a right to receive education in the official language of his or her choice, the majority of learners in South Africa receive their education through the medium of English. English is still the dominant language at national and provincial levels in South Africa, and is favoured over other languages because it is seen by parents and the government as the language of power (Setati, 2005). Research on the association between mother tongue education and scholastic achievement points to a good correlation between the two (Burkett, Clegg, Landon, Reillly & Verster; Kaphesi, 2000; Van Heerden, 1996; Myburgh, Poggenpoel & Van Rensburg, 2004). Research reveals that bilingual children perform better in schools when the school teaches the children's home language effectively (Cummins, 2001). This implies that when their home language is rejected, the development of that language stagnates and their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined. Many studies revealed that most Black African learners in

South Africa are disadvantaged by the medium of instruction. According to Myburgh et al. (2004), where learners do not speak the language of instruction, authentic teaching and learning cannot take place. This is a serious concern when one considers the fact that the whole of Africa is facing this challenge.

Van Heerden (1996:04) states that Black learners experience problems because they cannot study in their first language. He states that English is the preferred medium of instruction in schools because some indigenous languages do not have the linguistic complexity to enable them to be used in technical and scientific contexts. Moreover, many parents choose English as the Language of Teaching and Learning because they see that it has a cultural capital that will ensure jobs for their children. Most learners who struggle in the Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT), will in all probability, also be under-achievers. These learners are not fluent in English, the tuition medium of their choice. They lack sufficient command of English to succeed at school. This leads to problems regarding effective comprehension of the content of academic material, analysis of questions and presentation of answers. Most learners struggle to communicate in English. As a result, they are at a disadvantage because English is the language used to respond to questions in the examinations. Lemmer (1995) observes that in an examination or a test, a learner might know the answer but could lack the adequate vocabulary and positive attitude to present his/her answers. McKay (2012) also argues that children learn better when they are taught through a language they know well.

According to Wessels (2010), language or literacy constitutes the very process through which learning occurs, and lies at the root of academic performance. Wessels (2010) adds that students need good language skills at a high maturational level in order to participate in the academic playing field and to perform well academically. However, there is a problem in learning English because African learners communicate in African languages in the homes, communities as well as in the classrooms. African learners use English only for learning and not communication. These learners do not speak English during breaks with their friends. The English Language Proficiency (ELP) of the learners is very limited because they only speak it in the classroom. There is too little sustained and meaningful exposure to English outside the classroom for most of these learners.

They play with learners who speak different indigenous African languages at home. Whatever little progress is being made at school is undone at home because learners revert to their mother tongue. These learners speak a few words in English, do not perform well in tasks, tend to not do their homework and do not participate in class activities. The learners also experience difficulties in areas of reading, reading comprehension and spelling. Their English proficiency is not adequate for the purposes of formal learning and, as a result, they do not succeed or perform well. This is confirmed by Lemmer (1991:169) who asserts that learners with Low English Language Proficiency (LELP) who use English as a Language of Learning and Teaching suffer the following serious effects in the learning situation: poor academic achievement, a poor foundation for cognitive development and academic progress, a poor self-image and lack of self-confidence and emotional insecurity or anxiety. This trend is reflected in most schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.

The South African National Curriculum declares that, since English First Additional Language (FAL) is used as a 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 (Department of Basic Education, 2002:04). However, these learners struggle in the acquisition of English. Language acquisition is the process by which we learn to speak, write and use language in meaningful ways to communicate (Saxton, 2010:10). In order to speak a language as adults do, children need to have acquired five areas of linguistic competence, namely; phonology, lexis, semantics, grammar and pragmatics (Stotsky, 1999:227). Phonological development is the acquisition of sounds in order to pronounce words; lexical development is the acquisition of words; semantics development is the acquisition of the meaning of words; and pragmatic development highlights children's motivation to acquire language. Halliday (1995) classified the functions of language as *instrumental* (to express needs), *regulatory* (to control the behaviour of others), *interactional* (to relate to others), *heuristic* (to gain knowledge of the environment), *personal* (to express yourself), imaginative (to use language imaginatively) and informative (to convey facts and information).

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The social context within which language is used dictates the type of proficiency as demanded by the context. Most children gain the knowledge of the language implicitly during the socialisation process (Moonsamy, 1995:02). However, English L2 learners are not as exposed to English as their English L1 counterparts in terms of correct exposure to the language, be it speaking regularly with English-speaking peers, listening to English radio, watching English programmes on television, exposure to English print media or singing English songs. Should these be provided, English L2 learners will be able to achieve proficiency in English at the same or higher levels as their English L1 peers. Although English Second language learners experience difficulties and are at a disadvantage in their acquisition of English as compared to their English L1 counterparts, they nevertheless also have the same capacity to learn as their fellow English L1 school mates.

According to Alexander and Bamgose (1999), learning in a language that is not one's own leads to two challenges. Firstly, the acquisition of the official language, and secondly, the ability to understand the knowledge rendered in the official language. McKay (2012:56) also argues that children learn better when they are taught through a language they know well. Hence, she points out that while the Language-in-Education Policy (Department of Education, 1996) grants parents and school governing bodies a significant role in the choice of the language of the school, more needs to be done to make parents aware of the benefits of mother language education. It is therefore necessary to conduct a study to investigate why African languages are not used as media of instruction in South Africa. Professor Webb of the University of Pretoria warns of dire consequences for learners who do not learn in a language they understand (Webb, 1996). He notes that learners who do not learn in a language they are familiar with:

- participate minimally in classroom discussions;
- perform below par in relation to other students;
- experience feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem; and
- experience higher rates of failure and repetition, and are more prone to dropping out from school (Webb, 1996).

The studies outlined above revealed that African learners do not know English well enough to cope with the academic demands of their schooling. This implies that they are not fluent in English, are passive in the classroom and lack sufficient command of English to succeed at school. Their English proficiency is not adequate for the purposes of formal learning and, as a result, they do not succeed or perform well in assessment tasks. This is a major blow to policy makers and educators as language or literacy is a core foundation of all skills relating to education, and determines the accomplishment of any aim or purpose one might have in life. Language competence and proficiency is central to educational success because it is the primary tool through which teachers mediate and through which students access the whole curriculum (Hoff, 2005:12). However, Balfour (1999:106) holds the view that the medium of instruction in townships schools is a problem not recognised by the education sector in South Africa.

2.8 SUMMARY

Chapter two dealt with literature review with special attention on the theoretical framework underpinning the study, historical background of languages in South Africa, the South African language policy, the negative perception of multilingualism, the advantages of using mother tongue as a medium of instruction and disadvantages of using foreign languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning. The purpose of the review of literature was to shed light on different views on how African languages and the impact thereof when used as media of instruction in South Africa.

It is important to recognise the fact that the argument for African languages as media of instruction is not an argument against learning English, but an argument for a pedagogically sound approach to learning for all children. Any language can be used for any function, including teaching Mathematics and Science, but like muscles in our bodies, languages grow when used and shrink when neglected (Bloch, 2012). The problem with English as a medium of instruction is that it is only used in the classroom; outside the classroom and at home, African children use African languages. Children need at least six to eight years to come to know a language well. Many people argue that the low status

accorded to African languages in South Africa is often based on the fact that there is no sufficient terminology in African languages to be used in Science and Mathematics. While it is true that the use of African languages in subjects such as Mathematics and Science requires language development efforts, the commonly held view that African languages cannot be used to express scientific concepts is not true because African languages in South Africa already have a written tradition. What is required is to expand African vocabulary by creating terminology to serve adequately in subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

The next chapter focuses on the empirical investigation, which includes the research paradigm, research design, research methodology, ethical considerations and the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two provided a review of the literature on the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools. Various literature sources were reviewed in order to explore and learn how other scholars have theorised and conceptualised issues related to the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools. This study is aimed at exploring why African languages are not used as Languages of Teaching and Learning in public schools in South Africa. The use of English second language as a medium of instruction for African learners is a serious challenge to both African teachers and learners. The findings of this study will enable the researcher to suggest solutions for the challenge of the medium of instruction found in most schools in Limpopo Province. This chapter provides details on the research design and methodology used to conduct this research. This includes a description of the primary (3.2.1) and secondary research questions (3.2.2), aim and objectives (3.3.1) of the study (3.3.2), research paradigm (3.4.1), research design (3.4.2), research approach (3.4.3), population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and limitations of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.2.1 Primary question

Against the background of the research problem described in Chapter 1, the following is a restatement of the research questions of this study:

Why are African languages not used as Languages of Teaching and Learning in public schools in South Africa?

3.2.2 Secondary questions

- Is it possible to use African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning in South Africa?
- What are the challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as Languages of Teaching and Learning in public schools in South Africa?
- What strategies can be taken to implement African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning in public schools in South Africa?

3.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

3.3.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study as highlighted in Chapter 1 can be restated as follows:

The aim of this study is to analyse the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.

3.3.2 Objectives of the study

This study is directed by the following objectives:

- To investigate the possibility of using African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning in South Africa.

- To explore the challenges of using African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning in public schools in South Africa.

- To devise strategies that can be taken to implement African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning in public schools in South Africa.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, the research design and methodology used to conduct this study is presented and discussed. This includes a discussion of the research paradigm, research design and research methodology.

3.4.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs on how the world is perceived, which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Wahyuni, 2012:69). In other words, a research paradigm is a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied. A paradigm creates new worldviews, social contexts and new sets of beliefs that guide new kinds of actions that have widespread impacts on the conduct of inquiry (Morgan, 2014:151). This implies that all research should be based on a paradigm that clarifies the study, and researchers must consider the interaction of such views when conducting research (Neuman, 2011:27). There are two main research paradigms, namely; positivist and constructivist paradigms. Positivists believe that different researchers observing the same factual problem will generate a similar result by carefully using statistical tests and applying a similar research process in investigating a large sample (Creswell, 2009). The objectivist-positivist

paradigm considers reality as definable and quantifiable, and therefore, examines it from a distant and objective perspective. The goals of objectivist-positivist research are to control and make predictions (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). Quantitative research is generally based on this paradigm.

In contrast to positivists, constructivists believe that reality is constructed by social factors and people's perceptions of it (Wahyuni, 2012:71). This study is based on the constructivist or interpretivism paradigm, which indicates that reality is constructed by social factors and people's perceptions of it (Wahyuni, 2012:71). According to constructivists, individuals with their own varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the construction of reality. This implies that constructivism is associated with subjectivity, and that social reality may change and can have multiple realities. The purpose of constructivist research is to generate meaning by engaging the world, rather than through the verification of measurable, objective and factual data. In this study, meaning was created by means of a partnership between the researcher and the participants during the research process.

This study will be based on the constructivist paradigm because the aim of the study is to explore educators' perceptions of the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in their schools. Constructivism will allow the researcher to interview participants from various backgrounds, assumptions and experiences in order to understand why African languages in various contexts are not preferred as media of instruction in schools.

3.4.2 Research Design

According to Dawson (2002), a research design is the conceptual structure within which research will be conducted. Babbie (2004) concurs with Dawson when he defines research design as a plan of what you are going to observe during the research process, while Mouton (2002) describes it as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. Accordingly, the function of a research design is to provide for the collection of relevant information with a minimal expenditure of effort, time and money. A qualitative phenomenological research design will be used in this study to investigate the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public

schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The aim of phenomenological design is to transform lived experiences into a description of its essence, allowing for reflection and analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). When using this design, the researcher brackets or puts aside all pre-judgements, and collects data on how individuals make sense of a particular experience or situation, and in this case, the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The researcher will collect data on how educators use African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The phenomenological research design is preferred because it will transform lived experiences into a description of its essence, allowing for reflection of and analysis of the use African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.

3.4.3 Research Approaches

There are two main recognised approaches for the procedures for conducting research, namely; quantitative and qualitative approaches (Maree, 2011:257). According to Maree (2011:257), the quantitative and qualitative approaches are well established in the social and behavioural sciences. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) describe quantitative research as "a type of approach which is deductive in nature". Something that is deductive works from the more general to the more specific, and is useful in the establishment of cause and effect, as well as the repllication and generalisation of the population of the study group. This implies that if something is true of a class of things in general, it is also true for all members of that class. In his discussion of the quantitative approach, Van Rensburg (2010:85) describes it as a formal, objective and systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the phenomenon under investigation. Quantitative research therefore, relies primarily on the collection of quantitative data, and such investigation requires the researcher to collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data. A quantitative approach is used chiefly to test or verify theories or descriptions, select variables of the study, explain variables in questions or hypotheses, use statistical standards of validity and reliability, and to employ statistical procedures for analysis (Creswell, 2003:02). In other words, we predict what the

observations should be if the theory were correct. Furthemore, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) assert that this can be "useful in the establishment of cause and effects as well as the replication and generalisation to the population of the study group".

Quantitative researchers consider it to be of primary importance to state one's hypotheses, and then to test these hypotheses with empirical data to see if they are supported. The quantitative approach makes observations more explicit, easier to aggregate, compares and summarises data, and opens up the use of statistical analyses ranging from simple averages to complex formulae and mathematical models (Babbie, 2004: 27). In his discussion of the quantitative approach, Van Rensburg (2010:85) describes it as a formal, objective and systematic process in which numerical data is used to obtain information about the phenomenon. Such investigation requires the researcher to collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2012:18). This method, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), is used chiefly to test or verify theories or descriptions, select variables of the study, explain those in questions or hypotheses using statistical standards of validity and reliability, and employ statistical procedures for analysis. The quantitative approach makes observations more explicit and easier to aggregate, compares and summarises data and opens up the use of statistical analyses, ranging from simple averages to complex formulae and mathematical models (Babbie, 2010:27). This study is not based on quantitative approach, but on constructivist paradigm, which is associated with subjectivity and that social reality may change and can have multiple realities. In this study, the researcher seeks to understand the use of African languages as media of instruction in schools by engaging the participants from various contexts, rather than the verification of measurable, objective and factual data.

This study is based on the qualitative approach. Creswell (2012:12) defines qualitative research as an enquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on forming a complex, complete picture, constructed with words, reporting views of subjects in detail and conducted in a natural setting. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the word 'qualitative' implies emphasis on the qualities of entities and processes and on meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount,

intensity or frequency. It is also defined by Curry, Krumholz, O'Cathain, Piano Clark, Cherlin and Bradley (2013:1442) as a form of inquiry that explores why or how a phenomenon occurs to develop a theory or to describe the nature of an individual's experience. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:10), qualitative research studies typically serve one or more of the following purposes:

(i)   Description, whereby they can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people;

(ii) Interpretation, whereby they enable the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives and discover problems that exist within the phenomenon;

(iii) Verification, which allows the researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalisations within a real world context; and

(iv) Evaluation, which provides the researcher with a means to judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practices and innovations.

In this study, the qualitative approach was used to explore the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The qualitative research approach was preferred because it was able to produce descriptive data, which are generally people's own written or spoken words. The in-depth interviews allowed the participants the time and space to respond to the questions posed. The main reason for using the qualitative approach in this study was because it allowed the researcher to conduct research in a way that limits disruption of the natural context of the phenomenon under study. The use of qualitative approach gave the participants the latitude to explore the topics under discussion, give their honest perspectives, relate the issues to their own experiences, offer solutions to problems and propose solutions. This is confirmed by Streubert Speziale and Carpenter (2003), who indicate that qualitative researchers believe in multiple realities, are committed to understanding the phenomenon under study, and to the acknowledgement of the participants' viewpoints. The use of qualitative approach also allowed the researcher to

test the validity of the assumption that African people are proud their own culture. The approach was also used to validate the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

3.4.4 Research Methodology

Methodology refers to a system of methods used in a particular field to reach a valid and reliable perception of phenomena, events, processes or issues at many different levels (Soanes, 2002). Research methodology focuses on the population of the study, sampling, data collection and data analysis.

(a) Population of the study

According to Van Rensburg (2010), the term 'population' refers to the entire group of persons or set of objects and events that the researcher wants to study, while Mouton (2002) defines a population as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. This study was conducted in Limpopo Province, which consists of five district municipalities and 25 local municipalities. But due to financial and time constraints, this study focused exclusively on Mopani District. The population of this study was all the educators from six primary schools in Lulekani Circuit, Namakgale Circuit and Groot Letaba Circuit of Mopani District in Limpopo Province. This population was selected because it consists of the educators who are directly involved in the use of English as a medium of instruction in the primary schools.

(b) Sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting certain objects, events, units, people or members to represent the whole group (Van Rensburg, 2010). A sample is part of the whole or a subset of measurements drawn from the population. De Vos et al. (2002) define sampling as taking any portion of a population as a representative of that population. We study the sample in an effort to understand the population in which we are interested (Creswell, 2013:124). There are two methods of sampling, namely; probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Babbie, 2007). The probability sampling method is any method of sampling that utilises some form of random selection from a list containing the names of everyone in the population being sampled (Babbie, 2007). Examples of probability

sampling are systematic random sampling, simple random sampling, cluster random sampling, and multi-stage sampling and stratified sampling (Babbie, 2007). Non-probability sampling does not involve random selection. Examples of non-probability sampling are convenience sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling.

In view of the aim of this study, purposive sampling was used to select the participants of this study. In purposive sampling, the principle used to select a sample is to select cases with a specific purpose in mind (Schultze, 2002). Purposive sampling was preferred in this study because it allowed the researcher to select schools and participants on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones would be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 2007). In this study, six research sites were selected by the researcher to participate in the study. The sample of this study consisted of 30 educators from six primary schools, from three circuits in Mopani District, namely; Lulekani Circuit, Namakgale Circuit and Groot Letaba Circuit. The following table illustrates the sample size of the study:

Circuit	School	Number of educators
Lulekani	A	5
	B	5
Namakgale	C	5
	D	5
Groot Letaba	E	5
	F	**5**
	Total	**30**

Table 1: The sample size of the study

The criteria for inclusion in this study were that all the schools were English medium primary schools located in Mopani District of Limpopo Province, and all were within easy reach with regard to travelling from the researcher's home.

(c) Pilot study

A pilot study is described as a small scale study using a small sample of the population but not the same group that will eventually form part of the sample group in the actual research (Uys & Basson, 1995:103). According to Tuckman (1978:225), a pilot study attempts to determine whether questions possess the desired qualities of discriminability.

For example, if all respondents reply identically to any one item, that item probably lacks discriminability. A pilot study is important to improve the research questions, credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 1994:121). In this study, a pilot study was conducted with five educators from one of the schools from which the sample was drawn. Interviews were conducted with five educators selected for the pilot study.

At the end of the pilot study, the five teachers were requested to freely give their comments and criticisms about the interview questions. The researcher took special note of any cues suggesting that the respondent was uncomfortable or did not fully understand the questions. The interview questions were then reviewed and a final interview schedule was designed to conduct the individual interviews. In this study, the researcher also ensured that there was data saturation. Data saturation in qualitative study is a difficult concept to define but has come to be associated with the point in qualitative research project when there is enough data to ensure the research questions can be answered (Bowen, 2008). Saturation is therefore a tool used for ensuring that adequate and quality data are collected to support the study. Various strategies of data saturation are recommended by research experts. For example, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) indicate that data saturation may be achieved by conducting 20 to 30 interviews that last an hour or more. Cresswell (2013) suggests that to reach saturation means conducting twenty to sixty interviews. Fusch and Ness (2015) emphasise that interviews are one method by which one's study results reach data saturation. Furthermore, interview questions should be structured to facilitate asking multiple participants the same questions (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). In this study, data saturation was achieved by conducting 40 long individual interviews of more than one hour, and where required, the researcher had two interview sessions with each participant.

(d) Data Collection

Data collection refers to a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering relevant information to answer emerging research questions using methods such as interviews, questionnaires and observations (Creswell, 2012). Informed by the literature review, and the qualitative phenomenological research design of this study, an interview was used to collect the data from the participants of the study. An interview occurs when researchers

ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers (Creswell, 2012). The aim of the interviews is to gather information about the participants' experiences, understandings and feelings about the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in their schools. An interview was preferred in this study because it:

- was able to supply additional and more detailed information, and enabled the researcher to establish relationships with the respondents in order to obtain richer information;
- enabled the researcher to establish relationships with the interviewees to obtain richer information to supplement the survey;
- offered the researcher the possibility to interpret the findings of the survey against the insights of the interviewees;
- offered the researcher an opportunity to restructure questions, where necessary.

There are generally two main types of interviews, namely; structured (closed-ended) and unstructured (open-ended) interviews (Creswell, 2012). In structured interviews, the questions, order and wording, and their sequence are fixed and identical for every respondent, while in an unstructured or open-ended interview, which was used in this study, the participants can best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspective of the researcher, and the interviewer does not follow a rigid structure, but covers as much ground as possible (Creswell, 2012).

Before data collection, a letter was written to the principals of the schools, seeking permission to conduct research in the school. After the permission was granted, the researcher proceeded to speak to the educators to inform them about the study, requested them to participate and to sign a consent form. An interview schedule was used to conduct the interview. An interview guide or schedule is a list of questions that guide the interviewer through the interview. The interview schedule offered a framework and sequence for the questions and helped maintain some consistency across interviews with different participants. The interviews involved asking questions, intense probing for deeper meaning and understanding of the responses, recording and documenting of

responses. The participants were given the latitude and the time to speak freely while the researcher guided the discussion to ensure that all the questions were covered.

(e) Data Analysis

In every study, the data collected need to be analysed before they can be interpreted. According to Babbie (2007), data analysis refers to a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. The purpose of data analysis is to describe the data clearly, identify what is typical and atypical of the data, bring to light differences, relationships and other consistent patterns existing in the data and ultimately answer the research questions (Charles, 1995). The Tesch Method or Thematic Approach was used to analyse the data collected in this study through the interviews.

Once the data collection process had been completed, the researcher began the process of data analysis and interpretation. The Tesch Method or Thematic Approach was used to analyse the data collected in this study through the interviews. After preparing the transcripts for data analysis, they were subjected to the Tesch Method of interpreting data in the basic sense of reflecting on them until a better understanding was achieved (Tesch, 2002). Starting with the first question, all the answers of the participants pertaining to a question were read. Data were categorised and frequencies of each category formed the basis for analysis of data recurring. Different themes were identified in the answers. A table was used to summarise the answers which were relevant to specific themes. The rest of the questions and answers were dealt with in the same way.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

When this study was designed, the researcher became aware of several limitations in its design. The following were identified as limitations of the study:

- This study was demarcated to one District of Limpopo Department of Education, namely; Mopani District, while there are presently five districts. It is the view of the researcher that this delimitation has, to a certain extent, decreased the generalisability of the research findings. This study could have been extended to the other districts.

- This study was demarcated to three circuits of Mopani District of Limpopo Province, namely; Lulekani Circuit, Namakgale Circuit and Groot Letaba Circuit. Mopani District consists of 24 circuits and demarcating the research area to three circuits further decreased the generalisability of the research findings. It would have been ideal if the study were extended to more circuits.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the researcher believes that the findings of this study will contribute to enhancing the performance of learners in the secondary schools under investigation.

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on research methodology and design that was used to conduct the study. In this chapter, the primary and secondary research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research paradigm, research design, research approach, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and limitations of the study were presented and discussed. The next chapter focuses on the analysis of and interpretation of the research findings**.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary goal in this study was to explore and describe the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. In the previous chapter, the research design and methodology, which includes the description of research, research questions and aims, research paradigm, research design, research approach, sampling, data collection and data analysis was presented and discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and interpret the data collected during the interviews. Data analysis is a process of examining and interpreting data in order to derive meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Creswell, 2009). The concept "data" refers to information that has been translated into a form that is efficient for processing (Terblanche & Durrhem, 2002). The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the investigation carried out in order to provide answers to the research questions that guided the study.

This study was based on the qualitative research approach and the constructivist paradigm. The phenomenological research design was used to investigate the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The study was also based on the Social Constructivist Theory (Social Constructivism) developed by Lev Vygotsky. Social Constructivism emphasises that learning is an active continuous process where learners take information from the environment, construct meaning and make interpretations based on their prior knowledge and experience (Killen, 2000). Constructivism is preferred because it allowed the researcher to interview participants from various backgrounds, assumptions and experiences in order to explore the possibility of using African languages as media of instruction in the schools. The participants of this study were 30 educators from six primary schools, Lulekani, Namakgale and Groot Letaba Circuits. Guided by research questions, interviews were conducted to collect information from the participants.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to respond to the following primary and secondary questions:

4.2.1   Primary question

Is it possible to use African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province, South Africa?

4.2.2   Secondary questions

- What are the challenges of the medium of instruction in the schools?
- What strategies can be implemented to ensure the effective use of African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning?

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section presents the findings of the study collected by means of interviews. The data was collected from 30 educators from six primary schools from three circuits in Mopani District, namely; Lulekani Circuit, Namakgale Circuit and Groot Letaba Circuit. The Tesch Method of qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The eight steps as explained in Chapter 3 were eventually reduced to a focus on the following three final steps:

Step 1: Reading

In this first step, all the transcripts were read and reread to get a sense of the whole. This was followed by selecting the participants' responses to find underlying meanings and thoughts of the interview.

Step 2: Listing of topics

After listing all topics from the responses, similar topics or responses were clustered together. These responses were organised into categories in an attempt to answer the research questions.

Step 3: Development of categories

The development of categories progressed on account of the identification of themes adhering to each category. During data analysis, the following main three main themes and sub-themes emerged from the participants' responses:

4.3.1 Main theme 1: The possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province, South Africa

The participants from Namakgale, Lulekani and Groot Letaba Circuits in Mopani District of Limpopo Province were asked five questions about the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in primary schools. The following sub-themes emerged from the participants' responses to the questions:

(a) Sub-theme 1: The current national policy of medium of instruction in South Africa

The participants were asked to explain the current national policy of medium of instruction in South Africa in order to understand the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. Participant 1 argued that "*Learners from grade R to grade 3 use Home languages as media of teaching and learning. As from grade 4 to grade 12, English is used as a medium of teaching and learning.*" This response was supported by participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 who responded as follows:

Participant 2: "*It is all 11 official languages of which African languages are included. It is further said that learners' first entry (grade R) must use African language if it is their mother tongue.*"

Participant 3: "*Every person has a right to learn and be taught in his or her own home language, provided it is possible at that education institution.*"

Participant 4: "*It indicates that there are 11 official languages in South Africa. It further says every learner has the right to be taught in his or her own language.*"

Participant 5: "*The current national policy in principles allowed all 11 languages to be official languages and in practice there are only two languages which are regarded as media of instruction.*"

Participant 6: "*Everyone has the right to express himself or herself in his or her own language. Learners also have the right to be taught in their own language.*"

Participant 7: "*It caters for 11 languages in South Africa but only two languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in all public schools. The other languages are used as First Additional Languages or Home languages but not as Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT).*"

Participant 8: "*It recognises all 11 languages as official languages.*"

Participant 10: "*The current national policy caters for 11 languages but only two which is English and Afrikaans are used as media of teaching and learning in public schools.*"

The above views of the participants are supported by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. A key constitutional clause pertaining to language in education is found on page 14 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996), which states that: "*Everyone has a right to receive education in the official language of his or her choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable." (*Republic of South Africa, 1996)*.* The new constitution seeks to stop the dominance of English and Afrikaans and elevate the status of the other nine languages. For example, Section 9 (3) protects against unfair discrimination on the grounds of language, whilst Sections 30 and 31 (1) refer to people's rights in terms of cultural, religious and linguistic participation and differences (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Section 6 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) prescribes several principles with regard to the determination of language policy in public schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). The policy gives school governing bodies the power to determine the language policy of a school in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and provincial policies (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Although school governing bodies have been given this power, it is very clear that these bodies cannot declare an African language as a medium of instruction

because only two languages are recognised by the government as media of instruction, namely; English and Afrikaans.

(b) Sub-theme 2: The significance of the use of African languages as media of instruction in schools

The participants were asked a question on whether they support African languages as media of instruction and why it is significant to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. The findings of the study revealed that many educators are against the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools. Participant 1 from Namakgale Circuit does not support the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools. According to participant 1, "*an African language can be learned and perfected as a home language for learners to understand their culture, tradition and how to communicate with it, but not to explore the world.*" This view is confirmed by participant 2 from Namakgale Circuit who said that "*I don't support it because when you look for a job, there is nowhere you will be interviewed in African languages. They use English and African languages are used in certain places only and are not international languages.*" Participant 6 from Lulekani Circuit also rejects the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning. Participant 6 said, "*No I don't support that. The problem is that it is only spoken at some part of the province and outside that part is another language. For example, Xitsonga is only in Mopani; outside is another language.*" Similarly, participant 7 from Groot Letaba Circuit does not support the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning. Participant 7 indicated that "*No, I don't support that. However, the use of African languages as media of instruction may simplify other subjects.*" Participant 7 does not clarify why she does not support the use of African languages as media of teaching and instruction.

There are, however, other participants who support the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. For example, participant 3 from Namakgale Circuit emphasise that she supports the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. Participant 3 said: "*Absolutely, yes. This could take our learners higher in their general academic performance. Well, at the moment I*

don't see it possible as the textbooks and all other teaching equipment are printed in English and the educators are also trained in English, making home language teaching difficult or impossible. This makes me angry as the impression we remain with is that our children are unintelligent." Participant 4 from Lulekani Circuit also supports the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning. According to participant 4, "*yes, learners come with their languages from home. They learn to speak or talk using that language until they know and understand things using it. So, if they can use it as a language of learning and teaching, there will be a flow of information.*" This view is also supported by participant 5 from Lulekani Circuit, who emphasised the significance of the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning as follows: "*Yes, they will acquire more vocabulary and knowledge and it will help to unfold their identity. Another thing is that if they don't use African languages as media of instruction, sooner or later, South Africa will be a mono-language country.*" Participant 8 from Groot Letaba Circuit also supports the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. Participant 8 said that "*Yes, so that every learner will be able to understand that language*", while participant 10 said that "*Yes, I support African languages because learners will understand the subject matter.*"

The above findings revealed that there are educators who support the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning because it promotes teaching and learning, and there are those who reject the use of African languages because they are not international languages.

(c) Sub-theme 3: The possibility of using African languages as languages of teaching and learning

The participants were asked a question about the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. The participants' responses revealed that there are educators who see the possibility and those who think that it is impossible to use African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. For example, participant 1 from Namakgale Circuit said that "*South Africa has 11 official languages and in reality to translate everything in all 11 official languages, it is not really*

possible, as these will take years to complete. If we can create an island for each and every language it can work but not when surrounded by different languages and cultures and not forgetting social media. If our learners learn everything in one African language and not use English, how are they going to communicate outside that language?" Participant 2 also believes that it is not possible to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. In her own words, she said: "*Yes, but it will take time and money. There are no African language resources in schools. Textbooks need to be translated into African languages, which will need translators."*

There are, however, some participants of this study who believe that it is possible to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. According to participant 3 from Namakgale Circuit, "*It is not just ready for our country now, but with all the positives in our Constitution and policies around education, allowing that, we are our own enemies. We only point fingers in different directions for the delays to implement this. Translation can be done and I don't think it can take time because every year our government implement many things with lots of changes.*" This view is supported by participant 4 from Lulekani Circuit who emphasises that "*Yes, it will be possible. During the Bantu Education era, the media of instruction were African languages and there were textbooks and all resources they needed."* Participant 5 from Lulekani Circuit also believes that it is possible to use African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. In her own words, she said: "*Yes, it is possible. Currently, African languages are used as Home languages at some schools and as First Additional Languages in others. This is a clear indication that African languages can be used as media of teaching and learning in our schools."* The above responses of the participants indicate that there are mixed reactions about the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools.

(d) Sub-theme 4: Attitudes of curriculum advisors, teachers, parents and learners towards the use of African languages as media of instruction

The participants were asked a question about attitudes of curriculum advisors, teachers, parents and learners towards the use of African languages as media of instruction.

Analysing attitudes of these stakeholders is very important because they also contribute to the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. Analysis of the participants' responses revealed that there are mixed reactions about the use of African languages as media of instruction in public schools. Participant 2 from Namakgale Circuit, for example, indicates that there are positive and negative attitudes about the use of African languages as media of instruction in public schools. Participant 2 said that "*some buy the ideas and some are reluctant. Those who support it said it will help their children and future nation to know where they come from because not long the country will become a mono-language country. The other part believes that if they use African languages, they will not pass interviews because it will be conducted in English.*" The views of participant 2 are supported by participant 3 who said that "*We have mixed reactions. Some feel that we are not yet ready, as a result of the unavailability of resources. As we move forward, we will then realise the shortages and then do the corrections by translating. The main sufferers are teachers because they must do translation. They must ensure that whatever content subject they offer, is well understood by learners.*" Participant 4 from Lulekani Circuit also believes that there are mixed feelings about the use of African languages as media of instruction in public schools. Participant 4 said "*some are positive, more especially curriculum advisors, parents and some learners. Some have different opinions. They said as we always meet and sometimes work outside South Africa, it will be difficult to communicate.*" Participant 5 supports this view as follows: "*Parents and curriculum advisors are positive. Some educators are not, saying that they were not trained to use African languages as media of instruction in public schools. Learners also have their views saying that there is no interview which will be conducted in African languages.*" According to participant 7, curriculum advisors, teachers, parents and learners have various attitudes about the use of African languages as media of instruction in public schools. Participant 7 said that "*curriculum advisors and teachers are not comfortable with the use of African languages as the medium of instruction, but parents and learners are very positive about it",* and participant 8 from Groot Letaba Circuit also emphasises the presence of mixed attitudes on the use of African languages as the medium of instruction. Participant 8 said that "*some parents are positive but there are also those who are negative. There are also learners who are*

excited and those who do not like the idea." Participant 10 from Groot Letaba indicated that "*some are willing to start with the implementation but some are reluctant saying that we are going nowhere when we use African languages. They base their argument on the areas, that Xitsonga is only spoken in Limpopo. When you go outside Limpopo you must use English in order to communicate with outside countries or provinces.*"

Participant 6 from Lulekani Circuit argued that there are negative attitudes about the use of African languages as media of instruction in public schools. Participant 6 said that "*some said African languages are used in particular areas not nationwide and is not a medium of instruction. Therefore, using it as a medium of instruction will be a waste of time because it cannot take you somewhere.*" According to participant 6, African languages as media of instruction in public schools are not acceptable because they do not possess any value.

(e) Sub-theme 5: Coping with African languages as media of teaching and learning
The participants were asked this question in order to establish if, as educators, they will be able to cope with African languages as media of teaching and learning. An analysis of the participants' responses to this question indicates that many teachers will not be able to cope with African languages as media of teaching and learning. This finding is confirmed by participant 1, who said that "*there will be no one who will cope because they were not trained to use African languages as media of teaching and learning*". According to participant 3, "*we are not yet ready to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. Our training was always and is still done in English or Afrikaans. The use of African languages is only limited to our homes. The process will need proper and total training of new entrants into education career. That might run for a minimum of five years.*" Participant 4 supported this view by saying that *"No, unless I am thoroughly workshopped [trained] to do it. Not only one workshop; you can't attend only one workshop and say you can use it. This can lead to suicidal teaching.*" Participant 5 emphasised this view as follows: "*No, no one has been trained to do that at present. To start with, training now will take a lot of time because even at the colleges there is no lecturer who has been trained to train student teachers how to use African languages as media of teaching and*

learning." Participant 6 also rejected the idea of the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning. Participant 6 said "*No. It means training for educator will be needed first before the implementation. Educators need to be well-equipped before they can start teaching. They will need to know the language and its terminology.*" Participant 7 emphasised their inability to cope with an African language as a medium of teaching and learning as follows: "*No. Training will also take time and money. This means that the implementation or the use of African languages as a language of learning and teaching will take a long time before it starts.*" Participant 8, on the other hand, believes that it will be difficult to cope with African languages as media of teaching and learning in the beginning but later on it will be possible. In her own words, she said "*No, it will be a challenge in the first few months but later on it will be easy, because I will learn through my mistakes.*" Lastly, participant 10 also emphasised that it will be difficult to cope with such situation. The participant said "*No, I need to be workshopped [trained] before I start teaching. The Department will conduct workshops beforehand, in order to start with the teaching.*"

A deep analysis of the participants' responses indicates firstly, that they believe that they will not be able to cope with African languages as media of teaching and learning because they are not trained to use these languages as media of teaching and learning. Secondly, they may only cope if they are trained by the Department of Education, which will take a long time for them to cope.

4.3.2 Main Theme 2: The challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in public schools

The participants were asked about current problems that they encounter in the medium of instruction in their schools. Two themes emerged from the analysis of their responses to the question. Theme 1 emerged from the responses of the educators, namely; difficulty in understanding English and difficulty in mastering other subjects.

(a) Sub-theme 1: Difficulty in understanding English

Under this theme, the participants' responses to the question revealed that educators have problems with using English and Afrikaans as media of instruction in South African schools. This view is confirmed by several participants of this study. Participant 1 from Namakgale Circuit, for example, indicated that it is difficult for the learners to understand English words. In her own words, the participant said: "*Learners, especially at the Foundation Phase, find it difficult to understand English or Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and teachers need to explain these words or translate these words for understanding.*" The current problem of using English or Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools was also emphasised by participant 3, who emphasised that "*the problem is that the same learners hardly speak English during their playful activities and neither do the teachers use English outside their classroom and the lack of textbooks in African languages is the main problem that delays the constitutional right that our learners have*". In addition, participant 4 from Lulekani Circuit said "*learners speak different languages at their homes. They encounter English as a language of teaching and learning, when they start schools, at 6 or seven years. English is difficult for them because in their homes they use their home language.*" Similarly, Participant 5 from Lulekani Circuit argued that "*Learners come from different families with different languages. To start with, a new language which is foreign to them is confusing*", while participant 8 from Groot Letaba Circuit school said that "*learners who come from home, don't know of any other language except their home language, that is, an African language."* Participant 9 from Groot Letaba Circuit also complained about the problem of English as a medium of instruction. Participant 9 said that "*most learners have dropped their languages too soon and learn a language they do not understand. They therefore struggle to understand other concepts or how to read and write."* Similarly, participant 10 said that "*Learners come from different backgrounds with different language backgrounds and knowledge. When learners come to school, they are confronted with another language which they don't understand. This makes them to be confused.*"

(b) Sub-theme 2: Difficulty in mastering other subjects

Under this theme, the participants indicated that another challenge of using English

as a language of teaching and learning is that learners have difficulty in mastering other subjects. This opinion was supported by other participants. Participant 6 from Namakgale Circuit, for example, said that there is currently a problem of using English as a medium of instruction. In his own words, he said that "*most learners have more difficulties in English which is the medium of instruction and this poses a serious problem with the mastering of subjects, which cause them to underperform and end in failing the grade.*" This opinion was confirmed by participant 7 from Lulekani Circuit, who emphasised that "*most learners have more difficulties with English and this poses a serious problem with mastering other subjects and it results in a number of them being retained."*

4.3.3 Main theme 3: The expected challenges of using African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa

The participants were asked to explain the challenges they foresee when using African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa. An analysis of the participants' responses to this question produced three themes, namely; a shortage of resources, especially educators who will be qualified to teach in African languages and those learners will take more time to understand it.

(a) Sub-theme 1: There will be shortage of resources

This theme revealed that there will be a shortage of resources when African languages are used as media of teaching and learning. According to participant 2, there will be shortage of educators who are qualified and able to use African languages as media of teaching. This is because currently, educators have been trained to use English or Afrikaans as media of teaching and learning. In this respect, participant 2 said: "*There will be a shortage of educators who will be qualified to teach the African languages content."* On the other hand, participant 1 indicated that another challenge in the implementation of African languages is the lack of content textbooks that are written in African languages. In this regard, participant 1 said: "*Currently, there are no content textbooks written in African languages because African languages are being offered as a language and not as content. Only textbooks in the Foundation Phase and Home language textbooks are written in African languages. The textbooks of other subjects are currently written in*

English and Afrikaans." Participant 4 said that "*there will be a lack of resources, like textbooks and posters or charts. There will be a lack of, or inadequate translators as people are used to English than their own languages.*" This view is supported by participant 5 who said that "*the problem or challenge will be a lack of textbooks and also well trained African language teachers. Currently, there are no textbooks and teachers are yet to be trained to teach in African languages.*" If African languages are offered as media of instruction, it will bring us back to tribalism. Tsonga speaking educators are the only ones who can teach in a Xitsonga media schools. Sepedi people can only teach at a Sepedi school.

(b) Theme 2: Learners will take more time to understand African languages

Participant 1 said *"learners will take time to understand it as they are not used to it. It will be funny at first and when time goes on, it is then that they will start to understand it."* This view was supported by participant 3, who indicated that it will take time to understand African languages because these languages have many dialects. Participant 3 put it as follows: "*The different dialects will start fighting for recognition. Every group will feel their accent is much relevant as against the others.*" According to participant 7, learners will take long time to be able to use African languages when they arrive at universities. The participant argued that "*Transition from high school to universities will be more difficult. I don't know whether universities will be able to use all the 11 official languages as media of instruction and learning. Training of academic staff to teach in African languages will be a big problem. Translation and printing of textbooks will also be a problem because it will take a long time.*" Participant 8 said that "learners themselves will be confused as they are mostly used to English", while participant 10 emphasised that "*it will not be an overnight thing to start with the implementation of African languages. The government will need to supply proper books which need to be in African languages and qualified teachers for the teaching of African languages.*"

(c) Theme 3: African languages are not used in various industries and businesses
Under this theme, the participants indicated that there will be chaos when the learners leave school because African languages are not used in the work places. Participant 1,

for example, said that "*I see a chaos in our schools as our learners will be narrow minded and by the time they complete grade 12 or university studies, they will have to face the world in a different language which is English as it is used worldwide. What is there to gain to master mother tongue? One can master mother tongue if one needs to take a career in African languages but not with careers like Accounting, Engineering, law, Health and many more.*" This problem is confirmed by participant 6, who said "*Our children will not be able to express themselves in English and also not to be interviewed in English. They will not be able to communicate with the world outside South Africa because of language barriers.*"

4.3.4 Main theme 4: The strategies that can be implemented to ensure effective use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning

The participants were asked to identify the strategies that can be used to implement the effective use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning. The participants' responses to this question produced three sub-themes, namely; training of teachers to use African languages as media of teaching and learning, introducing textbooks written in African languages

(a)   Sub-theme 1: Ensuring that teachers are competent and prepared to use African languages as media of teaching and learning

According to this sub-theme, the Department of Education must ensure that teachers are competent and trained to use African languages as media of teaching and learning by training teachers. This opinion is confirmed by participant 2, who said that "*Educators will need to be trained in order to be qualified to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. Workshops cannot work because they will be for one day or two days only. The only thing which can help will be in-service training, until such teachers are up to standard.*" The training of teachers is also emphasised by participant 3, who said that "*the effective training will be starting by training new student teachers who want to join teaching, which will take time as young people do not want to pursue their career in teaching.*" Participant 4 also supported the training of teachers by saying *"If teachers are trained to teach in African languages from their colleges, then it will be possible for them*

to teach in African languages." This strategy is also supported by Participant 5, who said that "*The effective strategy of implementation of African languages as media of teaching and learning will be a long process. Firstly, lecturers at the college or university need to be trained to train student teachers to teach in African languages as Languages of Learning and Teaching (LOLT). Then we can say that we Africans are ready to implement these languages as media of instruction.*" Participant 6 also recommended the training of teachers to use African languages as media of teaching and learning, saying: "*Educator will be trained through workshop in order to acquire knowledge and the skills needed. It will take time as we know it will not occur through one workshop."* Similarly*, participant 8 said that *"Educators need to be workshopped in order to cope with the teaching of these languages. The training will enable teachers to properly plan their teaching in such a way that it will be interesting and easy to understand.* Participant 10, on the other hand, said that "*teachers support group will help in engaging other teachers. Training and workshops by the department of Education will also help."*

(b) Sub-theme 2: Introduce textbooks written in African languages

In sub-theme 2, it is recommended that the Department of Education should introduce textbooks written in African languages. This opinion is supported by participant 2, who said that the first thing that should be done is to translate textbooks into African languages. He added: "*the first thing will be translation. They have to translate the learner support material first and are then that they can introduce it."* This view is confirmed by participant 10, who emphasised that "*textbooks and posters should be written in African languages so that the African languages can be used as a medium of teaching and learning. Without textbooks in African languages it will be impossible to introduce African languages as media of teaching and learning."*

4.5. SUMMARY

This study explored the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The thematic approach or Tesch Method of qualitative data analysis was used to present, analyse and interpret the data collected through interviews of 30 participants. The participants answered all the

interview questions, which indicated that they were clear and easy to understand. The findings of this study revealed that it is possible to introduce African languages as media of teaching and learning in South Africa, but it will require extensive preparation, which involves effective training of all the teachers and the acquisition of teaching and learning materials in African languages. The study also revealed that the current use of English and Afrikaans as media of teaching and learning contribute to poor academic performance of learners. The findings of the study, recommendations and conclusions, are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on presentation, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data collected through interviews. The purpose of this study was to explore the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The study also explored current challenges of medium of instruction in schools, the challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in public schools, and the strategies that can be taken to implement African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools. Specifically, this study was designed to answer the following main research question:

What is the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province?

Questions that were formulated in order to answer the main question were:

- What are the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in public schools?
- What are the challenges of using African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools?
- What strategies can be taken to implement African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa?

The above research questions were used as a reference point in designing interview questions. The findings of the study are based on the above questions. Thirty educators from six primary schools, from three circuits in Mopani District in Limpopo Province, namely; Lulekani Circuit, Namakgale Circuit and Groot Letaba Circuit were interviewed. In this chapter, the summary of research findings, conclusion that emanates from the findings of the investigation and recommendations are presented.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1, the background and problem of the study were explored and formulated. Some of the critical aspects presented in the chapter include the research problem, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, significance of the study, preliminary literature review, and research design and methodology (cf.1.2-1.11).

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature reviewed on the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. The themes explored in this chapter included the theoretical framework underpinning the study, historical background of languages in South Africa, the South African language policy, the negative perceptions of multilingualism, the advantages of using mother tongue as a medium of instruction and disadvantages of using foreign languages as languages of teaching and learning (cf: 2.8). The primary aim of literature review was to shed light on the impact of languages as media of teaching and learning. This study is foregrounded in the Social Constructivist Theory developed by Lev Vygotsky and the Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura. The literature revealed that since 1948, Afrikaans and English were declared official languages and media of instruction in schools (Frederikse, 2001). All African languages were ignored in the schools (cf.2.3).

An empirical study based on the quantitative approach was used in this study. Chapter 3 focused on the research design and methodology, looking specifically at the research paradigm, research design, research approach, research methodology, validity and reliability (cf.3.5.1-3.5.4). The chapter was concluded by discussing data analysis methods chosen for the study (cf. 3.5.1-3.5.6). In Chapter 4, data analysis, data interpretation and the findings of the study were presented. In chapter 5, the summary of research findings, conclusion that emanates from the findings of the investigation and recommendations are presented (cf.5.3-5.8).

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on constructivist paradigm, which indicates that reality is constructed by social factors and people's perceptions of it (Wahyuni, 2012:71) (cf: 3.2.1). The

constructivist paradigm was used to evaluate the impact of languages as media of teaching and learning. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used to investigate the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The justification for using this methodology was presented in section 3.3. The phenomenological research design was used to put aside all pre-judgements and to collect data on how individuals make sense of African languages as media of instruction out of a particular experience or situation. In this study, the qualitative approach was used in order to explore the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The population of the study included all educators from two primary schools from each of the following circuits: Lulekani, Namakgale and Groot Letaba Circuits. In this study, purposive sampling was used to select the participants of this study. The sample of the study consisted of five educators from each of the six primary schools in the three circuits. The interview method was used to collect data from the educators. The data collected was analysed qualitatively by means of Tesch Method of data analysis. The data from the interviews was translated into themes for analysis.

In the next two sections, summary of the results from literature review and summary of findings from the empirical investigation are presented.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review focused mainly on the impact of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. According to the literature review, this study is based on two theories, namely; the Social Constructivist Theory (Social Constructivism) and Social Cognitive Theory. Developed by Vygotsky, the Social Constructivist Theory indicates that learning is an active continuous process where learners take information from the environment, construct meaning and make interpretations based on their prior knowledge and experience (Killen, 2000). The Social Constructivist Theory also emphasises that language, as part of culture, plays an active role in the development of thought. According to Vygotsky, language plays a significant role in cognitive development because a child learns how to think through language; and it is through words that a child internalises complex concepts (Dahms et al., 2007). A mother tongue

is therefore very important for effective learning. The second theory, the Social Cognitive Theory, was developed by Albert Bandura, and emphasises that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment and behaviour. This theory is based on self-efficacy, which refers to the level of a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform certain actions. This theory implies that a learner who uses a foreign language will lack self-efficacy, and this will result in poor academic performance.

The literature also analysed the historical background of language in South Africa. The language usage of the whole Africa is based on colonial legacy (Bamgbose, 2011). The colonial powers of Africa imposed their language in administration, commerce and education (Bamgbose, 2011). Even after independence, the majority of African countries are still dominated by foreign languages. According to Bamgbose (2011:30-31), out of 53 countries in Africa, indigenous African languages are recognised as official languages in only 10 countries, Arabic in nine, and all the remaining 46 countries have foreign languages as official languages as follows: French in 21 countries, English in 19, Portuguese in 5 and Spanish in 1. From 1652, South Africa was dominated by Dutch as a medium of instruction, which later evolved into Afrikaans. From 1806 to 1948, South Africa was dominated by English as a medium of instruction and learning. From 1948, both Afrikaans and English were used as media of instruction. Since 1994 Afrikaans has been used progressively less than it was during the apartheid era (Statistics South Africa, 1989; 2003) and English is dominating the country (Bourdieu, 1991:84). This is however against the Constitution of South Africa, which states that "*Everyone has a right to receive education in the official language of his or her choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable." A*ll the 11 languages of South Africa are official languages but only Afrikaans and English are used as media of instruction in schools. All African languages of South Africa are marginalised. There is an argument that operating in a single language is more economical than operating in several languages. Whatever status may be ascribed to African languages in South Africa, they still rank lower than imported official languages (Webb 1996: 143-144). There are many disadvantages of using foreign languages as media of teaching and learning. Many studies reveal that most Black African learners in South Africa are disadvantaged by the

medium of instruction. According to Myburgh et al. 2004), where learners do not speak the language of instruction, authentic teaching and learning cannot take place.

5.5 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

This section presents the findings from interviews with educators. The descriptions of participants' feelings and thoughts were presented qualitatively in the form of themes and sub-themes. The findings in this section have been interpreted in accordance with the research questions (Cf. 5.1).

5.5.1 Findings on research question 1: *What is the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province?*

The participants were asked several questions in order to establish whether it will be possible to implement African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The participants' responses revealed that this is possible because the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa allows African languages to be used as media of teaching and learning in schools. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, everyone has a right to receive education in the official language of his or her choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Learners from grade R to grade 3 are already using Home Languages as media of teaching and learning. Section 9 (3) protects against unfair discrimination on the grounds of language, whilst Sections 30 and 31 (1) refer to people's rights in terms of cultural, religious and linguistic participation and differences (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). According to the findings, school governing bodies are given the power to choose a medium of instruction, but it cannot declare an African language as a medium of instruction because only two languages are recognised by the government as media of instruction, namely; English and Afrikaans. The findings of the study also indicate that many educators are against the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools because when a person looks for a job, they will be interviewed in languages other than African languages. African languages are used in certain places only and are not international languages. They are only spoken in some parts of the province. There are however, other

participants who support the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools because they believe that they will improve the academic performance of the learners. There are therefore, educators who see the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools and those who think that it is impossible to use these languages.

5.5.2 Findings on research question 2: *What are the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in public schools?*

The participants were asked to explain the current challenges of using English as the medium of instruction in their schools. The findings revealed that two main challenges were identified by the participants, namely; that they find it difficult to understand English, and this makes it difficult for them to master other subjects. Every time the teachers are expected to translate the words in order to ensure that the learners understand the content. English is difficult for the learners because at home, they use African languages. Using English as a medium of learning is therefore very difficult and confusing for learners; they struggle to understand many concepts or how to read and write in English. The findings also revealed that learners have difficulty in mastering other subjects, which results in poor academic performance of the learners and failing at the end of the year.

5.5.3 Findings on research question 3: *What are the challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in public schools?*

The participants were asked to explain the challenges they foresee when using African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa. The findings of the study revealed three challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in public schools, namely; shortage of resources, especially educators who will be qualified to teach in African languages, taking a long time to understand the content in African languages and difficulties when the learners leave school. There will be a shortage of educators who are qualified and are able to use African languages as media of teaching because currently, educators have been trained to use English or Afrikaans as a medium of teaching and learning. Another problem is that many African languages may be used in one class

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because there are nine African languages in South Africa. If learners are classified according their African languages, tribalism will be promoted. There will also be a lack of textbooks that are written in African languages because currently, there are no textbooks written in African languages. The textbooks in other subjects are currently written in English and Afrikaans. Another problem of using African languages as media of teaching and learning is that learners will take more time to understand content in African languages. Another problem is that there will be chaos when learners leave school because African languages are not used in the work places.

5.5.4 Findings on research question 4: *What strategies can be used to implement the effective use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa?*

The participants were asked to identify strategies that can be used to ensure the effective use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning. In terms of the findings of the study, two strategies can be used to ensure the effective use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning. Firstly, the Department of Education should ensure that teachers are competent and trained to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. Lecturers in colleges and universities must be competent in training student teachers to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. Secondly, the Department of Education should introduce textbooks and support materials written in African languages by translating them from English into African languages.

This study revealed four major findings, namely; (a) it will be possible to implement African languages as media of teaching and learning because the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa allows African languages to be used as media of teaching and learning in schools; (b) educators have problems when using English and Afrikaans as media of instruction in South African schools; (c) learners find it difficult to understand English, and this makes it difficult for learners to master other subjects; (d) many educators are against the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools; (e) there are two challenges that may be experienced when African languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in public schools, namely; shortage of resources, especially

educators who will be qualified to teach in African languages, and it will be difficult for universities to teach in 11 languages (f) the Department of Education should ensure that teachers are competent and trained to use African languages as media of teaching and learning.

5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

The findings of this study will have many positive implications for teachers, learners and the Department of Basic Education.

5.6.1 Contribution to teachers, learners and Department of Basic Education

The findings of this study will make teachers aware of the possibility and advantages of using African languages as media of teaching and learning. The teachers will prepare themselves to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. When these languages are implemented as media of teaching and learning, African learners will be able to understand what they learn and be able to improve their academic performance. The findings of this study will also assist the Department of Basic Education to realise the possibility and advantages of using African languages as media of teaching and learning. This will enable the Department of Basic Education to organise and conduct professional development workshops to prepare teachers to use African languages as media of teaching and learning. Using African languages as media of teaching and learning will improve the whole education system of South Africa.

5.6.2 Contribution to Theory

The findings of this study will also contribute to the learning theories of learning. This study is based on the Social Constructivist Theory developed by Lev and Vygotsky and the Social Cognitive Theory developed by Bandura. According to the Constructivist Learning Theory, learning is an active continuous process where learners take information from the environment, construct meaning and make interpretations based on their prior knowledge and experience (Killen, 2000). According to the Social Cognitive Theory, learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment and behaviour, and is based on the level of a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform certain actions. The two theories assist teachers in improving the academic performance of learners. This study

implemented the Social Constructivist Theory and the Social Cognitive Theory to investigate whether the theory is valid and reliable, and truly represents effective teaching and learning in education. The findings of this study corroborate the usefulness of the Social Constructivist and Social Cognitive Theories as a means of exploring how the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning can improve the academic performance of learners.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

In order to be able to use African languages as media of teaching and learning, the following recommendations for the improvement of practice and future research are made.

5.7.1 Recommendations for the improvement of practice

The findings of this study revealed that the use of English and Afrikaans as media of teaching and learning contribute to poor academic performance of the learners. In terms of the findings of the study, the use of African languages will improve the academic performance of learners. For effective use of African languages as media of teaching and learning, it is therefore recommended that effective professional development workshops should be organised and conducted by the Department of Basic Education to prepare teachers. The department should also provide teachers and learners with teaching and learning resources in African languages. It is also recommended that principals, deputy principals and Heads of Departments (HODs) should support and motivate teachers to use African languages as media of teaching and learning.

5.7.2 Recommendations for future research

This study focused on the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools. The findings of the study revealed that many participants believe that using African languages as media of teaching and learning will disadvantage learners because African languages are not international languages used in various sectors such as industry and commerce; it will be difficult to use them in other subjects such as Science and Technology. These assumptions are misleading because there are countries such

as China that do not use English as a medium of instruction, but have very prosperous economies and education systems. It is recommended that future research should focus on how other countries such as China are using their indigenous languages but have very successful economies and education systems. The findings of such studies could be vital in convincing the government of South Africa and teachers to use African languages as media of teaching and learning in schools, which will improve academic performance of learners.

5.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In chapter 5, an overview of the previous chapters, summary of research methodology, conclusions from literature review, conclusions from empirical investigation, contribution of the research and recommendations of the study are presented and critically analysed. The major findings of this study responded to the main and secondary research questions and the aim and objectives of the study. The study also outlined the contributions of this study and recommendations for the effective use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOL

Enquiries: Sithole KL   PO Box 12

0731505806   Phalaborwa

                                                                                                  1390

                                                                                                  23 February 2018

The Principal

………………......Primary School

……………………………………….

…………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

1. I hereby request permission to conduct research at your school. I am a doctoral student in the Department of African Languages at the University of Limpopo.
2. I am doing research under the supervision of Professor N.A. Milubi, in the Department of African Languages.
3. The title of my research is **"The use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District (Limpopo Province): A Critical Analysis".**
4. The aim of the study is to investigate the possibility of using African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.
5. The research will involve interviews with five educators at your school.
6. The study will be conducted after school hours (as from 14h30) from the 5th March 2018 to 12 March 2018.

7. The research will address current challenges of using African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in order to devise strategies that can be taken to implement African languages as languages of teaching and learning in these schools.

8. We do not expect any potential risks during the study, except that the educators may be inconvenienced. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

9. As all participants are entitled to feedback, a meeting will be arranged where I will discuss the final results with them.

Yours sincerely

_____

Sithole KL
Researcher

ANNEXURE B

A LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS REQUESTING THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Enquiries: Sithole KL
P O Box 12

Cell: 0731505806
Phalaborwa

1390

27 March 2018

Dear Prospective Participant

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I hereby request you to voluntarily participate in an academic research which I will conduct at your school. I am a doctoral student in African Languages at the University of Limpopo, working on a thesis with the title: "*An analysis of the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District (Limpopo Province).* The aim of this study is to analyse the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.

I request you to participate in the research by responding to interview questions. The expected duration of your participation is 60 minutes, and your participation in this study is voluntary. The interview sessions will be conducted at your school after school hours (as from 14h30), from the 15th March 2018 to 12 March 2018. The research will be conducted in the strictest confidentiality and your name will not appear in any document. There is no risk involved in participating in the study given that your names and names of your schools will not be mentioned in any of the reports about the study, and no one will be able to connect you to your responses.

The research will explore current challenges of media of instruction in schools, explore challenges that can be experienced when African languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in public schools and devise strategies that can be taken to implement African languages as languages of teaching and learning in the schools.

In the end, all the participants will be provided with the results of the study. A feedback meeting will be arranged in each school where I will provide the final results of the study. No reward or incentive will be offered to any participant, and the participants will not incur any costs. If you have any inquiry, you are free to contact me telephonically at 0731505806. If you are willing to take part in this study, please complete the attached consent form. I will appreciate your participation in this study.

Thank you for taking time to read this letter.

Yours Faithfully

………………………………………..

Sithole KL

Researcher

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant's name) hereby confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

The researcher explained to me and I understand the study. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and conference proceedings and that my name and the name of our school will not be mentioned in any of the reports about the study. I also agree to the recording of the interview. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's name and surname (please print) _____

Participant signature_____Date_____

Researcher's name & surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature_____Date_____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TOPIC OF THE THESIS

THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS MEDIA OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MOPANI DISTRICT (LIMPOPO PROVINCE)

Good morning. Firstly, I want thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The purpose of this interview is to request your opinions about your experiences and perceptions in the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. I request to tape-record the interview so that I do not miss any part of our deliberations. I fear that I might miss something valuable or even somehow change your words unintentionally when I rely on note-taking. The success of this interview is dependent on your honest responses and comments. There is no right or wrong answer and please feel free to express your opinions with regard to the use of African languages as media of teaching and learning in public schools. Is there any question or comment before we commence?

_____

QUESTIONS

1. What are the current problems in the medium of instruction in your school?
2. Do you support the use of African languages as media of instruction in your school? Explain why it is significant to use African languages as media of instruction in schools.
3. Is it possible to use African languages as languages of teaching and learning in South Africa?
4. What is the current national policy of the medium of instruction in South Africa?
5. What are attitudes of curriculum advisors, teachers, parents and learners towards the use of African languages as media of instruction?

6. Are there textbooks written in African languages in your school? If not, how will you solve this challenge?

7. Which challenges do you foresee in the use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning in public schools in South Africa?

8. Are you trained to teach your subjects through the medium of African languages? If not, how will you cope with the use of African languages as media of instruction?

9. Explain an effective strategy that can be implemented to ensure that teachers are prepared and competent in teaching through the media of African languages in your school.

10. Many textbooks are currently in English and Afrikaans. What can be done to solve this challenge?

Thank you very much for your time and contributions. May God bless you.