

**The Influence of English on Mother-tongue in Learning and Teaching in Secondary  
Schools (Fet Band) with Specific Reference to Sepedi in Mankweng Circuit in the  
Limpopo Province**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Raesibe Onicah Montjane hereby declare that the dissertation, submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the Degree of Masters of Arts, has not previously been submitted by me at this or any other institution, that is my work in design and that all sources contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the following people:

- The Almighty God for granting me the grace to complete this study.
- To my late husband Montjane Stephen Mathole. May your soul rest in peace, Kolonyane. Your dream of seeing me reaching this highest level of academic study has come to fruition.
- To my father, Mr. P.M Mphahlele and my mother, Ms. M.S. Mphahlele, for their parental guidance which has propelled me to where I am today. May God bless you.

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- My lovely children, my daughters, Bokang and Seipati, my son Kgopotso for the support they have given to me during my studies. My God bless them.
- The University of Limpopo Africana librarian, Mr. Lucas Seabi, for assisting me with sources. Through you, my brother, Africans will have bright future.
- I thank Mr. N.V.Kekana, for his encouragement and motivation.
- Above all to the Almighty God who has given me the wisdom and strength to complete this study.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study sought to investigate the challenges that the learners and educators encountered in learning and teaching when they use English as a medium of instruction. The study reveals that African languages, along with their culture are being dominated by English. Most of Pedis' learners cannot speak Sepedi without mixing it with English, and most of African people usually read English books and neglecting the Indigenous books.

In addition, the study shows that learners performed better when they were taught in Sepedi than in English. The educators' responses showed that learners have difficulties in understanding English as the medium of instruction and that they code-switch from English to Sepedi to enhance understanding.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The term 'mother-tongue' has been used by linguists in a technical sense to refer to an individual's first learned or primary language, it also has popular connotations (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:2). The child learns what he or she is prepared to learn. In terms of language use, this means that the language in which the child is prepared to learn the language through which he or she understands meanings. The language must be the medium of the primary education of the child. It is the language which the child knows well, in which he or she can form sentences and express meanings, and that is his or her own, is the best medium of education.

African languages are said to be promoted in a way which is believed to be breaking down the legacy of apartheid languages. The promotion is done in order to challenge the hegemony of English and to eliminate the stereotypes of African languages which are held not only by English and Afrikaans speakers, but by many speakers of African languages as well. Makgopa (2003:8) writes, "It is high time that we move from Eurocentric and egocentric indoctrination and eliminate the negative stereotypes towards African languages which are held not only by speakers of colonial languages, but also by many of the speakers of African languages themselves". There are some speakers of African languages who still hold a very strong negative prejudice towards their own languages, and that a serious linguistic imbalance is still taking its course.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Language has always been a contentious issue in education in South Africa. From the drive for mother-tongue education to the ever pressing need to be able to use international language such as English. To be able to understand the language and education situation in South Africa today, it is necessary to look at the historical

background of languages in schools and also looks at current national policies regarding language in education.

The first schools in South Africa were usually attached to Christian missionaries throughout the country. For years this has been a problematic issue as the so-called 'importation of European ideas' has been regarded as colonisation of people in terms of religion, language, culture and thought. Yet the missionaries played a significant role in recording the languages of South Africa. Orthographies were established and grammars written down and sometimes with no regard for culturally similar ethnic groups. In this sense 'language' was created by recording regional dialects differently. This happened mainly due to the fact that missionaries came from various countries and missions in Europe. Translations of the Bible also served as a driving force in the written development of African languages as outlined in the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

The status and efficiency of the first language as medium of instruction depends crucially on the quality of teaching in the first language itself. In this regard, education departments and language boards should be urgently assessed concerning their efficiency and potential in providing proficient and enthusiastic first language teachers, as well as quality language teaching materials in the indigenous languages.

De Lange (1981:143) says instead of using English as a medium of instruction, any group will have the right to develop an indigenous language of South Africa as the medium of instruction. In our province Limpopo, for example, people who speak Northern Sotho/ Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda have the right to maintain their languages and use them as their media of instruction at schools. These languages are now maintained; they can be used as media of instructions at Primary schools, especially from Grades R-3 (which is also called compulsory stage in education). These languages, through the Department of Arts and Culture, have developed the Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology and Information Technology multilingual terms that can assist them in schools.

### **1.3 RERERARCH PROBLEM**

The study highlights the real situation taking place in the classroom whereby the second language (English) is used as the medium of instruction. In many secondary schools, learners speaking African languages as their first language are taught through English and this promotes a high failure rate, low literacy level, and drop-out rates. The problem is that the use of English as the language of instruction in secondary education serves as a barrier in learning and teaching of Sepedi.

### **1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.4.1 The Value of Mother-Tongue in Education**

Mother tongue in education is one of the most crucial language planning decisions a country can make, that of determining a language to serve as the medium of instruction in schools. Learning are ready enough to be taught through their home languages, Fasold (1987:293) further says that it is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother-tongue, psychologically, it is the system of meaningful beginnings that in his/her mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he/she learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium.

De Lange (1981: 143) says instead of using Afrikaans or English as the medium of instruction, any group will have the right to develop an indigenous language of South Africa as the medium of instruction. In our province, Limpopo, for example, people who speak Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda have the right to develop their languages so that they are used as medium of instructions at schools.

The second language used as the medium of instruction should not be replaced by language as a subject component of the curriculum. The mother-tongue or the home language also requires study as a language to achieve fluency and proficiency in speech and written expression and in listening and reading with discerning

comprehension. Learners learn better if they use their mother-tongue to understand of concepts and participate actively during lessons.

#### **1.4.2 Language Shift and Language Maintenance**

Language shift and maintenance are terms that refer to a choice made by a society as to which language will be used for certain functions. This choice may lead to the death of another language in its totality, leaving no speakers of the language, or death of the language in a specific community only. If this shift does not occur or if it occurs in certain domains of a society, then some degree of language maintenance occurs.

According to Hamers and Blanc (1990:176) language shift typically takes place over three generations. The first being monolingual or dominant L1, the second differentially bilingual and the third dominant or monolingual in L2. The variable of ethnicity may of course intervene and slow down or prevent the shift to the total assimilation. In Limpopo province at Zebediela village for instance, the people are speaking isiNdebele as their first language but now they are speaking Sepedi and even their children are learning Sepedi as their first language. Therefore, IsiNdebele language is shifting to Sepedi.

Several conditions have been identified that will promote language shift. These conditions include societal bilingualism, migration, industrialization, the schools and government's use of the language, urbanization, and the prestige level of the language in contact. Another factor associated with language shift is that of migration. As often observed with military occupations, a large number of speakers of the other language may migrate or be imported to a society. At times these speakers may in fact outnumber the native population of the area, creating an environment property for language shift (Fasold, 1984; Lieberman, 1982).

Factors that promote language shift, discussed extensively by sociolinguists is the language used in schools and by the government. In order for the language shift to occur, the spreading language must allow access to power and resources, and this is achieved primarily through the educational process. It is education that will allow people access to better positions, specialized knowledge and control over human and material resources. “For language spread, schools have long been the major formal (organised) mechanisms involved...” (Fishman, 1977:116).

Romaine (1995:306) describes language maintenance as simply a matter of bringing up one’s children in the home, speaking their language or mother-tongue so that it does not die-out. This means that language will be maintained, and it will continue to live. In South African schools, English is being maintained more than African languages because the majority of the learners are expected to learn through the second language (English) before they could develop sufficient proficiency in their home language. To maintain African languages learners must be taught and learn in their mother –tongue.

### **1.4.3 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing**

Code- switching is defined by Nwoye (1993:365) as the use of more than one language or variety of languages in the course of a single discourse. It is also known as a strategy of bilinguals to fit in different social situations where monolinguals become unfit. Code-switching can be used freely as a conscious and pragmatic strategy for achieving specific discourse objectives. On the other hand, Pieres (1994:14) refers to code-switching as the alternative use of two or more languages in a single piece of discourse, that is, a sentence may begin in one language and end in another.

Romaine (1995:121) state that code is not used only as different languages, but also as varieties of the same language, as well as styles, within the language. Thus code-switching is referred to by Romaine (1995:121) as a linguistic situation where two languages or varieties co-exist, each with special to function. Code- switching is also frequently and extensively used among members of the bilingual communities when communicating. They switch from one language to the other and thus mix the two

languages. In most South African schools, especially African schools, educators would teach a learning area like “Life Science” in English and mixing it with Sepedi, though learners are to be tested in English. There are several reasons for code-switching, they switch so that learners can understand better.

A speaker can mix codes either because he lacks the equivalent in appropriate language or because the mixed utterance expresses the intended meaning more adequately. The mixing of languages may occur to the speaker with both language proficiencies. For example, the educator can mix two languages which he /she knows very well while educating so that learners will understand him better.

Code-switching or code-mixing is potentially the most creative aspect of bilingual speech. The two have however, also been considered as a sign of linguistic decoy, that is evidence that bilinguals are not capable of acquiring two languages properly or keeping them apart. It is sometimes defined as the use of more than one language in the course of a single discourse. For instance, often a mother tongue speaker of Sepedi would code mix throwing English words or phrases from time to time to show off that he/she knows the language. It may also be a way of bargaining for more power in a situation where the majority of participants are from the particular group.

One may also find that Sepedi speaking people code mix by using English words to indicate that they are educated people who know their way around. Hence, code-switching is said to involve the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation.

#### **1.4.4 Language Policy**

Language policy is a legal document that has the aims and objectives, provisions regarding language. It is a document that guides the people on how, why, where to use official languages of the country. According to the Final draft Language Policy and Plan for South Africa (2000), the language policy is intended as an enabling framework for promoting South Africa's linguistic diversity and encouraging respect for language rights within the policy framework of building and consolidating a united democratic South African nation.

The National Language Policy Framework (2003) points out that, the previous policy of the official bilingualism created an unequal relationship between English and African languages. Although English provides access to job opportunities and education, it is at the same time an obstacle to people who lack proficiency in the language. In as much as English it is viewed as the key to socio-economic mobility. It is also a threat to the use and maintenance of the indigenous languages. African learners have the right to be educated in languages of their choice.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No.108 of 1996 states that: "Language Policy regarding education has been and stills is a very sensitive issue in South Africa. Under apartheid, the Policy regarding the African population was constructed in such a way that is promotes ethnic identity while hampering proficiency in the official languages to limit access to employment. Indeed, the principle of mother-tongue education was conveniently applied to further the political interests of division among all communities. The sudden change from mother-tongue instruction to the double-medium or 50/50 policy (English/) caused many African students to fall behind in their education and created other major upheavals."

History of language is not to separate from the rest of human history. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No.108 of 1996 "recognizing the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the State must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the

use of these languages.” In Section 6(4) (2) the Constitution states that all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equally.”

#### **1.4.5 Language in Education Policy and Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)**

The Department of Education (1997:14) states that the language(s) of learning and teaching (LOLT) in a public school must be (an) official language(s), it states categorically that: “The learners must choose the language of teaching and upon application for admission to a particular school where a school uses the language of learning and teaching chosen by the learner and where there is a place available in the relevant grade, the school must admit the learner, and where no school in a school district offers a desired language as a medium of learning and teaching the learner may request the provincial education department to make provision for instruction in the chosen language. The provincial education department must make copies of the request available to all schools in the relevant district”.

Mother tongue is the most appropriate language to impart reading and writing skills.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the language of learning and teaching has been prescribed by the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996:14). It states that “Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public education institutions”. The language of learning and teaching in a public school in South Africa has to be (an) official language(s) (*South African Schools Act*, 1996:2b-15). The *Department of Education Provincial Language in Education Policy* (2001:07) indicates that in grades R and 3 the language of learning and teaching should preferably be a mother tongue/primary language [L1] or more of the official languages. Thus, any other official language may be used as a language of learning and teaching.

Given the position of the Department of Education on the issue of language of learning and teaching, it is clear that the proposals made are only on paper, but are not applied in practice. The choice of LOLT in most South African public schools is either English or

Afrikaans because African languages are not resourced or maintained/ developed. Research indicates that the use of mother-tongue, as the LOLT contributes to linguistic and cognitive development of the learners in ways that a foreign language cannot do (Moraes, 2002; and Vygotsky, 1962).

According to the new language in education policy, in determining the language policy of the school, the governing body must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism using more than one language of learning and teaching, and/ or by offering additional language as fully-fledged subjects, and /or applying special immersion of language maintenance programmes (Department of Education, 1997:8).

#### **1.4.6 Multilingualism**

The National Language Policy Framework (2002) defines multilingualism in South African context as the use of more than three languages by an individual or a group of speakers but it also means that all citizens of the country should be encouraged to speak each other's languages inclusive of English and Afrikaans. In South Africa people should not just speak English and their mother tongue and claim to be multilingual. They should also speak other languages that they are exposed to.

The South African Constitution has guiding principles for the promotion of multilingualism contained in the Bill of Rights. Such principles are contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, Clauses 6(1) – (5). They actually serve as the founding provisions of the Bill of Rights. Although the Bill of Rights is mainly on the notion of individual rights, the language clauses are understood from the orientation of language as a right. There is in the Constitution the Republic of South Africa a frequent use of concepts such “use”, “usage” and “status”. These concepts attest to the fact that the South African Constitution has a stand on multilingualism.

South Africa is endowed with multilingualism because of its multicultural nature. In South Africa, like in many other countries around the world with either an ethnically mixed population, language has become an extremely emotive issue with social,

economic, and often than not, political implications. According to the booklet published by the Department of Arts and Culture (2003:2) “for quite a number of years multilingualism was just a farce or rather a myth or perhaps a dream but these were ideas engendered to the minds of South Africans by colonial power mongers. There was no advocacy for multilingualism as against bilingualism on the part of the then government through its State Language Services”.

English and Afrikaans were the only languages that were considered official languages for quite a long time. According to the booklet published by the Department of Arts and Culture (2003:2), the Former State Language Services were focused on the development of English and terminology and lexicography. The booklet further indicates that indigenous languages were given second class treatment since they were relegated to the ill-conceived Department of Bantu Education. There were Language Boards for all South African languages under this Department but they were all serving the interests of the National Party.

## **1.5 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

### **1.5.1 Aim**

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of English on mother tongue in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band) with specific reference to Sepedi in Mankweng Circuit in the Limpopo Province. In order to achieve this aim, the study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Does English have the influence on Sepedi in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band)?
2. Is Sepedi important in learning and teaching?
3. Do learners prefer the use of English or Sepedi in their classroom?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of code switching and code mixing in learning and teaching environment as far as English and Sepedi are concerned?

### **1.5.2 Objectives**

The study has the following objectives:

1. To determine the influence of English on mother-tongue in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band).
2. To assess whether learners prefer to be taught in English or Sepedi.
3. To determine the importance of teaching and learning in Sepedi.
4. To determine the advantages and disadvantages of code-switching and code-mixing in learning and teaching environment as far as English and Sepedi are concerned.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method answered questions such as why and how the influence of English on mother tongue in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band) is important. This section consists of the following: data collection and data analysis.

### **1.6.1 Data Collection**

The research was conducted in Mankweng Circuit in the Limpopo Province. Four Secondary schools were chosen. The schools are Makgoka High School at Boyne, Makgoangoana High School at GaMakanye, Ditlalemeso High School at Mankweng Unit C and Hwiti High School at Mankweng Unit A. Data were collected from 10 learners from each school (i.e. 40 learners), 5 educators from each school (i.e. 20 educators), 2 parents from each school (i.e. 8 parents), 2 circuit managers and 2 curriculum advisors.

### **1.6.2 Data Analysis**

The data were analysed using the descriptive method. This method is used to determine the influence of English on mother tongue in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FETband) and problems related to Language Policy, Language in Education Policy and code-switching and code-mixing.

### **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE**

The research will be useful to language policy makers, educators, parents and learners in multilingual classes on how they can maintain their mother tongue while learning the second language. This research will also contribute the body of knowledge on the topic under investigation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a review of literature about the topic of this study. Previous studies are reviewed to assess whether English has the influence on mother-tongue in learning and teaching with specific reference to Northern Sotho. The literature reviewed in this study is based on the following themes: the value of mother tongue, language shift and language maintenance, code-switching and code-mixing, language policy, language in education policy and multilingualism.

#### **2.2 THE VALUE OF MOTHER-TONGUE IN EDUCATION**

Ouane (2003: 41-42) states that mother tongue is the strongest language that the person could express himself or herself emotionally. You will notice one's own identity through mother tongue. Through this language people can share knowledge and gain more experience. According to Ouane (2003), the child learns to communicate in his or her mother tongue by listening and watching the people around him or her. This is achieved through associating certain sounds with certain objects or actions. Magabe (2009) also encourages that, learners should be taught in their mother tongue so that they could understand better. "A man understands when spoken to in a language he or understands. But he understands even better when spoken to in his own language" (Magabe, 2009:2).

Mother tongue in education is one of the most crucial language planning decisions a country can make, to determine a language which is used a medium of instruction in schools. Learners are ready enough to be taught through their home languages. As Fasold (1987:293) points out that it is self-evident that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother-tongue, psychologically; it is the system of meaningful beginnings that in his or her mind works automatically for expression and understanding.

Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he or she belongs.

De Lange (1981:143) says instead of using English as the medium of instruction, any group will have the right to develop an indigenous language of South Africa as the medium of instruction. In our province, Limpopo, for example, people who speak Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda have the right to develop their languages so that they are used as media of instruction at schools. The mother-tongue or the home language also requires study as a language to achieve fluency and proficiency in speech and written expression and in listening and reading with discerning comprehension. Learners learn better if they use mother-tongue, understanding of concepts and active participation during lessons.

### **2.3 LANGUAGE SHIFT AND LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE**

Language shift and maintenance are terms that refer to a choice made by a society about a language which should be used for certain functions. This choice may lead to the death of another language in its totality, leaving no speakers of the language, or death of the language in a specific community only. If this shift does not occur or if it occurs in certain domains of a society, then some degree of language maintenance occurs.

According to Hamers and Blanc (1990:176) language shift typically takes place over three generations. The first being monolingual or dominant L1, the second differentially bilingual and the third dominant or monolingual in L2. The variable of ethnicity may of course intervene and slow down or prevent the shift to the total assimilation. In Limpopo province at Zebediela village, the people are speaking isiNdebele as their first language but now they are speaking Sepedi and even their children are learning Sepedi as their first language. Therefore, IsiNdebele language is shifting to Sepedi.

Factors that promote language shift have been discussed extensively by sociolinguists on the language used in schools and by the government. In order for the language shift to occur, the spreading language must allow access to power and resources. This is achieved primarily through the educational process. It is education that allows people access to better positions, specialized knowledge and control over human and material resources. "For language spread, schools have long been the major formal (organised) mechanisms involved..." (Fishman, 1977:116).

Romaine (1995:306) describes language maintenance as simply a matter of bringing up one's children in the home, speaking their language or mother-tongue so that it does not die-out. This means that language will be maintained, and it will continue to live. In South African schools, English is being maintained more than African languages because the majority of the learners are expected to learn through the second language (English) before they could develop sufficient proficiency in their home language. To maintain African languages learners must be taught and learn in their mother-tongue.

When speaker of a language use mother- tongue in a way they protect their culture. If someone speaks his mother tongue he respects his culture and he does not want to see his language die. He speaks it, so that it will be simple to pass that language to the young generation to another. In addition to maintain mother tongue is to make sure that the Sepedi language is taught in schools and encourage parents to speak their mother tongue at home.

#### **2.4 CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING**

Code-switching and code-mixing occur when the people are communicating to each other in two or more different languages and these languages are well known by both speakers e.g. Sepedi and English. Nwoye (1993:365) defines code- switching as the variety of language and it is also known as a strategy of bilingual in different social situation where there is non-equivalent of another language. On the other hand Pieres (1994:14) refers to code-switching as the alternative use of two or more languages in a

single piece of discourse , that is, a sentence may begin in one language and end up in another , e.g. Keja breakfast meaning I eat breakfast.

Romaine (1995:121) is of the opinion that code is not used only as different languages, but also as varieties of the same language, as well as styles, within the language. Thus code-switching is referred to by Romaine (1995:121) as a linguistic situation where two languages or varieties co-exist and are specialized to function. Code-switching is also frequently and extensively used amongst members of the bilingual communities when communicating. They switch from one language to the other and thus mix the two languages. In most South African schools, especially African Schools, educators will teach learning area like “Life science” in English and mixing it with Sepedi, whereas learners are going to be tested in English. There are several reasons for code switching. One of them is that they switch so that learners can understand better.

A speaker can mix codes either because he lacks the equivalent in the second language or because the mixed utterance expresses the intended meaning more adequately. The mixing of languages may occur to the speaker with both language proficiencies. For example, the educator can mix two languages which he /she knows very well while educating so that learners will understand him better.

Code-switching or code-mixing is potentially the most creative aspect of bilingual speech. The two have however, also been considered as a sign of linguistic decoy, that is evidence that bilinguals are not capable of acquiring two languages properly or keeping them apart. It is sometimes defined as the use of more than one language in the course of a single discourse. For instance, often a mother tongue speaker of Sepedi will code mix throwing English words or phrases from time to time to show off that he or she knows the language. It may also be a way of bargaining for more power in a situation where the majority of participants are from the particular group.

Amua-Sekyi (2000) conducted a survey of teachers' classroom language practice and examined the use of English language as a medium of instruction in education in Ghana. He found that a minority of teachers used mother-tongue exclusively during the teaching and learning process, whereas the majority used bilingual code-switching as a communication strategy, more than the use of mother-tongue. Teachers who use mother-tongue, according to Amua-Sekyi, believe that mother-tongue enables pupils to learn better; facilitate better understanding of concepts and ensures active participation in lessons, because pupils understand. Code-switching facilitates easy transfer of information and better explanation of concepts thus ensuring effective teaching and learning.

One may also find that Sepedi speaking people code mix using English words to indicate that they are educated people who know their way around. Hence, code-switching is said to involve the alternate use to two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation. In the case of bilinguals speaking to each other code-switching can consist of changing languages in that monolingual shifts of style. You may find that two learners both speaking Northern Sotho as their mother-tongue, communicate socially in Sepedi, but they choose to switch to English when they enter the classroom.

Cook (1989) provides teaching aids by using code-switching method as a language through reciprocal language in teaching. This method requires students to switch languages at predetermined points pairing students who want to learn each other's languages. Thus the students alternate between the two languages and exchange the roles of student and teacher. A similar system may also be used whereby the teacher uses code-switching by starting the lesson in the first language and then moving into the second and back.

## 2.5 LANGUAGE POLICY

The new language in education policy is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for language other than one's own would be encouraged. In terms of the Constitution *of the Republic of South Africa (1996)*, the government and the Department of Education recognises that our cultural diversity is an asset and is tasked amongst other things to promote multilingualism, the development of the official languages, and respect for all languages that are used in South Africa.

Language policy is a legal document that has the aims and objectives, provisions regarding language. It is a document that guides the people on how, why, where to use official languages of a country. According to the *Final draft Language Policy and Plan for South Africa (2000)*, the language policy is intended as an enabling framework for promoting South Africa's linguistic diversity and encouraging respect for language rights within the policy framework of building and consolidating a united democratic South African nation.

*The National Language Policy Framework (2003)* points out that, the previous policy of official bilingualism created an unequal relationship between English and African languages. Although English provides access to job opportunities and education, it is at the same time an obstacle to people who lack proficiency in the language.

In as much as English is viewed as the key to socio-economic mobility, it is a threat to the use and maintenance of the indigenous languages. African learners have the right to be educated in languages of their choice.

*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No.108 of 1996* recognise that the status of the indigenous languages of our people. It brings about the idea that the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advanced the use

of these languages. Section 6 (4) (2) acknowledges that official languages must enjoy the parity of esteem and must be treated equally

After the democratic election in 1994, eleven languages were declared as official languages and were given the same status. This was done in order to promote African languages which were neglected in the past. This afforded provinces a free choice to declare an official languages or language at regional level from the eleven official languages. In Section 31 of the Bill of Rights established the notion of languages as a fundamental right. The following is stated under Section 31 of the Bill of Rights that : every person shall has the right to use the language of her or his choice, to insists that the state communicate in the official language of his or her choice and no discrimination against on the ground of that particular language”.

Tshotsho (2007) argues that using English as a language of learning and teaching often denies access to better education for African learners while it simultaneously maintains the advantageous status. For this reason South Africa should address the issues of Language Policy status, access, equity and empowerment, based on the principle that says, everyone has the right to choose the language or languages to study and use as the language of learning and teaching, to develop the linguistics skills and to develop African languages.

Language Policy in South Africa has set the following goals to be recognised to promote national unity, to establish democratically use of languages, promote multilingualism and respect for tolerance towards linguistic and cultural diversity, further elaboration and modernization of African languages, and to promote national and economic development. Language planners indeed must have the task of planning a language to be used as a medium of instruction in schools and by doing this will promote mother tongue will be promoted. For a language to be used as a medium of instruction at secondary schools it must be known well by the learners and teachers and it must be have been used as medium of instruction in primary schools

## **2.6 LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY AND LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LOLT)**

According to the Language in Education Policy the main aims of the Education's policy is to promote and develop all the official languages and to support the teaching and learning of all other mother tongues required by learners to be used in schools. The majority of learners in public schools are still struggling with English second language. Yet the democratic constitution of South Africa states that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice. This shows there is a need to encourage the teaching of all languages.

Heugh (2001) says that everybody must master his or her mother tongue as an entry point of learning his or her neighbouring language. He further emphasized that African children will continue being disadvantaged if they continue learning in a language that they do not understand. The majority of children are going to school doing the same thing in learning a language that is strange to them. "We are dishing out an inferior education to African children all over again and unintentionally reproducing the same inequalities that existed in the past" (Heugh, 2001).

Learning becomes meaningful when the learners learn in the language that they understand best. The language that learners understand best is the mother tongue. Since there are eleven official languages, learners that speak languages that have been declared as official languages, have an advantage to use their primary languages as their language of learning and teaching. The Department of Education (1997:14) states that the language(s) of learning and teaching (LOLT) in a public school must be (an) official language(s), it states categorically that: "The learners must choose the language of teaching and upon application for admission to a particular school where a school uses the language of learning and teaching chosen by the learner and where there is a place available in the relevant grade".

Mother-tongue is the most appropriate language to impart reading and writing skills to learners. As far as South Africa is concerned, the language of learning and teaching has been prescribed by *the Constitution of South Africa* (1996:14). The Constitution states that “everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of his or her choice in public education institutions”. The language of learning and teaching in a public school in South Africa has to be (an) official language(s) (South African Schools Act, 1996:2b-15).

The Department of Education on the issue of language of learning and teaching, is clear that the proposals are made only on paper, and are not applied in practice. The choice of LOLT in most South African public schools is English because African languages are not resourced or maintained. Researchers indicate that the use of mother-tongue, as the LOLT contributes to linguistic and cognitive development of the learners in ways that a foreign language cannot do without mother tongue (Moraes, 2002; and Vygotsky, 1962).

According to the *National Policy Framework*, the Department of Education introduced a ‘Language in Education Policy’ (LiEP), which stresses multilingualism as an extension of cultural diversity and necessity of building a non-racial South Africa. The LiEP include the following: to promote, develop and pursue all official languages, to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages of learning and teaching and to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages.

## 2.7 MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism is when the speaker can speak more than two different languages. The National Language Policy Framework encourages South Africans to be multilingual, meaning people should know at least more than two languages. They should go to an extent of speaking some other languages that they are exposed to. The people should not just speak their mother tongue and English and claim to be multilingual. *The National Language Policy Framework* (2002:5) defines multilingualism in South African context “as the use of more than three languages by an individual or a group of speakers”. This means that all citizens of the country should be encouraged to speak each other’s language inclusive of English. But what happens practically is not what South Africans aspire to achieve because multilingualism should be applied in all social, economic, political, and centrally education domains. But in almost all these domains, it is English that is used mostly than other languages like mother tongue.

*The South African Constitution* (1996) has guiding principles for the promotion of multilingualism and these are contained in the Bill of Rights. Such principles are contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, Clauses 6(1) – (5). They actually serve as the founding provisions of the Bill of Rights. Although the Bill of Rights is mainly on the notion of individual rights, the language clauses are understood from the orientation of language as a right. There is in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa a frequent use of concepts such as “use”, “usage” and “status”. These concepts attest to the fact that the *South African Constitution* has a stand on multilingualism.

It is thus clear from the *Constitution* that South Africa supports multilingualism. *The South African Constitution* in its founding provisions gives the country 11 official languages, must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably. In addition, it states that in view of their historically diminished use and status, the state must take measures to elevate the status and advance the use of the indigenous languages. However, for South Africa to implement this policy of eleven languages, resources both human and material should be made available to enable implementation.

South Africa is endowed with multilingualism because of its multicultural nature. In South Africa, like in many other countries around the world with either an ethnically mixed population, language has become an extremely strong issue with social, economic, and political implications. The Department of Arts and Culture (2003:2) states that “for quite a number of years multilingualism was meaningless or a dream but these were ideas engendered to the minds of South Africans by colonial power mongers”.

In spite of a general acceptance, that multilingualism is a sociolinguistic reality in South Africa, there is still a tendency toward monolingualism in public use (Thorpe: 2003). This is an indication that achieving language equity in South Africa is difficult and because of this difficulty, there is a need then to monitor and ensure the implementation of South Africa’s multilingual policy. A number of agencies for the development, promotion and implementation of multilingualism were then formed in South Africa.

They all had to serve as partners in the monitoring and implementation of multilingualism. Agencies that emerged due to this difficulty are; The Language Task Action Group (LANGTAG), Department of Arts, Culture and Technology (DACST), Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), National Language Services (NLS), National Language Bodies (NLBs) and Provincial Language Committee (PLCs). They were all established with the same government mandate, which is to promote, implement and monitor multilingualism with each agency responsible for certain aspects of multilingualism.

*The Constitution’s* section 6(5) promotes further linguistic diversity by promoting the establishment of PanSALB in 1994. PanSALB was established with a constitutional mandate to promote and create conducive conditions for the realization and implementation of multilingualism. PanSALB does not work alone in this mandate, but with the help of other agencies, institutions and organizations that include among others

universities, NGOs, the NLS, the NLB and the PLCs all within the umbrella of DACST. LANGTAG was appointed in 1995 by the minister of Education to work on the national language policy. The document submitted to the minister by LANGTAG in 1995 shows clearly the mandate of LANGTAG as Thorpe (2003) indicates, intended to propose the promotion and development of the status of the historically disadvantaged African languages and counter the hegemony of English.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In most cases, for learners to understand better, teachers also code-switch to the use of the learners' first language (Sepedi) to make sure that they achieve their goals during lessons. Children's knowledge and skills transfer across language from the mother tongue they have learned in their home to the school language. When children's mother tongue is valued and recognized, the development of the second language is more effective, but when children are encouraged to reject their mother tongue and consequently, its development stagnates, their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research methodology used to answer the research question of the study. It describes the design, population and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is a system of collecting data for a research project. It is a way in which a researcher is going to gather information. Babbie and Mouton (2008: 647) define research methodology as the methods, technique and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing the research design or research plan, as well as the underlying principles and assumptions in their use. Methodology on the other hand, refers to a technique for scaling objects or statements. It is a method of ranking attitudes or judgements and is particularly effective when the number of items to be ranked is large ( Best and Kahn, 1993:158).

From a methodological point of view, there are two types of research methods or approaches namely, qualitative research and quantitative research. Research studies that are qualitative are normally designed to discover about people. The concern of this study is to understand people's experience in context. The qualitative approach is therefore deemed appropriate for this study as subjects (teachers and learners in grade 10) can be observed and interviewed in their natural settings (the ESL classroom).

According to Cresswell (2002:18) qualitative research describes events, persons, and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data. It is also planned carefully and leaves the possibility of change to ask different questions and to go in the directions that the observations may lead the experimenter. The researcher chooses qualitative research approach because it studies phenomena from their natural settings. This is

supposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985 Gled in Best and Khan) that its naturalistic inquiry implies that participants observational technique results in a more natural approach, than the tests survey used in the more traditional qualitative approaches.

Qualitative research also stems from an anti-positivistic, interpretative approach, it is also idiographic and holistic in nature, and aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that the people attach to everyday life. The researcher will choose this approach because its naturalness is suitable for educational and social research. It will also give the researcher the direction to take especially in detailing the specific stages that the whole research will follow in addressing the research questions.

### **3.3 DESIGN**

A research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where “here” may be defined as the initial set of research questions to be answered, and “there” as some set of conclusions or answers about these questions (Yin, 1994:19). How the researcher structures his or her design is particularly crucial at this stage because the inquiry has to be compatible with the purpose of the study.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997) contend that research design is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures, also, to answer the research question. The researcher chose qualitative research design to capture relevant information for the study given by the Limpopo Department of Education. The researcher will follow a case study design because it gives the researcher the opportunity to explore and shed light on a particular phenomenon. The phenomenon studied was the influence of English on mother tongue in learning and teaching in FET (band) in Mankweng circuit. The case study also allowed the researcher to have an in depth study and understanding of the problem situation. The importance of a case study is to bring the details from the view point of the participants in a natural setting using multiple evidence with data that ultimately converge into triangulation (Yin, 1994).

### **3.4 SAMPLE**

The research was conducted in Mankweng Circuit in the Limpopo Province. Four Secondary schools were chosen. The schools are Makgoka High School at Boyne, Makgoangoana High School at GaMakanye, Ditlelemeso High School at Mankweng Unit C and Hwiti High School at Mankweng Unit A. The first two schools are from a rural area and the last two schools are from an urban area.

Best and Kahn (1993:220) state that sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as a representative of that population. One type of that population disguised is called target population. The advantage of drawing a small sample from a large population is that it saves time and expense of studying the entire population.

### **3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

To perform any task, or to do any job, one needs tools that are naturally associated with the task. In the same vein, a researcher uses tools or objects to realize his or her goal. As Leedy puts it, “The total is what the researcher employs to amass data or manipulate them to extract meaning from them” (Leedy, 1992:26). The researcher is going to use three instruments for collecting data: questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is the most used survey method in research. The reason for this is because of some of the advantages it has. One major advantage is that it is designed to be self-explanatory so that it can be completed in privacy and without supervision (Fink & Kosecoff 1993). A questionnaire was prepared for families and teachers who teach at public schools. The questionnaire focused on secondary schools on grade 10 learners, teachers, and parents. All the participants received instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Prior to completing it, they were informed that the study was not intended to intimidate anybody, and that they would be required to identify themselves

in the questionnaire and of utmost importance, the obtained responses would be handled with absolute confidentiality.

A questionnaire was administered to learners, parents, and teachers asking them about their preference in language as used in the classroom. The purpose of using the questionnaire was to gather data on community expectations and experiences they encounter when they communicate with their children on daily a basis. In the school environment, the purpose was to establish which language learners and teachers were comfortable with when they teaching and learning.

### **3.5.2 Interview**

Over and above a questionnaire, supplementary data were collected by means of interviews with the respondents. The purpose of using this instrument was to fill in the gaps that the questionnaire might have left. Interviews are defined by Macmillan and Schumacher (1999), as encounters between a researcher and respondent.

### **3.5.3 Classroom Observation**

In qualitative observation, the researcher is looking around with only a general scheme to guide him and the product of such observation in field notes (Tuckman, 1985). The researcher observed for the relationship between the behaviour of the participants, that is, the students working together or intention behind the behaviour an outcome so as to confirm or disconfirm various interpretations that have emerged from the interview of reports. The researcher did this in an attempt to complement data gathered from the questionnaire and interviews. The observation was used to establish the use of English in the classroom and how it benefited or disadvantaged the learners.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collection procedures consisted of teaching two learning areas in two different languages, namely: the mother tongue (Sepedi) and English. The learners were given the questions that were answered in English and the other questions were answered in Sepedi. The method that the researcher used to analyse data was qualitative. When analysing the data, the researcher made sure that the transcripts of data collected were kept together with the recorded and written data. The reason for this is that overtime it would be difficult to remember everything said in an interview or in the classroom, if records are not kept. Keeping records enables the researcher to refer back when the need arises. When the researcher is collecting data, she or he ensures that he or she analyses it simultaneously. She or he does this to avoid forgetting some of the important data collection and to avoid data overload.

The lessons were observed and analysed manually. The transcription was done in the following transcription convention outlined by authors such as Malamah and Thomas (1997). Interaction analysis was used to analyse the data. Interaction analysis is used to analyse the interaction between the teacher and the learners during the lesson observation. The analysis focused on the functions of the interaction. The information from the lesson assessment helped in determining the problems that the learner's experienced when learning takes place in language that they struggle to understand.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

The researcher expects the parents to encourage their children to be proficient in their home language. The researcher is concerned that children lose their mother- tongue and they acquire English.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4 DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data collected on the topic “The influence of English on Mother Tongue in Learning and Teaching in Secondary Schools (FET band) in Mankweng Circuit in the Limpopo Province”. Data were analysed according to the questionnaires administered and interviews conducted. Questions were posed to educators and learners in four schools from Mankweng circuit in Limpopo Province. Questionnaires were also administered to parents, circuit managers and subject advisors. As there was a lot of data, the researcher made it a point that only the most suitable information was selected.

#### 4.2 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Table 1, indicates the number of respondents from each school while table 2 indicates characteristics of the respondents from the whole data, which means data were collected from 72 respondents.

Table 1. The number of respondents from schools.

Name of Schools	Educators	Learners	Parents
Ditlalemeso	5	10	2
Hwiti	5	10	2
Makgoka	5	10	2
Makgongoana	5	10	2
Total	20	40	8

Table 2. The number of respondents from different areas.

Group	Total	Percentage
Educators	20	28%
Learners	40	55.0%
Parents	8	11.1%
Circuit Managers	2	3.0%
Subject Advisors	2	3.0%
Total	72	100%

Table 1.2 outlines the number and percentages of people from various occupations who responded to the questionnaire. The table reflects the following information: 28 % were educators, 55% were learners, 11% percent were parents, 3% were circuit managers, and 3 % were subject advisors.

### 4.3 RESEARCH RESULTS

Results are dependent on the questions used and are as follows:

#### 4.3.1 Does English have the influence on Sepedi in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band)?

Table 3. Views of respondents concerning the influence of English on Sepedi.

Respondents	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Educators	16	28%	0	0%
Learners	40	55%	0	0%
Parents	8	11%	0	0%
Circuit Managers	2	3%	0	0%
Subject Advisors	2	3%	0	0%
Total	72	100%	0	0%

Table 3 shows that 72% that is (100%) of respondents agreed that English has an influence on Sepedi and that English was seen as the key to economic empowerment and progress. Pupils and parents seem to believe that a basic education in English was more preferable in life rather than mother tongue, because it would give them the upper hand in schooling and thereafter a better opportunity in the job market.

In schools, the circuit managers make use of circulars to communicate with principals of schools and educators. It is a common practice that all such circulars are written in English, even in circuits and schools where the circuit manager, the principals and the educators are Sepedi speakers. For example, circuits such as Mankweng, Lebopo, Mamabolo, and Dimamo in the Capricorn district are lucky to have both principals and circuit managers who are Sepedi speakers. It is prevalent that circulars are still written to schools in English.

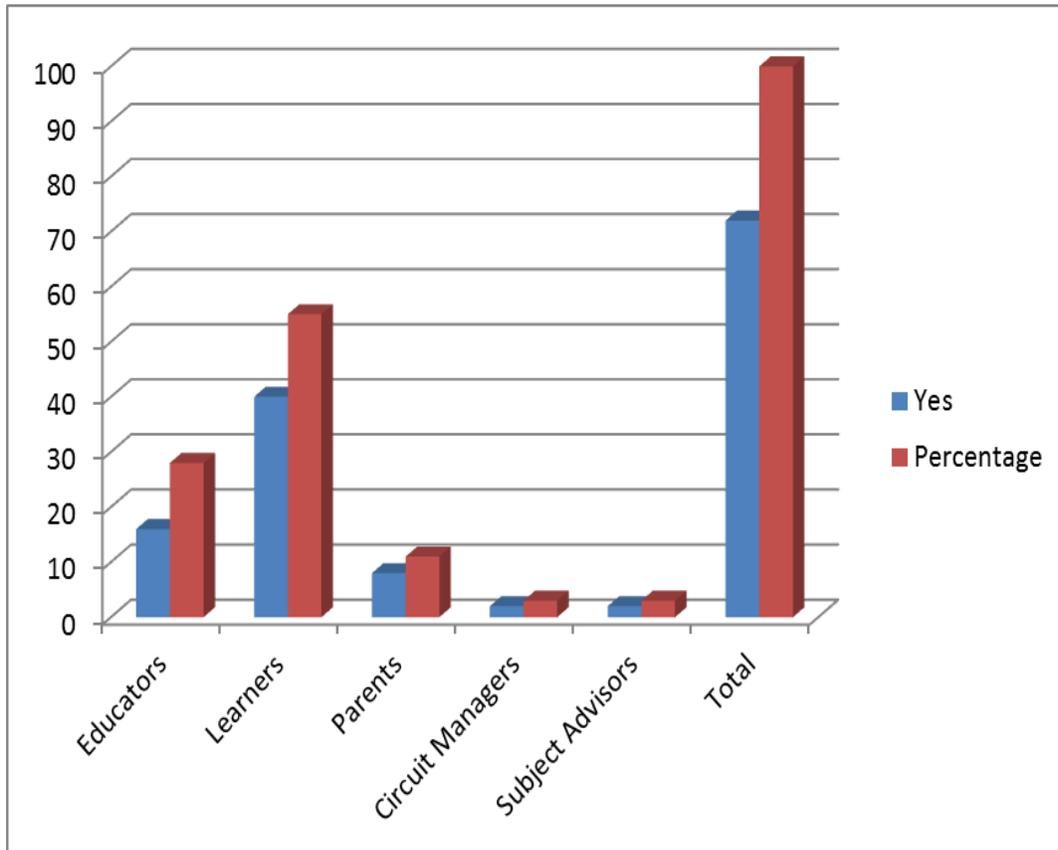
In the work place, communication by means of the written word is usually preferred in case of formal communication. Letters, circulars, newsletters, memorandums, guides, reports, brochures and pamphlets, complimentary notes, journals, and notices are written in English. The assumption is that every member will be able to understand English. As already alluded to, the use of English is preferred even though the colleagues speak African languages. This also takes place even amongst Sepedi speakers. Writing in Sepedi is only done at a very low percentage limited to those who do not know English.

On the other hand, parents raised a concern that, their culture was dying because of the dominance of English and Sepedi words were dying out because there were no longer used. In this case the parents listed a few examples as indicated below:

- *Setšidifatši* (fridge)
- *Letsikangope* ( window )
- *Namone* (orange)
- *Senkgwa* (bread)
- *Matena* (lunch)

Moreover, the parents indicated that their children could not even construct Sepedi sentences without mixing them with English.

Graph 1. It shows the influence of English on Sepedi in learning and teaching.



#### 4.3.2 Is Sepedi important in Learning and Teaching?

The use of Sepedi by most of the respondents in completing questionnaires is a clear indication that they have positive attitudes towards the language, as they feel proud to use it. There was a strong belief among the majority of learners that they would learn more effectively in their mother tongue as compared to English. Furthermore, from the data collected, it was clearly apparent that there was more than one language used in the classroom situation.

The educators often switch to Sepedi to ensure that the learners understand the subject well. Some of the learners that were interviewed believe that even though their

educators switch between English and Sepedi, they are not familiar with some of the scientific words that are used in the translation and they do not wish to learn in Sepedi. Although it is obvious that Sepedi is being used, the learners still feel that the translation of these papers was unnecessary especially when they consider terms like “atom” “aluminium” and “sulphur” which were translated as “atomo”, “aluminiamo” and “sebabole” respectively. The translated terms are mere adoptives which would not enable a learner to understand them if he or she was not aware of them previously.

Table 4 below shows the response of various respondents in terms of their preference or non preference of the use of Sepedi in learning and teaching.

Respondents	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Educators	16	80%	4	20%
Parents	2	25%	6	75%
Learners	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
Circuit Managers	0	0%	2	100%
Subject Advisors	0	0%	2	100%

Table 4 shows the responses of the 16(80%) educators who preferred Sepedi as the medium of instruction (MOI). The number of learners who dropped out of school because they lack basic knowledge of English can be reduced and it will boost the economy of South Africa as many people will have better knowledge of how to use modern equipment such as computers, washing machines and so on.

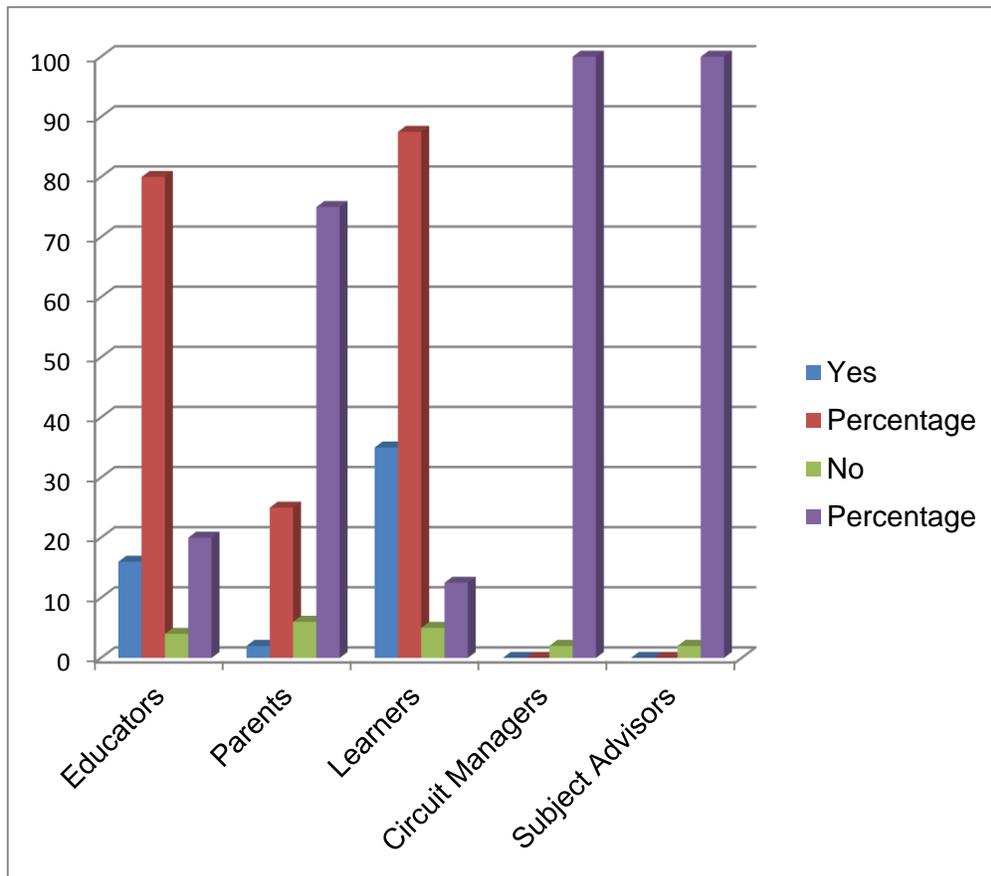
Further, the table shows that 35(87.5%) of learners have positive towards the use of Sepedi because they said that learning through their mother tongue in which they are adequately proficient would help them to understand the difficult concepts in their subjects. Their wish is to have all learning materials offered in Sepedi from grade 1 up to grade 12.

The study found that the main problem which prevented learners from using Sepedi as the language of learning and teaching was their parents. The study shows that 6(75%) of parents still attached great value to English as a medium of instruction. They said that English was the main language which was used in all the nine provinces in business, media and education. However, there were two parents (25%) who disagreed with the rest of the parents. In this case, it is apt to suggest that the

Government can help by implementing policies that can make African languages part of the languages of social mobility and power, currently a monopoly of European languages (Ngugi, 2003:12).

From the study, it is clear that if African languages are not promoted to be languages of social mobility and power, it will be extremely difficult for the majority of people in South Africa to prefer them as the medium of instruction. What worsens the situation is that politicians and government officials constantly use English instead of promoting African languages.

Graph 2. The importance of Sepedi in learning and teaching.



#### 4.3.3 Do learners prefer the use of English or Sepedi in their classroom?

From the interviews, questionnaire and observation, the researcher deduced that 16 educators (80%) encountered problems when they taught using English as required by the policy. The researcher observed that very few learners who were intelligent participated effectively during the lessons. Most of the learners were not proficient in English as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT) and they were expected to make meaningful contribution during the lesson. The fact that very few learners managed to participate effectively in class was a clear indication of problems posed by English as the medium of instruction (MOI). The majority of the learners managed to conceptualise the subject matter taught in their mother tongue.

6 (75%) parents chose English as the medium of instruction for their children. Their choice of English as a medium of instruction reveals that parents consciously and unconsciously influence their children to love and learn English than Sepedi. They further perpetuate the dominance of English by rendering praises to learners who speak English well and show disappointment to learners who cannot speak English.

16 (80%) educators commented about their observations when teaching content subjects through the medium of English to Sepedi speaking learners. They said learners struggled in understanding English especially when difficult concepts were used. They had to switch to Sepedi to help them to understand what they said in English.

The responses of the educators to the question of whether they prefer to teach in Sepedi or English was that, it was easier for them to teach learners more effectively through the use of Sepedi as a language of learning and teaching. A few of the educators (20%) from urban secondary schools mentioned that they experienced difficulties in explaining concepts in English to their learners using Sepedi as they have done their teaching method in English. Secondly it is time consuming for them translating English concepts into Sepedi. Another obstacle was the lack of equivalents when they translated materials from English. They thought learners had to be exposed to English and they should also be compelled to use English only in the school premises.

In contrast to the views of urban educators, educators in rural schools think that it would be very helpful and handy to translate English concepts into Sepedi as the learner can better comprehend what they are learning about. The learners would have the opportunity to refer to both English and Sepedi versions which has always been the case with Afrikaans. The Afrikaans-speaking people had the opportunity to write their examinations in their mother- tongue and could still access the English versions.

Further 4(20%) of parents showed negative attitudes towards the learning and teaching in Sepedi. They felt the same way as other educators discrediting the use of learning and teaching in Sepedi. They said if they allow educators to teach their children in all learning areas in Sepedi, their children will be unable to meet the national and international economical demands.

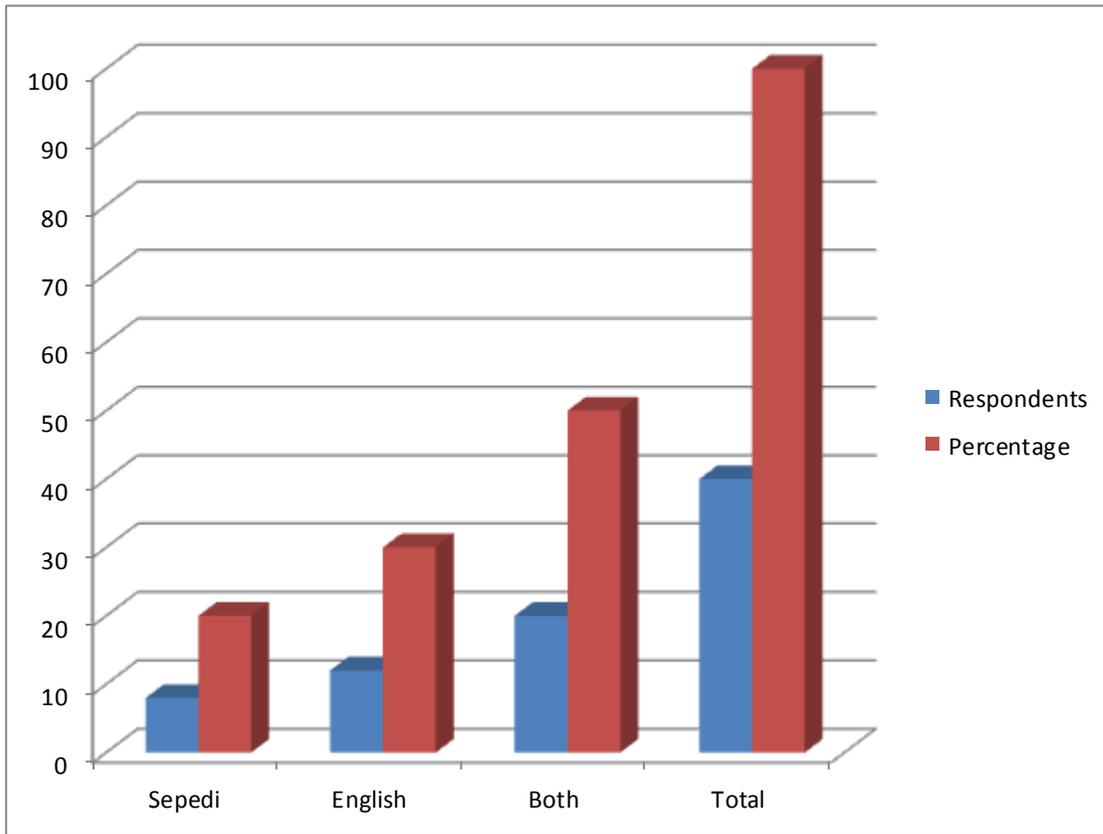
Again, they stated that English is a unifying factor across the country enabling people to relate to each other without difficulties. They said they could not allow their children to use Sepedi as medium of instruction in all learning areas because of scarcity of terminology to be used in Sepedi. They argued there was no way African languages could develop as long as they still borrow terminologies from other languages. The gist of the argument advanced by both parents and educators is that irrespective of using Sepedi in learning and teaching, they believe that Sepedi will not develop to the same level as English.

As it is common 5 (12.5%) of the learners thought that it was ridiculous to use Sepedi as the medium of instruction at school because they would not use it at University. They emphasised that English is the medium of instruction in different universities and is an international language, whereas Sepedi is not.

Table 5. The respondents' performance in both languages: Sepedi and English.

Learning Areas	Respondents	Percentage
Sepedi	8	20%
English	12	30%
Both	20	50%
Total	40	100%

Graph 3 below shows that learners preferred to be taught in Sepedi



#### 4.4 CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING

According to Skiba (1997:3), a second language can be taught using code-switching through a reciprocal language teaching whereby learners are required to switch languages at pre-determined points. In order to do this, learners are paired according to how they want to learn each other's languages. Then the learners alternate between the two languages and exchange roles of learner and educator.

#### 4.4.1 Advantages of Code- Switching and Code- Mixing in Learning and Teaching

The researcher observed that educators constantly switched from English to Sepedi and vice versa without disturbing the smooth flow of the lesson. The educators believed that learners would have a better understanding when they practically gave an example in the mother tongue. This enabled the learners to have a familiar picture of the issues under discussion.

Table 6 below represents the number and percentages of respondents who support the use of code-switching in learning and teaching.

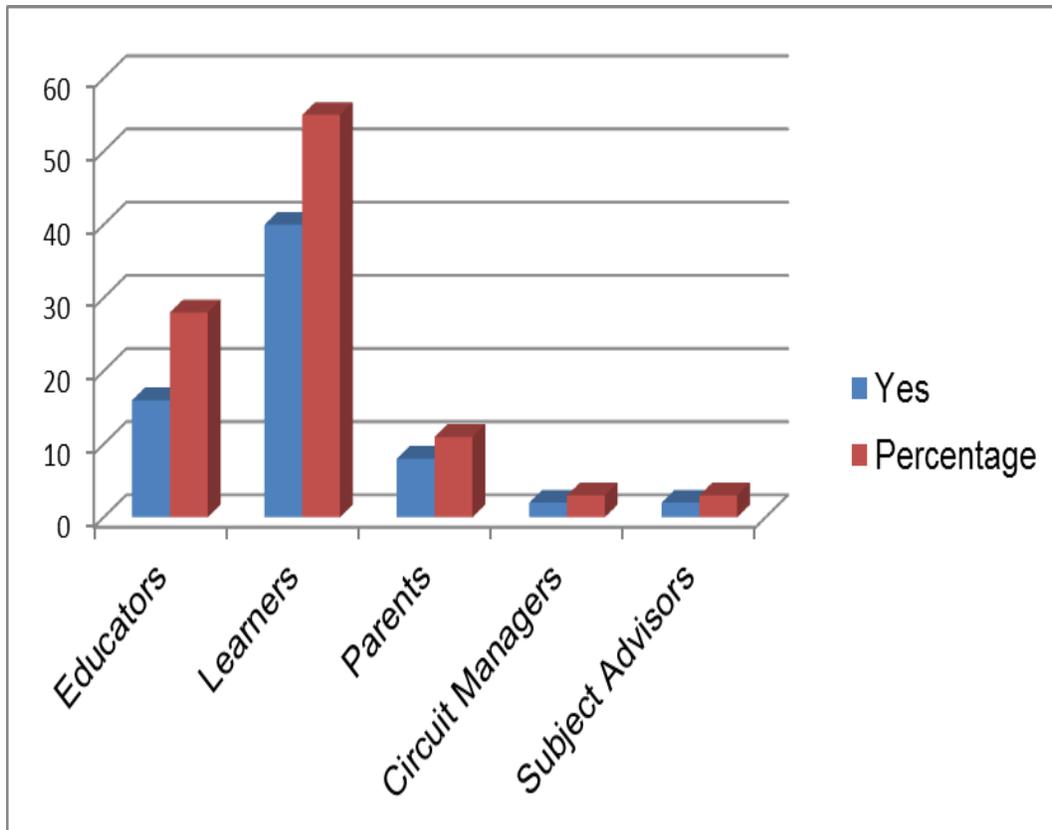
Respondents	Yes	Percentage
Learners	35	87.5%
Educators	16	80%
Parents	6	75%
Circuit Managers	2	100%
Subject Advisors	2	100%

Table 6 shows that 35(87.5%) out of 40 learners agreed that their educators made use of code-switching when teaching other subjects such as English and other learning areas whilst 5(12.5%) said no, educators did not code-switch when teaching. According to these results it is a clear indication that educators do code-switch when teaching, and if this phenomenon is not used in the classroom, then some learners will not understand the lesson.

16(80%) of educators agreed that they employ code-switching when they are teaching and they code-switch in order to help learners to understand better whereas 4(20%) educators think that it is not necessary to use code-switching. These findings show that the practice of code-switching is enjoyed by the majority of learners. Most educators employ code-switching basically because code-switching enhances the understanding of the learners during teaching and learning as the medium of instruction is often not the learners' home language and they also give a reason that this phenomenon saves time as time allocation for one period is not enough.

6(75%) parents agreed that educators should code-switch during teaching and learning as this enhances the learner's understanding whereas only 2(25%) disagree about code-switching. The majority of respondents stated that code-switching should be encouraged because it does not harm any language as it is just a mixing of languages. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Circuit Managers 2 (100%) and Subject Advisors 2 (100%) did not support the use of code-switching in class.

Graph 4 below illustrates the number and percentage of the respondents who support code-switching.



It is fascinating to note that two of the learners who were in favour of the use of the mother tongue communicated their ideas in Sepedi. These are their responses towards the interview questions: *Sepedi se tlanthuša go kwišišamantšu le go kwišiša English. Kehwetša gore e bothata ke ge barutiši ba bantši ba šomiša mantšu ao e lego gore ga re a kwišiše, ga ba re hlaolotše gore mantšu ao a bolela ka eng?*

The above quote can be translated back as: “Sepedi will enable me to understand English much better when I am learning. I find it very difficult because most of the teachers use words that we are not familiar with, without explaining their meanings”.

Learners stated that once educators realise that the learners are not responding to what they are presenting, they switch to the mother tongue, which is linguistically called code-switching.

The results have shown that Sepedi is also used in class for educators to express themselves effectively and for learners to get a good understanding of concepts.

In supporting the existence of code-switching in language classrooms, Skiba (1997) suggests that in the circumstances where code-switching is used due to an inability of expression, it serves for continuity in speech instead of presenting interference in language. In this respect, code-switching stands to be a supporting element in communication of information and in social interaction. All this suggests that in general code-switching somehow builds a bridge from the known to unknown and may be considered as an important element in language teaching when used efficiently.

According to Rubagumya (2003:153) educators are not enough trained to teach in English as the medium of instruction because majority of educators have not mastered English, they copy everything from the teacher's guide, and the learners also copy what the educator has written on the chalkboard. As a result of this the minority of learners become literate mainly because they are brilliant. It is evident that most of the learners in the class become confused and frustrated throughout the school years. When the educator realises that most of the learners are confused he or she immediately code-switches to the mother tongue to provide them with in-depth explanations.

Baker (2006) and Heugh (2006) argue that educators who use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in teaching and learning, turn to communicating very well with learners and their teaching becomes effective because learners understand them and they are free to ask questions where they do not understand and they are given more time to discuss on their own.

The impact of mother tongue instruction on teaching and learning was documented by Francis Lavoie (2008, 661-667) in Burkina Faso. He indicated that learners perform well when instruction occurs in the language which is familiar to both learners and educators, and also found that mother tongue helps to make education more relevant to learners because it is integrating their cultures, for example, Arts and Culture learning area is integrated with culture because learners dance, sing, render poems, and act drama as activities of the curriculum.

In addition, there is evidence that mother-tongue may increase academic achievement in South Africa. Department of Education implemented the mother tongue as the medium of instruction from Grade R-3 in public schools. This showed that early first language education had a positive effect on the personal and self-esteem. This makes it easier for children to develop an initial understanding of the functions and mechanism of reading and writing in the first language.

Research indicates that mother tongue literacy provides a number of educational advantages to learners which include lexical development as linguistic skills in the higher levels of proficiency. The acquisition of literacy in the mother tongue smoothen the transition into the school environment and enhances the learner's performance.

Research has shown that when learning in the first language, the subject-matter can be easily transferred to the second language. Swain, et al, (1990, 3,65-81) argue that it is very much easier for educators who facilitate mother tongue literacy to develop an initial understanding of the functions and mechanics of reading and writing in the first language. Therefore learners who are educated initially in their mother tongue achieve more success in their studies and because they have a solid foundation.

Once students have basic skills in the home-language and have developed communicative abilities in the majority languages, they will be able to transfer the literacy skills acquired in the familiar language to the new language: (Cummins, 1979).

Wright and Taylor who studied the effect of education in the home language in Canada showed that mother tongue education had a positive effect on the personal and self-esteem while in the second language instruction has a negative effect.

Research has shown that the mother tongue is instrumental in forming self-identity, cultural heritage of our parents and grandparents and feeling of belonging. Furthermore, teaching and learning in the mother tongue enables culture to be accessed, reproduced, transmitted and maintained.

#### 4.4.2 Disadvantages of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Learning and Teaching.

The table 8 below illustrates the number and percentages of the respondents who are opposed to code-switching in learning and teaching

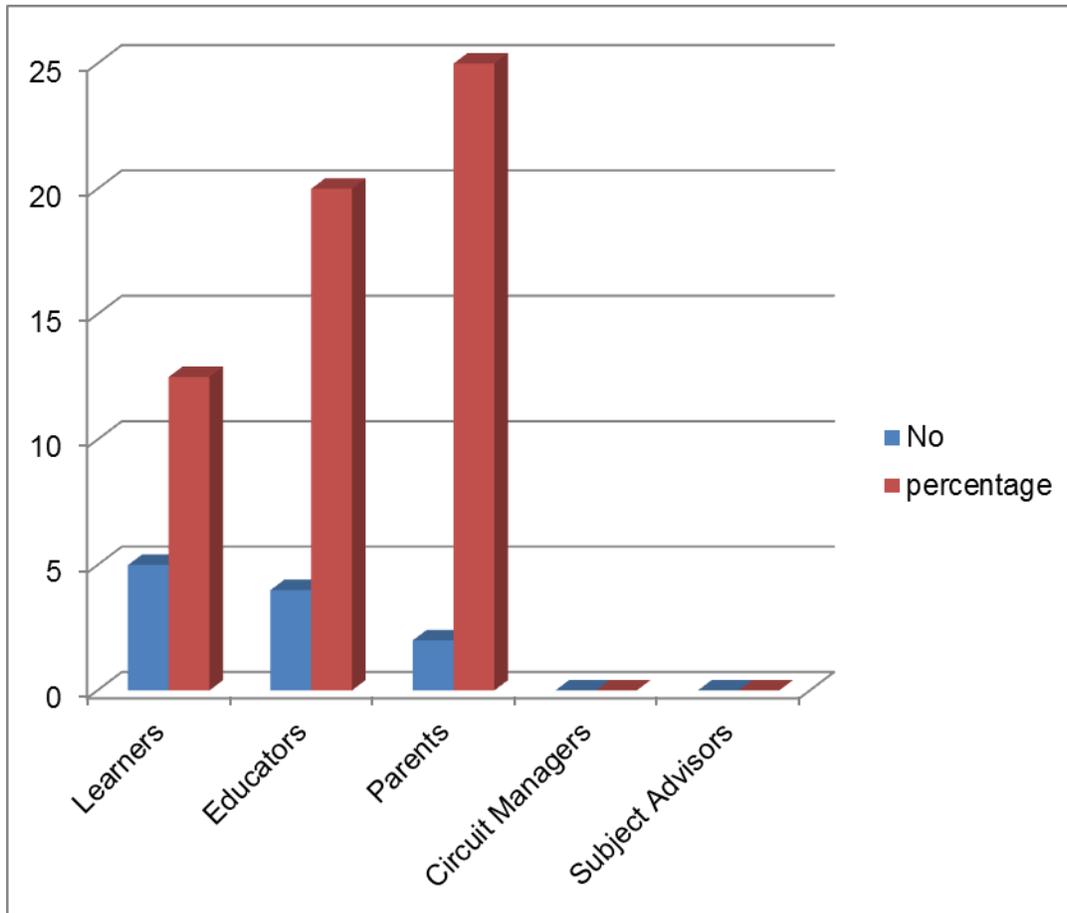
Respondents	No	Percentage
Learners	5	12.5%
Educators	4	20%
Parents	2	25%
Circuit Managers	0	0%
Subject Advisors	0	0%

The table above indicates that 5(25.5%) learners view code-switching as disadvantageous to their learning and teaching. They say code-switching prevents rather than promote proficiency in the English language; they get confused when they are supposed to write and spell the English words.

It shows that 4(20%) of educators found it difficult to code-switch between Sepedi and English because they have done their teaching method in English. There is no examination that is set in a mixture of languages. Respondents mentioned further that code-switching denies them the opportunity to perform up to expected standards. These educators are opposed to code-switching mainly for the following reasons:

- The majority of examinations are set in English language;
- Learners will never master English language as medium of instruction;
- Self-expression in English will decline; and
- Learners will fail their examinations as code-switching is not applied to examinations.

Graph 5 below illustrates the number and percentages of the respondents who are opposing code-switching.



#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

From the questionnaires and the observations it became clear that most learners in both urban and rural areas had problems with the language of instruction, which was English. Proficiency in this language was very low and some learners were unable to express themselves either orally or when they wrote their answers on the questionnaires. In spite of the negative perception of Sepedi as a language of learning and teaching, some of the learners mentioned that they would learn more effectively in Sepedi than in English.

The chapter shows that if the teaching of the entire language subject in the classroom was implemented through the medium of the mother tongue, learners would be encouraged to take part actively in class and all educators would be encouraged to teach all subjects through the medium of the mother tongue, learners' progress would be excellent.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5 CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter concludes the study. It contains summary of each chapter, providing the findings and recommendations of the study.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter one serves as the introduction of the study where the general background to the study and methodology has been presented.

Chapter two presented a brief synopsis of the literature reviewed, based on the opinions of several researchers. The views confirmed that the majority of the learners are influenced to use English than their mother tongue. Lastly, the review revealed that there was a good deal of code-switching in schools as learners had insufficient knowledge of English.

Chapter three explored in detail different research methodologies which were used to collect data. It also outlined the effective manner in which the research instruments were used to collect data.

Chapter four focused on data analysis of data collected from Educators, Learners, Parents, Circuit managers and Subject Advisors. It also showed the manner in which the data were collected and interpreted to evaluate whether learners encountered challenges when they use English as the medium of instruction in learning and teaching.

### **5.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- A major finding of the study is that English serves as the medium of instruction in learning and teaching.
- Learners are struggling because English is not their mother tongue and they always want educators to code-switch in order to understand better.
- It also found that majority of parents had a negative attitude towards Sepedi and that is the reason why they preferred English as the medium of instruction in teaching learning at school even though is difficult for their children.
- The use of English and Sepedi simultaneously (that is code-switching) enable the learners to understand the subject-matter better.
- A large number of both parents and learners recognise that the use of English and Sepedi is beneficial for teaching and learning.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The study recommends that more emphasis must be put on the use of both Sepedi and English in learning and teaching for all learning areas (subjects) for secondary school (FET band).
- There must be dedicated classes for both English and Sepedi as these languages need each other.
- Learners must be taught in such a way that they become very good in both English and Sepedi.
- Campaigns are required to show that all languages are of importance, and there is room for them to co-exist.
- Yes, English is the language of the future, the language of technology and international communications, but it does not have to “kill” other languages .

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

The influence of English on mother tongue in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band) in Mankweng Circuit in the Limpopo Province. This came as a result of the adoption of the language policy as stated in 1996 and the democratic Constitution of South Africa out of eleven languages; learners are expected to learn two official languages in the classroom. English and Sepedi are the two of official languages used in the Limpopo Province. This research is aimed at determining whether English has an influence on Sepedi in learning and teaching in Secondary School (FET band). In relation to this, answer the questions below:

- a. Name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Mother tongue: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. School: \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do learners understand questions and content in English? Explain.

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2. Which language do you use in the classroom? Explain.

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3. Which language do you speak at home? Explain why.

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4. Should English remain the language of teaching and learning in your school?

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5. Which language do you use outside the classroom and why?

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6. Should the question papers in English be translated into Sepedi?

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7. How do you rate yourself in English? Tick.

Fair	Good	Excellent	Poor
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8. Write the following verbs in Sepedi.

8.1. Conscious\_\_\_\_\_

8.2. Understand\_\_\_\_\_

8.3. Remain\_\_\_\_\_

8.4. Use\_\_\_\_\_

9. Translate the following sentences into Sepedi:

(a) She looks beautiful.

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(b) He is brilliant.

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