

**AN ANALYSIS OF A LANGUAGE POLICY PLAN WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MOPANI DISTRICT OF  
THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**by**

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## STATEMENT

I, Ernest Morokolo Rabapane, declare that *an Analysis of a Language Policy Plan with Special Reference to Mopani District of the Limpopo Province* is my own work. All the references have been acknowledged, making use of complete references.

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Signature

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents, Seropola Phineas Rabapane and Chaisa Mmatlala Rabapane, my siblings, Maropeng, Masia, Molatelo, and Mmolawa and to all my nieces and nephews as well as to my fiancée Pontsho Vivian Raolane.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to analyse the language policy adopted by Mopani District. The study has discovered that although the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) grants official recognition to all eleven languages, the Mopani District uses largely English and Afrikaans in its official communication. The study further reveals that although the majority of the residents of the district are Sepedi and Xitsonga speakers, they still prefer English to their own languages. In other words, most people in the district still harbour negative attitudes towards African languages. Lastly, the study recommends that Sepedi and Xitsonga should also be accorded the respect that they deserve, if the district is to achieve its full potential in terms of social, economic and educational development.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Language has always been a central issue in South Africa. For instance, the 1976 protests that led to the death of many African students were triggered by issues related to language when Afrikaans was made compulsory in schools. It was felt that the promotion of Afrikaans was going to further disfranchise the African population. At the time English and Afrikaans were the only two official languages even though the majority of the African people were not competent in these two languages. Like all African languages in the rest of the country, the indigenous languages of Mopani District such as Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, were not developed as part of the apartheid policy. When the country became a democracy in 1994, a new language policy came into being. The South African Constitution (1996) granted official recognition to 11 languages: English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Siswati, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, and Isizulu. The new government started to put a lot of effort in developing African languages.

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The Limpopo Province, which is predominantly rural, is divided into five district municipalities, namely Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe, and Waterberg. Each district municipality is further demarcated into five local municipalities, giving a total number of twenty-five. The present study will focus on the Mopani District. In the Mopani District five official languages are spoken. They are: Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, English, and Afrikaans. The district itself consists of four municipalities, namely Ba-Phalaborwa which has the following areas (Gravelotte, La Cotte, Leydsdorp, Lulekani, Murchison, Namakgale, and Phalaborwa); Greater Giyani (Bend, Gaula, Giyani, Ka-Homu, Khakhala, Nkomo, and Thomo); Greater Letaba (Ga-Kgapane, Ga-Phooko, Hildreth Ridge, Mamaila, Middelwater, Modjadji, Modjadjiskloof (Duiwelskloof), Mooketsi, Raphahlelo, and Rotterdam); and the Greater Tzaneen (Dan, Haenertsburg, Ka-Muhlaba, Khangela, Lenyenye, Letsitele, Lehujwana, Nimogoma, Mogoboya, Nkowakowa, Olyfberg, Politsi, Rubbervale,

Tzaneen, and Veekraal). Mopani District was established in terms of the Municipal Structures Act (2000) as amended. It shares borders with one of the SADC states, namely Mozambique in the eastern part (Reviewed Integrated Development Plan, 2006-2011).

The Mopani District Municipality is characterised by mainly rural conditions and is located far from the main economic centres of South Africa such as Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. Low levels of economic activity are prevalent in the district, together with high unemployment and extreme poverty. The low levels of education and skills place the area in a more precarious position, and making it difficult to retain those who are skilled and qualified.

The total population in the district is approximately one million, with the number of households standing at 218, 796. Women constitute 49,9% while men make up 50,1% of the population (Census 2001). The following table illustrates the number of population groups:

Afrikaans	English	Sepedi	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
18,132	6,030	446,989	4,519	468,122

From the above statistics, it is evident that the Sepedi and Xitsonga speaking people are in the majority. As a result one would expect to see this fact reflected in the language policy of the district.

South Africa's apartheid government discriminated against indigenous and minority language groups by decreeing a language policy that gave recognition only to Afrikaans and English. This policy was mostly effective in the more urbanised city centres where the quality of service delivery in the public sector was much better than that found in the more rural areas. Following South Africa's transition to democracy, the democratic government sought to reverse this form of discrimination by initiating a multilingual language policy as stipulated in the constitutional framework (Webb, 2002:137).

The language policy for each province in South Africa is congruent to the national language policy (of eleven official languages) where any one of the official languages is given priority according to the language demographics of each province. Each province seeks to ensure that services are equally distributed among all the ethnic groups and that the inclusion of the previously disadvantaged language groups to communicate in their home language is realised. As far as the Mopani District is concerned, this seems to be mere theory as African languages that are dominant in the district are hardly used in written communication.

Mopani District Municipality provides notices to the communities in two languages, namely English and Afrikaans. For example, the notices to remind pensioners about their pay date are written in English, although only a fraction is able to read or understand the notices. Furthermore, the notices for elections are also written in these two languages as if all the voters are functionally literate in the two languages.

In addition, letters from the district, such as water statements, electricity statements and HIV/AIDS brochures are written in English and Afrikaans of which most of the residents do not understand the messages. The African languages which are official in the country and are mother tongues to the residents are not used in written communication. Below is one of the notices which were pasted by the municipality on 2 March 2009:

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 21A (i) and (ii) of the municipal system act that the 2008/2009 annual report has been tabled before the municipal council and is made available for the public. This notice also seeks to invite the local community to submit representations in connection with the annual report. Copies of the annual report will be available from Tuesday 03<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 at all local municipal buildings and the Khutsong centres within the district. Closing date for submissions is Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 12h00.

Here is another example, which was issued on February 1, 2008 about the increase of rates that was sent to residents:

For service supplied by the municipality to the residents listed below, the rates and charges under the economic development delivery service rate schedule are increased by the following applicable effective percentage increase.

Senwamokgope township	0.136
Kgapane township	0.121
All villages	0.000

Both the examples shown above are in English and there were no notices issued in Xitsonga and Sepedi which are the languages that are spoken by the largest number of the population in the district. This means English still receives prominence at the expense of African languages spoken in the district.

The local newspaper *Greater Letaba* is mainly written in English and Afrikaans and less in the mother tongue of the residents. What this implies is that the district does not value the interests of the majority of the residents because they cannot understand the languages that are used in the newspaper.

As in many other areas in South Africa, court cases are presented in English in the district and it becomes a problem as the majority of the residents are not fluent speakers of English. Even though the interpreting services are provided, the accused person may end up being sentenced because of the misinterpretation of the information. Naturally, people speak better in their mother tongue and therefore if they can be granted a chance to speak in their home languages they may have a fair trial.

Currently, it seems that the Mopani District does not have a language policy that is effective. Yet, according to the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF) (2003) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the provincial, and local governments must have a functional language policy. This policy should be established in terms of the guidelines that are provided in the NLPF. The NLPF mentions that where the government cannot provide documents or information in all the official languages, the government must at least use six languages, namely one

from Nguni languages, one from Sotho languages, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, English, and Afrikaans.

Both provincial and local governments must facilitate the use of African languages in all the districts of the province. Language policy plays a vital role in the district (Shohamy, 2000: 10). The local government must make sure that every district has the appropriate language policy to make communication effective in the district.

## **1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.2.1 Aim**

The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of the language policy of Mopani District. In order to achieve this aim the study will concentrate on the following research questions:

- Do the residents of Mopani District receive information in their home languages?
- Do they understand the information that they receive which is written in some of the other languages?
- As a multilingual district, is Mopani District practising multilingualism?

### **1.2.2 Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- To expose language related problems in Mopani District;
- To compile a sociolinguistic profile for the district, and
- To draft a sample language policy for the district.

## **1.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The researcher will ensure that the participants are not harmed physically and emotionally by minimising the questions that may prove to be sensitive. The researcher will also ensure confidentiality to the interviewee's information and it will

apply the non-judgemental principle. The respondents will also be informed about the goals, advantages and disadvantages of the study.

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

The research is of great significance as it seeks to highlight the need to formulate an effective language policy for the Mopani District in order to make sure that every citizen acquires the relevant information in his or her language of her choice. The study will also be of great use to scholars and researchers who are interested in language policy matters.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study will assume a qualitative perspective. Rossman and Rallis in Cresswell (2003:181) define qualitative research as a research that takes place in a natural setting. They further maintain that a qualitative researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. The qualitative method is relevant to this study as it requires the collection of data in the form of a policy documents, reports and other relevant documentation related to language issues. Interview will also be conducted as well as observation.

##### **1.5.1 Research design**

Yin (1994:19) indicates that every empirical research has an implicit, if not explicit, research design. A research design is defined by Yin (1994:19) as a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations. A case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes. In case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1994).

The study to be conducted here is a case study, which will be mainly descriptive. Zonabend (1992) states that a case study is carried out by giving special attention to completeness in observation, reconstruction, and analysis of the cases under study. A case study is done in a way that incorporates the views of the "actors" in the case under study. Burns (2000) and Yin (1994) agree that each case must be selected so

that it either produces contrary results for the predictable reasons or produces similar results. Mopani District will serve as the case study for the proposed research.

### **1.5.2 Sampling**

Purposive sampling sometimes termed non-probability sampling will be used in this study. As Burns (2000:463) proposes, purposive sampling is relevant to this study because “it serves the real purpose and objectives of the researcher of discovering, gaining insight and understanding into a particular phenomenon.”

### **1.5.3 Instrument development and data collection**

For the purpose of achieving the aims and answering the research questions of this study, the study had four phases of data collection. Rossman and Rallis (1998) as quoted by Cresswell (2003) note, “Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. Several qualitative methods of collecting data and recording processes will be used. The methods of data collection are growing, and they increasingly involve actual methods of data collection, traditionally based on open-ended observations, interviews, and documents....” Burns (2000:460), in support of Rossman and Rallis (1998), further notes that the main techniques used in case studies are observation (both participant and non-participant depending on the case), interview (unstructured and structured), and document analysis. As the study had followed a case study approach, triangulation is highly recommended and the techniques that were used to generate data were non-participant observation, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

The data collection process was divided into three phases. The first phase was non-participant observation. In this phase the researcher was designed an observation tool which was guided what things to observe. The observation took place at the offices of the district to find out the languages that are used on the notice boards, language used in interacting with individuals who seek services at the district offices. Secondly, the researcher conducted a document review of the district documents on strategic planning, communications policy, and language policy. Lastly, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews which were divided into group interviews and individual interviews. The individual interviews were held with the following number

of district officials, whilst the group interviews were done with five groups from the Mopani District to establish their views on language issues around the district.

- Two managers from the Greater Letaba and the Greater Tzaneen Municipalities
- Four junior officials from the Greater Letaba and the Greater Tzaneen Municipalities.
- Twenty residents of the district.
- Twenty learners of Makala Secondary School (Greater Letaba) and 20 learners of Sevenswana High School (Greater Tzaneen).
- Ten teachers of Makala Secondary School (Greater Letaba) and 10 teachers of Sevenswana High School (Greater Tzaneen).
- Five language practitioners.

#### **1.5.4 Data Analysis**

After all the phases of data collection have been completed, the researcher will be faced with a mass of raw data that will need to be reduced into workable data. The procedure to be followed in trying to reduce the collected data will firstly be to transcribe interview data. This step will be followed by reading the transcripts to identify categories of responses and to start coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate that when one is working with texts or less well-organized displays, one often notes recurring patterns and themes, which pull together many separate pieces of data. The data obtained from observation and document analysis will also be analysed. Finally, the data would be presented in the form of tables, data matrix, figures, and lastly, narrative text.

## **1.6 CONCLUSION**

Mopani District as one of the multilingual districts in the Limpopo Province has to make sure that all official languages within the district are used equally. However, presently this seems not to be the case as it is only English and Afrikaans that enjoy prestige and exposure. A study of this nature is, therefore, necessary as it will attempt to propose ways and means of promoting all official languages in the district.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an overview of the literature with specific reference to language policy and related topics. In order to achieve this objective, the chapter concentrates on the following topics: language policy, language policy and language planning, language policy in the Constitution of South Africa (1996), language policy in education, language policy and culture, language policy and religion, Limpopo Language Policy Implementation Plan and National Language Policy Framework (2003).

#### **2.2 LANGUAGE**

According to Sapir (1921:7), “language is the purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntary produced symbols”. This means that a language is a means whereby individuals communicate to get their opinions and ideas across to the other party. It varies in its communication method; it can be verbal and physical, in other words body language. A language is significantly related to the speaker’s language culture and identity, and any alteration in language has an effect on identity.

Therefore, language should be standardised under specific rules and regulations that support the language and prevent merging with other languages to avoid cultural assimilation. However, this standardisation should not discriminate or disallow any other language to be spoken. Moreover, with the help of rules and regulations, speakers should respect their language and avoid its alternation, since it is part of who they are and what makes them special.

Shohamy (2000:5) argues that language use is a unique phenomenon as it is personal and varies drastically from one user to another. That is why Webb (2002:48) says that “Indeed there are no speakers who speak exactly the same.”

### 2.3 LANGUAGE POLICY

In any discussion of language policy, there might be a tendency to think of a language policy as if it were something fixed in statutes, clearly specified, immutable and encompassing. It is unfortunate fact that in the literature on language policy and language planning these two topics are treated as one. Bugarski (1992:8) distinguishes the two by defining language policy and language planning as follows:

The term language policy refers to the policy of a society in the area of linguistic communication. That is the set of positions principles and decisions reflecting that community's relationship to its verbal repertoire and communication potential. Language planning is understood as a set of concrete measure taken within language policy to act on linguistic communication in a community, typically by directing the development of its languages.

Another view of this dichotomy is presented in an article by Cloonan and Strine (1991:268) who note that language planning is an approach to policy development that should be deliberate, rational, prospective and institutional. By prospective is meant that it is future oriented, and planning precedes implementation; by institutional is meant that it is organised by planning bodies or institutions.

Language policy can be analysed as the outcome of a struggle as well as components in it. Cooper (1989) also argues that in each case, efforts to modify language structure or language use constitutes one battle in a war. For instance, the 1976 Soweto riots that led to the death of many students were triggered by a language matter when Afrikaans was made compulsory in schools. Language was used to identify people and to define racial groups, and by so doing strengthening the apartheid system government. English and Afrikaans were the only two official languages even though the majority of the African people were not competent in these two languages. In other words, particular policies in specific countries resulted from and contribute to the relationships among classes (Tollefson 1991:14). Therefore, an individual's response to a language problem or language policy is constrained by class relationship in which that individual participates. This notion of constraints differs from the use of sanctions whereby individual or group deliberately seeks to restrict the range of

options open to the other. Language policy often includes sanctions such as loss of voting rights for those who insist on speaking their native languages.

According to Shohamy (2000:45), language policy is the primary mechanism for organising and managing, manipulating language use in society. It is through language policy that decisions are made about language that should be legitimised, used, learned, and taught. Language policy acts as the manipulating tool in the continuous battle between different ideologies. This manipulation occurs on a number of levels and in a number of directions especially in relation to the legitimacy of using and learning certain languages, for example, the right to speak and learn certain languages in a given context. Language policy also embraces laws and regulations or policy documents that specify how and where this language should be used.

Language policy plays a vital role in the society. It also provides guidelines to the people as to how to speak, pronounce, read, and write (orthography) their languages. In most cases, language policy is formulated to solve language problems or language related problems.

Although nations have historically used language policies most often to promote one official language at the expense of others, many countries now have policies that are designed to protect and promote regional and ethnic languages whose viability is threatened.

From Shohamy's (2000) analysis, one observes language policy as what a government does officially through legislation and court decisions or policy to determine how languages should be used.

According to Cooper (1989:33), language policy should include the following stages: corpus planning (that deals with the coinage of new terms, reforming spelling, and adopting new script), status planning (that is official languages should be given functions, for example they should be used as a medium of instruction and as vehicle of mass communication), and acquisition planning (to have more speakers and new words).

As far as Spolsky (2004:1) is concerned, language policy is about choice. It may be the choice of a specific sound, or expression or specific varieties of language. It may be the choice regularly made by the individual or a social defined group of individuals or a body with authority over a defined group of individuals. At the most basic level, individual speakers and groups of speakers demonstrate a belief that some of these choices are bad or undesirable and that others are good and valuable.

Nodoba (2003:32) argues that although there is a new language policy in South Africa, the language used in society still reflects the past. This, he claims, is because of the manifestation of a factor known as linguicism (discrimination against a person on the grounds of his or her language preferences or language background).

Webb (2002:43) is of the view that traditionally, the state is the major player in the field of language policy. It regulates which languages and forms of literacy are official and national, and it imposes rules and constraints on the use of languages.

Weinstein (1990:123) argues that a language policy may be rendered redundant if the languages that are provided are not used in the official realm. Language policy is an issue of considerable ethical, political, and legal importance in jurisdictions around the world. However, the language policy must be effective providing guidance on how to use all the official languages within a given country or area.

According to Cooper (1989:35) the term language policy means many things. The researcher should begin by distinguishing between what specialists in the field call status policy and what they call acquisition policy. Status policy relates to the standing of a language, for example, whether it is used in voting or the provision of court interpreting or at the local level. It is important to take cognisance of the fact that “the general objective of language policy and planning is to solve language problems in order to improve communication and to make it possible for speakers to use language as a means of identification” (Van der Merwe, 1990:178-184).

## **2.4 LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING**

The commonly accepted definition of language planning is that “it refers to all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties. The efforts may involve creation of orthographies, standardisation and modernization

programme, or allocation of functions to particular languages within multilingual societies. Language policy is the language planning by the governments” (Tollefson, 1991:16). The distinction between governmental and non-governmental activities reflects an uncritical social theory perspective that ignores the close relationship between public and private sectors. Moreover, the traditional definition of planning or policy expresses an implicit belief in essentially historical, unconstrained action and choice.

Language planning-policy means the institutionalization of language as a basis for distinctions among social groups. That is, language policy becomes one of mechanisms for locating language within social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources. Language policy is one mechanism by which dominant groups establish hegemony in language use. This conception of language policy implies that there is a dynamic relationship between social relations and language policy (Tollefson, 1991).

Language planning is not the first term to appear in the literature; perhaps the first term to appear in the literature was *language engineering* (Miller, 1960). Language policy sometimes appears as a synonym for language planning, but more often it refers to the goals of language planning. Haugen (1959) states that language planning is the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community. He later came to view these activities as outcomes of language planning, a part of the implementation of decision made by the planner, rather than language planning as a whole (Haugen, 1966:52).

Language planning, in my view is directed not only towards aggregates at the level of the society or state which cut across national boundaries, but also at smaller aggregates such as ethnic, religious, and occupational spheres.

According to Herriman and Burnaby (1996:3), the concept of language policy is in itself difficult. They state that the term is not monolithic nor has it a clear denotation. By using the term there is a danger of assuming that we are talking about one thing or kind, or that each of the countries has developed a set of pronouncements that have at least a similar status. The fact is that the kind or form of policy in each country is

sufficiently different as to make one question the appropriateness of the term 'policy' itself. As far as these scholars are concerned though originally more associated with the notion of prudent conduct or practices, it has come to have the connotation of a principled approach or plan in some matter affecting public or individual interest.

Fardon and Furniss (1994) point out that South Africans prefer to use English for communication and as a language of learning and teaching. The feeling is that English is an international language and because of its liberal ideology and status in the world, is more acceptable as a world language. Fardon and Furniss's views, amongst others, are valuable as they depict people's preferences regarding languages.

Barkhuizen (1993:24) argues that the perception of preferring English as a language of learning and teaching is also problematic as it causes many problems. Many teachers who teach through the medium of English are African and are not good enough in English. Barkhuizen (1993:24) supports this view when he states:

Problems these teachers have expressed include not knowing much about second language acquisition, feeling insecure when dealing with language issues in the classroom, as opposed to literature, and being unfamiliar with second language teaching methods. These problems are getting worse as more and more teachers leave universities and colleges without appropriate preparation, and more and more schools become multilingual in South Africa.

Barkhuizen's viewpoint is important in this study as the status of English impacts on the implementation of language policy in South Africa

Strauss's (1977) study explores developments of language in the economic world and the implications of language as a profession. Thus, the existing models on and developments in the use of language and business location as well as language choices in advertising are analysed. He indicates that South Africa's explicit work on the economics of language is still very limited.

## 2.5 LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION

The new *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act No. 108 of 1996), embodies an explicit language policy. In terms of section 6(5b), all eleven (11) official languages have official status nationally and each provincial legislature has statutory rights. The policy is rooted in the culture of the rights and is captured succinctly in the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) which declares that “all citizens shall be able to enjoy and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms”. The policy also grows out of an espousal of multilingualism and multiculturalism as a national asset. The diversity of languages and culture shall be acknowledged and protected and the conditions for their promotion should be encouraged.

In terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) Section 31 specifies that everyone shall have the right to use his or her own language of his or her choice. But that is a safeguard against proscription of the use of any language in or outside official contexts. In case it be taught that such clause is unnecessary, there have recurrently been such proscriptions in the country’s varied political history since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Herriman & Burnaby, 1996:19).

Section 8 of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) establishes the right to equality before the law. This includes a provision that no one shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly because of the language he or she uses. The indirect discrimination imagined would most probably arise from inadequacy of translation by court interpreters. Raising of the provisional level of interpretations services must be a major priority for the Department of Justice. In fact, Trew (1991) points out in a National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) working paper that:

To give full rights to the linguistically disenfranchised would be to ensure that reliable interpretations is available at all points of public and the states and if the voice that is provided through interpretation is audibly stumbling and uncertain, citizens will hardly feel that they have acquired a voice at all.

Furthermore, according to section 3(1) and 3(9) (a) of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996), the state incurs an obligation to create conditions for the development of all official languages and promoting their equal use. Conversely, in section 3(9) (c), it is obliged to prevent the use of any language to dominate, divide, or exploit.

The desire to extend the rights and status pertinent to each language rather than reduce them is laudable. Yet status is a relative concept and it is hard to imagine the status of one language being enhanced in a particular community without the status of another language at least being changed, if not correspondingly reduced (Herriman & Burnaby, 1996:20-21). However, sections 3(2) and 3(5) of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) establish a requirement that the rights and status of a language may not be diminished.

On the other hand, use of newly proclaimed official languages is usually subject to a practicability clause. Parliament and provincial legislatures may give content to the notion of practicability by legislation. Section 6(3) provides for legislature decision on the use of official language in government, taking into account usage, practicality and expenses, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole, or in the province concerned. Institutional inertia will still continue to favour Afrikaans and English language rights regarding communication in government departments.

## **2.6 LANGUAGE POLICY IN EDUCATION**

Before 1994, most African languages were marginalised and were not used as the first languages in schools; they were used as a subject. English and Afrikaans were the only two dominant languages, and learners were forced to learn English and Afrikaans as their first languages. Of all the domains for language policy, one of the most important is the school. Cooper (1983:33) adds acquisition planning alongside status planning and corpus planning as a third focus of language policy. Language acquisition policy is more commonly known as language education policy. When and where schools exist, they take over from the family the task of socialization, a central feature of which is developing the language competence of young people.

There are a number of basic questions that arise regularly in language education policy. First and foremost is the decision on the language to be used as a medium of instruction. It is rare for children coming to school to have control over the language or languages that the school system will want them to know (Spolsky, 1974). Most commonly, children learn at home one or more of a number of local vernacular varieties or dialects, and are expected to acquire, during their school years mastery of

a selected official standardized language. There are many factors that establish this gap between the language of the home and the language that the school wants everyone to acquire. Furthermore, here is an article quoted from the *Sunday Times* (Khumalo, 2005) of 20 March 2005 which emphasises that learners should be taught in the language that they understand better. It reads:

In his article that appeared in the *Sunday Times* newspaper of 20 March 2005, Fred Khumalo is of the opinion that children should be encouraged to take indigenous languages for their own good and for the sustainability of a process to gradually phase the hitherto marginalized languages into the mainstream. He, nevertheless, opines that the changing of the medium of instruction should perhaps be a long-term project, lest we regret our radical move in changing our education system. The implication of this article is that our planners should consider developing the indigenous languages first before campaigning for a radical implementation of first-tongue instruction in our education system (Maepa, 2005).

The languages spoken at home are usually unwritten, and schools almost universally aim to develop literacy in a written form of language which is standardised. This fact is seldom taken into account by advocates of mother tongue instruction, who assume that because the home variety often has the same names as a written language; it is in fact the same. The language spoken in the home is likely to be a local variety, while the language of school will commonly be regional or national (Spolsky, 2004:46).

The *Constitution of South Africa*, Act 108 (1996:15) further stipulates that “Everyone has the right to access to any information held by the state”.

This phrase gives everyone an opportunity to receive educational information in any of the 11 official languages. This is a positive development as apartheid never treated languages in this manner. “Indigenous local African languages were to some considerable extent, regarded as ‘low languages’ and therefore of inferior status in comparison to these two ex-colonial languages” (Moyo, 2002:150). The *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) allows the right of all learners to receive education in any of the official languages in public schools. This, in a way, has elevated the status of previously disadvantaged languages.

De Wet, Niemann and Matsela (1999:45) mention that the education policy of the government regards language as a necessary focus point of its strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. Kamwangamalu (1997:239) concurs with this view as he illustrates that the education language policy “is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region, while simultaneously creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one’s own would be encouraged.”

First, the *South African Schools Act* (1996) enlightens education stakeholders as to who is responsible for determining the language policy in a public school. In addition, the act outlines who is responsible for executing this important duty. It suggests that in all public schools, it is upon the shoulders of the school governing body to determine the language policy of the school. In constructing the language policy, the school governing body should take the language policy as prescribed by the *South African Schools Act* (1996) and the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) into consideration. “No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing policies determined under this section” (*South African Schools Act*, 1996:16).

In public schools, languages may be learnt as a subject and in this regard the *South African Schools Act* (1996: B-32) states that:

All learners shall offer at least one approved language as a subject in Grade 1 and Grade 2. From Grade 3 (Std 1) onwards, all learners shall offer their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional approved language as subject.

In schools where there is more than one language of learning and teaching, learners have to choose languages of teaching at the time of admission. In case of learners who are still minors, the parents may do so on behalf of their children (*South African Schools Act*, 1996:15).

The language of learning and teaching is a fundamental factor that is indispensable and pivotal as learning can hardly take place without it. The *South African Schools Act* (1996: B-32) states that “The language of learning and teaching in a public school must be an official language”.

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 in South Africa, learners that belong to the languages that have been crowned as official languages, have an advantage to use their primary languages as their language of learning and teaching.

## **2.7 LANGUAGE POLICY AND CULTURE**

Language policy is ultimately grounded in linguistic culture, that is, the set of behaviour, assumption, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular language. That is, the belief (one might even use the term myth) that a speech community has about language (and this includes literacy) in general and its language in particular (from which it usually derives its attitudes towards other languages) are part of the social conditions that affect the maintenance and transmission of its language (Schiffman, 1996:5).

In all cultures, there is a certain understanding that culture bearers have about what makes language polite and what constitutes lack of politeness. Though these are not hard and fast rules people make exceptions for small children, for example. There are different understandings of what is polite among older people than among younger people. There are certain amounts of commonality in the understandings about how language is to be used to get certain things done. The study of how language is used and how members of the culture acquire and display knowledge of usage has been approached in different ways by philosophers, and sociologists.

## **2.8 LANGUAGE POLICY AND RELIGION**

Much could and has been written about religion and language. This study concerns itself with the effects of religion on language policy, especially as an aspect of linguistic culture. Some of the work on language and religion has focused on the language policy of particular religious bodies, especially when the goal is language maintenance by ethnic minorities in immigrant societies (Kloss, 1977a; Fishman, 1966).

## **2.9 LIMPOPO LANGUAGE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (LLPIP)**

Limpopo Province is one of the nine provinces of South Africa, (The other provinces are Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, and KwaZulu Natal). The policy aims to promote the equitable use of the six official languages in the province namely, isiNdebele, Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsong, English and Afrikaans with a view to facilitating access to government services, knowledge and information, as well as respect for language rights (LLPIP, 2008). These aims are dependent on the successful promotion and development of the previously marginalised official languages of Limpopo province. Since language plays a vital role in enabling citizens to participate in the political, educational, social and economic life of individuals and communities, it is important that strategies to redress past language inequalities be put in place. For instance, many people do not participate in activities such as politics because they are left behind because of languages problems. The use of English and Afrikaans makes it difficult in many instances for the majority of people to participate in public, whereas it is going to be easy when people are given a chance to contribute in the languages of their choice as it is also stated in the *Constitution of Republic of South Africa (1996)* section 6 that everyone has the right to use any official language of his or her choice in both public and private.

It plays a major role in the development and promotion of the official languages of Limpopo. Activities that will follow must be undertaken in close collaboration with the LPLC. Other PanSALB structures that will be instrumental in developing the official languages include National Lexicography Units (NLUs) and the National Language Bodies (NLBs).

Furthermore, the Limpopo Language Policy Implementation Plan mentions that every government entity at provincial or local level should ensure that its oral, written and electronic communication is carried out with the assistance of interpreters and translators and other technical means such as simulcast and subtitling. These services should be carried out in the official languages of Limpopo, depending on the language use and needs of the residents. In terms of the LLPIP, one can easily say that any

member of Limpopo Province may use any one of the six official languages of Limpopo in his or her communication with any institution of the provincial or local government, and moreover, be served in any of the six official languages at any institution of the provincial or local government where there is a substantial need for communication and services in that language based on the language needs and preferences of the community.

## **2.10 NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY FRAMEWORK (NLPF)**

According to the National Language Policy Framework (2003), South Africa is a multilingual country which has approximately 25 different languages, of which 11 have been granted official status in terms of section 6 of the *Constitution of South Africa of 1996* or (Act no. 108 of 1996), on the grounds that their usage includes about 98% of the total population. The 11 official languages are isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, and siSwati (referred to as the Nguni language group), Sesotho, Sepedi, and Setswana (referred to as the Sotho language group), Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans.

Elements of the policy are divided into four categories whose are aims, approach, principles, and scope and will be discussed as follows:

The aims of the National Language Policy Framework is to give all 11 official languages equal status and also to protect them, particularly the African languages given the fact that these were marginalised during the apartheid era. Furthermore, the framework is there to ensure that all government services such as information and knowledge are accessed in all official languages in order to accommodate all South African citizens. In communicating with the members of the public, the language of citizen's choice can be used and all oral communication must take place in the preferred official language of the target audience. All the people who are working in various government services are also urged to learn more than one official language for the benefit of the residents.

In order to promote equity and language rights as mentioned in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) section 6(2) all official languages must be given

equal status and rights or treated equally. Moreover, the framework seeks also to promote multilingualism in all the nine provinces.

The NLPF mentions that where the effective and stable operation of government at any government at any level requires compressive communication, it must be published in all official languages and in the provinces in all the official languages prescribed in the provinces. In case where documents will not be made available in all 11 official languages, national government departments must publish documents simultaneously in at least six languages which are Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English, Afrikaans, one from Nguni group ( isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, and siSwati) and Sotho (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana).

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

Language policy is clearly stated in the 1996 Constitution of Republic of South Africa. The constitution stipulates that Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu are the 11 official languages of South Africa. However, the Constitution of South Africa affirms that all official languages may be used for any form of communication to access information but most of African languages such Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga are not used as official languages.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN BUSINESS WORLD AND SOCIAL LIFE**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a comprehensive exploration of the use of African official languages in the arenas of social life, business, communication with the residents, notices to the public, and also in politics in Mopani District. The aforementioned aspects will be examined in the towns of Tzaneen and Modjadjiskloof.

The total population of the district is approximately one million, with a number of households ranging at about 218, 796. Women constitute 49, 9%, while men make up 50,1% of the population (Census 2001).

Tzaneen is a large town situated in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. It is in a fertile region with tropical and subtropical agriculture taking place in a 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> region. Tzaneen has 650 000 people residing within a 30km radius, with the town itself holding a population of around 30,000 (Census 2003). The Tzaneen area is a subtropical paradise filled with indigenous and exotic plants. Tzaneen itself lies peacefully at the foot of the northern Drakensberg Mountains in the heart of a forestry area and in South Africa's richest sub-tropical fruit-farming region.

The town also contributes substantially to the total production of timber, citrus and litchis inter alia. The surrounding mountain slopes are heavily forested with pine and blue gum plantations and close to forty sawmill operate in the area. Tzaneen is the second largest town in Limpopo and accommodates some 80,000 residents while serving close on 650,000 people within a radius of 30 km.

Furthermore, Modjadjiskloof is a small town which has 260,286 people. Modjadjiskloof is found within the royal family of Balobedu. The town used to be known as Duiwelskloof. Today, the town is named Modjadjiskloof in tribute to the Rain Queen, Modjadji.

It is believed that the hereditary queen of the Balobedu, Modjadji or Rain Queen, has special powers bestowed on her that grant her the ability to control clouds and rainfall. The succession is matrilineal and the Queen's eldest daughter automatically steps in to take on the mantle.

Tradition holds that the queen communicates to her people via male councillors and indunas. She gives up any appearances at public functions and never marries. Instead, she bears children by her close relatives and is cared for by her 'wives', sent from many villages in Ga-Modjadji.

The Modjadji Royal Palace is one of the most popular tourist attractions, as it is close to the Royal Modjadji Nature Reserve, where some of the oldest and largest cycad specimens in the world form part of a unique and natural forest. The reserve is a treasure, not only for the giant specimens that stand as high as 13 metres and bear cones that weigh up to 34 kilograms, but also for the sheer beauty of the mist that often overlays the area and lends it an atmosphere of other worldliness (Mopani District Municipality Reviewed Integrated Development Plan 2007/8).

### **3.2 JUSTICE**

Justice is the quality of being righteous or fair. Many philosophers, theologians and others define justice as the proper ordering of people and things. Behind the concept of justice lies the notion of balance that people get what is right, fair and appropriate. Justice also includes the notion of upholding the law, as in the work of police, judges and the court (*www.yourdictionary.com*).

The established languages of the courtroom in South Africa are Afrikaans and English. Use has been made of interpreters down the years when dealing with evidence presented by someone who could not speak either languages and the courts have sometimes distinguished themselves by not taking translation at face value (Herriman & Burnaby, 1996: 29). This position holds for the Mopani District as well. In general, there are major inadequacies in the current practice, as to be expected in a country with more than three quarters of its population black, most people standing trial and giving evidence are black. However, most of the magistrates, judges and

public prosecutors are white and few have any command of an African language or any intimate understanding of South African's range of conventions. Almost all interpreters working in African languages and many working in other languages have not had professional training which would make them alert to the ethics of their role, to cultural nuance in translation and the exigencies of discourse (Crawford, 1993).

### **3.3 TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING**

Nida and Taber (1974:22) mention that translation is the transformation of text representation from one language into another. It is the end result of the process of transferring the meaning of a written text from one language into another. On the other hand, language interpreting or interpretation is the intellectual activity of facilitating oral and sign-language communication, either simultaneously or consecutive ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpret](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpret)). Some scholars define interpreting as a communication act whereby utterance in a source language is rendered in a target language at formal or informal settings. It is a translation that conveys the meaning of the original, or source text, by using equivalent language and the forms and structures of the target language, in order to produce a translation that reads like an original.

During the apartheid era, translation and interpretation were not major issues since the only official languages were English and Afrikaans and most of African languages such as Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiZulu, isiXhosa, and isiNdebele were marginalised. By the mid 1994 translation and interpreting services were required. The central government language office, the state language services, was developing a capacity to offer translation services from and into all South African official languages. Provincial and local governments have similar if less complex needs, and will have to develop or expand their own languages. There are professional bodies which are actively concerned to improve the situation. The South African Translators Institute has been examining the implications of the changes in the language order at its conferences for several years. There are also a Translators and Interpreters Association of South Africa and an Association of Court Interpreters both of which have taken steps to establish training opportunities.

Furthermore, South Africa is a democratic country which has eleven official languages which should be used all equally. As in many other areas in South Africa, court cases are presented in English in the district and it becomes a problem as the majority of the residents are not speakers of English. Even though the interpreting services are provided, the accused person may end up being sentenced because the interpreter may wrongly interpret the information. Normally people speak better in their mother tongue and if they can be granted a chance to speak in their home languages, they may have a fair trial. The study seeks to highlight that since South Africa has eleven official languages, they must be all used in court.

### **3.4 EDUCATION**

The challenge of English is everywhere, not least in education. Most Africans in South Africa were denied rights to better education during apartheid era. At the other end of the educational spectrum, when offered a choice significant number of black parents has opted for English as first language of instruction for their children even the first year of primary school (NEPI, 1992:13). The statistics (Census, 2001) outline that it was already so in 43% of schools and that 86% of teachers in those schools were satisfied with the policy. In terms of statistics in Mopani District, English lessons prior to standard 3 did not equip pupils with the necessary language skills to learn their content subjects once they switched to English as a medium in standard 3.

Heugh (2000) reports that in 1992, the Department of Education and Training (responsible for African schools education until the introduction of the new integrated system) gave parents the choice of several options on language medium for primary schools their children were attending. SAIRR (1992:182) mentions that the drive for English is far from unproblematic: 79% of all pupils in South African schools in 1990 were African. Almost all of these would have had a home language or home languages other than English. Nearly half of them would have been in the first four years of school and that stage would have been taught in an African language. The reminder would have been in higher education and taught through the medium of English by teachers for whom English was not a home language. Many people within the district are not educated and some are semi illiterate because of the language

policies which were in favour of whites. Languages of the district are offered as subject in schools while other languages such as English and Afrikaans are used as medium of instruction. Most people in South Africa are not educated due to the language problem. One is of the view that if black people are granted the chance to study in their mother tongue from grade R to grade 12, there will be great changes in the education of blacks.

On the issue of the language policy, Sinclair (1997:52) points out that there is a real danger in debating the role of English in education that we will get caught in a circular mode of reasoning, seeking justification for the dominance of English because English has already become dominant in the eyes of the population. However, there is an equally troubling danger that levels of competence achieved in English will not deliver the envisaged benefits to the majority of South Africans.

### **3.5 LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS**

Currently, English is the major medium of instruction at higher primary and secondary levels, yet many teachers in the Mopani District do not have command of the language adequate for them to enable their pupils to learn effectively. Herriman and Burnaby (1996) confirm that the problem is not as great in schools with Afrikaans as a language of medium of instruction, as it is also a language which has been developed for academic purpose and most teachers in Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools speak the language as their mother tongue. The majority of people in Mopani District speak Xitsonga and Sepedi but these languages are offered as subjects in schools.

### **3.6 PROMOTING AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

African languages were both promoted and neglected during the apartheid years. They were promoted in so far as there is published literature in each of them, and they were developed after some pressure as school subjects. After 1994, African languages have been given status but are still marginalised. Publishing in African languages has been constrained both by ideology and by economics, often working together. African languages should be used as any other language in the district.

## 3.7 THE USE OF LANGUAGES

### 3.7.1 The media

The media consist of several types of tools such as radio, television, and newspapers, and in this study only newspapers will receive attention. Sinclair (1997:1111) refers to a newspaper as “a publication consisting of a number of large sheets of folded papers on which news, advertisements and other information is printed”. Some newspapers are produced every day from Monday to Sunday, and others are produced once a week. The Mopani District has a weekly newspaper which is called *Letaba Herald*.

None of the abovementioned newspaper is completely written in Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. The newspapers are written in English and Afrikaans and less in the mother tongue of the residents. Here is one of the articles that appeared in *Letaba Herald* of Friday 26 May 2009:

Twee plaaslike vissermanne het die afgelope naweek die winter water van die Tzaneen dam aangedurf. Nick van Rooyen en Jaco Rademeyer het n volt ofgediep uit die langgrasse langs die dam en aan mekaar geflans. Die manne het die vierspesie kompetisie in baie ernstige lig gesien en dus besluit om op die waterte oornag sodat hulle a hulle tyd aan visvang kan span deer. Om seker te maak die koue gaan hulle die volt met hout gepak en n letsie vir die dors, koffie of so...

Here is another example from the *Letaba Herald* of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009:

A far reaching vision to transform the ward 8 area of Modjadjiskloof formerly Duiwelskloof from becoming a ghost town to a vibrant new centre within five years was outlined last week, the new ward chancellor, Mr. Mosila M. Reuben ward eight includes the town of Modjadjiskloof and Mooketsi the informal settlement of Makgoba and farms within its settlement of Makgoba and farms within its area, including tomato producer ZZ2. CLR. Reuben presented the five year 2010 to 2011 Intergrated Development Plan (IDP) for the ward following extensive investigation and consultations with the communities...

The aforementioned articles appeared on the weekly newspaper of Mopani District. It shows that languages of the districts are undermined. The *Constitution of the Republic*

of *South Africa (1996)* section 6(4) mentions that all South African official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably. However, in Mopani District, this is hardly happening.

Furthermore, *Seiponi* is a new newspaper that is being subsidised by the Pan South African Language Board. Some of its articles are written in Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi. *Seiponi* is not available in great numbers and it is hard to get hold of it. Very few advertisements are provided in Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. Murwamphida (2008:43) confirms that the newspapers serve as the main source of information to the world. It is a channel that gives the world information to the people. Without reading newspapers, one remains without knowledge. It is therefore an advantage to read the news in the language that one understands best. There are a number of newspapers in South Africa and a great number of such newspapers are written in English whereas a small percentage of them are written in African languages.

### **3.7.2 Politics**

English is seen as the language of politics in South Africa because in almost every political gathering only English is used. African languages are given status but are still marginalised. Before the 2009 elections in South Africa many parties launched their manifestos which were written in English and only a few in African languages. The posters which were displayed in some of the rural areas in Mopani District, for example, were in English. Only few posters were written in Sepedi and these were grammatically incorrect. Here are some of the African National Congress (ANC) posters which were displayed in one area in Mopani:

VOTE ANC  
A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL  
Working together we can do more.

VOTE ZUMA  
A better life for me  
What a lovely kanga you are wearing.

The abovementioned posters confirm that there is discrimination amongst official languages in South Africa. The posters were supposed to be in the languages that are spoken within the district in order for people to understand these important political messages so that they are able to make appropriate decision.

### **3.7.3 Informal settings**

Regardless of the official status of languages, the situation in practice is often of more importance to users, and is more effective as a site of struggle overwhelming the most vocal participants in the languages debate are Afrikaans fearing the future of their languages (Herriman and Burnaby, 1996).

In informal settings, in most cases, there is no stipulated language policy. Everyone is free and allowed to use his or her mother tongue even though it may not be an official language in South Africa. It is known that everybody speaks better in his or her mother tongue and dreams in his or her own mother tongue. In such gatherings, one is able to understand the issues under scrutiny as one will be using one's mother tongue. It is also highlighted in the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) that all official languages should be used equally.

It is commonly known that African languages such as Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi in the district are used as home languages and in schools as subjects. However, most parents encourage their children to study English as their first language in schools and this undoubtedly leads to the diminish of such languages.

### **3.7.4. Formal settings**

One can understand the fact that English is an international language but the fact that South Africa is a democratic country with eleven official languages should also be considered. *Act 108 of 1996* shows that all official languages should be used equally. It is surprising to find that, for most government official gatherings, where all the participants are Bapedi, Vhavenda or Vatsonga, invitations, agenda, and the running of the whole programme are mostly done in English. This again shows that African languages are not taken seriously.

The *Constitution of Republic of South Africa* (1996) section 32 mentions that “everyone has the right of access to any information held by the state and any information that is held by other person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights”. However, it also includes a provision that no one shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, because of the language he or she uses. Furthermore, it is important to make the district under analysis to be aware that many people are disadvantaged for not being able to speak or read English and Afrikaans. Language policy should empower people by enabling them to be free and use their own mother tongue.

### **3.8 THE USE OF LANGUAGES IN BUSINESS AREAS:**

#### **3.8.1 Banks**

Allen (2002:14) defines the term bank as follows: “A bank is a financial establishment which uses money deposited by customers for investment, pays it out when required, makes loans at an interest and exchanges currency”. An organization, usually a corporation, chartered by a state or federal government, which does most or all of the following: receives demand deposits and time deposits, honours instruments drawn on them, and pays interest on them; discounts notes, makes loans, and invests in securities; collects checks, drafts, and notes; certifies depositor's cheque; and issues drafts and cashier's checks. However, is a financial institution that accepts deposits and channels the money into lending activities; "he cashed a cheque at the bank"; "that bank holds the mortgage on my home". Badenhorst, (2004:46-47) stipulates that a bank:

is a company that has a license to receive deposits and conduct financial transactions on behalf of its clients. The bank lends money to borrowers whose applications have been approved. Anyone is entitled to lend money, but one has to be registered by the Registrar of Banks to take deposits and handle transactions.

A bank is a financial institution licensed by a government. Its primary activities include providing financial services to customers while enriching its investors. Many financial activities were allowed over time (Allen, 2002). For example, banks are

important players in financial markets and offer financial services such as investment funds. In some countries such as Germany, banks have historically owned major stakes in industrial corporations while in other countries such as the United States of America banks are prohibited from owning non-financial companies.

Mopani is a huge district which has several towns that have many banks. These are the banks found in the Mopani District: Amalgamated Bank of South Africa (ABSA), Standard Bank, First National Bank (FNB), NedBank and Capitec Bank. All these banks use English as their means of communication and is difficult for many customers to inquire about their accounts because they know little or no English at all. Communication at this point is very important. The banks should accommodate its customers by using the customers' language. All documentation used in these banks are in English: deposit slip, withdrawal slip, letters, brochures and bank statements. The *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) states that all South African citizens have the right to information and knowledge in their mother tongue, but in Mopani people are still denied access to information in their languages. Here is one of the withdrawal slips from one of the Mopani banks:

Autobank  
Business date  
Trans date  
Cash withdrawal  
Brch  
A/C  
Amount  
Available  
Latest

All the details of the receipt are in English. Those who do not know English are left behind because of language. In other words, these individuals are denied their rights to information in their own home language.

Notice is the legal concept describing a requirement that a party be aware of legal process affecting their rights, obligations or duties. There are several types of notices:

public notice (or legal notice), actual notice, constructive notice, and implied notice. ([wikipedia.org/wiki/Notice](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Notice)). Notice is a formal, written announcement communicating scheduling information or other information about a case. The original notice is filed with the Clerk of Superior Court and copies are mailed or hand-delivered to parties to the litigation.

Most of the notices in Mopani appear in English only and for someone who cannot read and understand this language it becomes a problem. For instance, notices to remind senior citizens about their pay date are written in English; however, the notice is no longer useful to those people. The notice come out useless since is no longer accommodating the relevant people whom the notice is meant for. Sapir (1921) defines language as a means of communication, sharing ideas, and emotions using a common language, but in many places in South Africa this is not the case. Communication in Mopani District is a serious problem as has been already explained.

### **3.8.2 Statements from the municipality**

Mopani is a rather large district with a population of about one million people. According to Census 2001, African languages have a large number of speakers. Here is the evidence from statistics to proof the point: 446,989 speak Sepedi; 4,519 speak Tshivend; 6,030 speak English; 18,132 speak Afrikaans and 468,122 speak Xitsonga. As a result one would like to see these African languages within the district been used like English. Afrikaans and English have less number of speakers but appear to be languages used to communicate in Mopani. However, most statements from the municipalities are written in English and the majority of the residents do not understand the message. As a result, some experience termination of services. Here is one of the water statements that were given to residents of Senwamokgope and Ga-Kgapane Townships in June 2009:

For service supplied by the municipality to the residents listed below, the rates and charges under the economic development delivery service rate schedule are increased by the following applicable effective percentage increase.

<b>Places</b>	<b>rates</b>
Senwamokgope	0,261
Ga-Kgapane	0,260

Here is an example of electricity statements:

Your next actual reading will be on 14/07/09

TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMED FOR BILLING PERIOD  
(kwh)

Premise ID number

Tariff name:

Stand no:

Network charge @ R6.32 per day for 28 days R176.96

Energy charge 1,875 kwh @ R0.7125 /kwh R 1.335.94

TOTAL CHARGES FOR BILLING PERIOD

ACCOUNT SUMMARY FOR JUNE 2009

Balance brought forward (due date 2009-06-12) R 439.82

Payment(s) received direct deposit 2009-05-29 R 440.00

Total charges for billing period R 1,512.90

Vat raised on items at 14% R211.81

Both the examples shown above are in English and there were no statements issued in Xitsonga or Sepedi, which are the languages spoken by the largest number of the population in the district. This means English still receives prominence at the expense of Sepedi and Xitsonga in the district.

### **3.8.3 Advertisements**

Advertising is a form of communication used to influence individuals to purchase products or services or support political candidates or ideas. Frequently it communicates a message that includes the name of the product or service and how that product or service could potentially benefit the consumer. Advertising often

attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume a particular brand of product or service (Heugh, 2000).

Commercial advertisers often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services through branding, which involves the repetition of an image or product name in an effort to associate related qualities with the brand in the minds of consumers. Different types of media can be used to deliver these messages, including traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards or direct mail. Advertising may be placed by an advertising agency on behalf of a company or other organization.

Organisations that spend money on advertising and promoting items other than a consumer product or service include political parties, interest groups, religious organisations and governmental agencies. Non-profit organizations may rely on free modes of persuasion, such as a public service announcement.

Advertising is bringing a product (or service) to the attention of potential and current customers. It focuses on one particular product or service. Thus, an advertising plan for one product might be very different from that of another product. Advertising is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or email messages and personal contact. Most of the adverts that appear on the newspapers, posted on windows, and brochures in Mopani District are in two languages; English and Afrikaans. The main purpose of advertising is to attract customers. According to statistics, Mopani has a higher percentage of old people and most of them are illiterate. The way in which service is rendered in the district, many people are still left behind in terms of language. Language plays a major role in our daily life. However, in this regard the advert is only meant for literate people since they can read for themselves. The language policy of Limpopo Province mentions that any business rendered within the province, government employees and local government must at least be able to speak two official languages for the sake of residents.

Retail stores have a way of communicating with their customers. They communicate with their customers through notices pasted on walls in and outside the shops. Most of them have a WELCOME sign above their doors. Inside the shop, customers are

directed to places where they should go to receive various types of help. Some of the notices read:

Sale, sale,  
Men's jeans,  
Men's shoes,  
Ladies' outfit,  
Ladies' sneakers,  
Ladies' jeans,  
Jackets.

All the notices in all these retail shops are in English. English is used even in retail shops where the majority of customers speak Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The language of the district could have been used to write notices in shops when the majority of the customers are speaking those languages. Since all the customers understand the languages that are used (Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga), they could give the shop a large number of customers. Customers who experience problems with language often seek assistance from other customers. They even go to the extent of looking for help from the shop assistants.

#### **3.8.4 Till slip**

A till "is a drawer for money in a shop or bank with a device of recording the amount of each purchase" (Allen, 2002:1277). According to Summers (1995:1513), a till is a machine used in shops, restaurants for calculating the amount of money you have to pay, and storing the money. The till slips of all shops in Mopani District are in English. Old people who are illiterate are just given the slips which they do not understand as it is written on them. The till slip shows the record of payments of the customers. The following details appear on receipts:

Name of the shop,  
Vat,  
Name of the cashier,  
Number of items sold,

Amount,  
Cash tendered,  
Change,  
Date.

Details on receipts are written in English. The use of African languages for writing receipts is ignored.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) stipulates that all official languages in the country must enjoy the purity of esteem. This means that all these languages must have an equal status, but as has been seen in the discussion, some languages such as Afrikaans and English are more used in official circle than most of the local languages. In case of Mopani District, where Xitsonga and Sepedi are the dominant languages, these languages are not used in official contexts. However, this study has recommended that African languages be given the opportunity for them to be used widely, primarily because these are the languages that people use for communication.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC VIEWPOINT OF THE LANGUAGES POLICY IN MOPANI DISTRICT

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the responses of the residents of Mopani District (Greater Letaba and Greater Tzaneen) as far as the implementation of language policy is concerned. This is done by briefly reviewing the respondents' responses to the questionnaire that they were provided with.

Data were collected from 97 respondents of different occupations, qualifications, race, home languages, and ages. Both males and females completed the questionnaire. The respondents' details are given in tables and explanations as shown in the following discussion.

#### 4.2 HOME LANGUAGE

The table shows the home language of the respondents who responded to the questionnaire.

Home languages	Total	Percentage
Sepedi	60	62%
Xitsonga	36	37%
Tshivenda	1	1%

The Sepedi and Xitsonga speaking people were in majority within the district and this is confirmed by the Census of 2003 which shows that the Mopani District has a large number of Xitsonga and Sepedi speakers. The statistics shown on the table also confirms this fact.

### 4.3 Other languages are preferred

The table illustrates other languages that the respondents prefer to use instead of their home languages.

<b>Other language</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sepedi	23	23%
Xitsonga	25	25%
Tshivenda	9	10%
English	40	42%

The table shows that the other languages that most people prefer to use are English and Sepedi.

### 4.4 Race

The table below gives the summary of race group of respondents.

<b>Race</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
African	97	100%

The questionnaire was completed by people of the same race group who reside in the Mopani District who fall under the following municipalities: Greater Tzaneen and Greater Letaba Municipalities.

#### 4.5 GENDER

The following table shows the gender of the respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	47	48%
Female	50	52%

#### 4.6 HIGHEST QUALIFICATION OBTAINED

The following table shows the qualifications of the participants.

##### 4.6.1 Learners

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Learners	40	40	<b>100%</b>

##### 4.6.2 Educators

The following table indicates the qualifications of the respondents who are teachers.

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Degree	4	20	20%
Diploma	8	20	40%
Certificate	7	20	35%
Grade 12	1	20	5%

#### 4.6.3 Residents

The following table shows the qualifications of the residents interviewed.

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Grade 12	16	20	80%
Certificate	4	20	20%

#### 4.6.4 Junior officials

The following table illustrates the qualifications of junior officials interviewed.

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Degree	5	8	62.5%
Diploma	3	8	37.5%

#### 4.6.5 Language practitioners

The following table shows the qualifications of the language practitioners interviewed.

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Degree	4	5	80%
Diploma	1	5	20%

#### 4.6.6 Managers

The following table indicates the qualifications of the managers who were interviewed.

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Degree	2	4	50%
Diploma	2	4	50%

The aforementioned tables have shown the number of participants together with their qualifications. The table highlights the fact that most of the residents in Mopani District are semi-literate.

#### 4.7 Occupation

The following table indicates the response to the question of occupation.

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Learners	40	100%
Educators	20	100%
Managers	4	100%
Unemployed	16	100%
Junior officials	8	100%
Students	4	100%
Language practitioners	5	100%

In terms of the total number of the researcher, it shows that only few people are unemployed and the other groups are learners and students.

#### 4.8 Are you aware of the new language policy in South Africa?

Occupation	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Total
Learners	25	62 %	15	38%	40
Educators	17	85%	3	15%	20
Residents	16	80%	4	20%	20
Managers	4	100%			4
Language practitioners	5	100%			5
Junior officials	8	100%			8

The table above indicates the respondents who were aware and those who were not aware of the new language policy in South Africa. From the above statistics, it is evident that the majority of the respondents were aware of the new language policy of South Africa. It is important, to observe that this view was held mainly by the residents of Mopani District. However, one observes that the overwhelming majority of the residents (20%), educators (15%), and learners (38%) did not know of the existence of a language policy of South Africa. Some respondents who fell in this category mentioned that all what they knew about the language policy is that the number of official languages had been increased.

In order to change the status quo, one is of the view that the government and local government should do more in order to familiarise the residents with the language policy. Some people are afraid to participate in activities because they have no knowledge of the more common languages, such as English and Afrikaans which are still regarded in some quarters as the only two official languages. It is also devastating because the new language policy is only in one language, that is, English, and the question is what about those who cannot read and understand English? Since South Africa is a democratic country with 11 official languages, the language policy was

supposed to be in all official languages. Given the platform to flourish, local government can and should change the current situation.

#### 4.9 Is the government succeeding in implementing its language policy?

Occupation	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Total
Learners	9	23%	31	77%	40
Educators	10	50%	10	50%	20
Residents	11	55%	9	45%	20
Language practitioner	1	20%	4	80%	5
Junior officials	3	37%	5	63%	8
Managers	00	00	4	100%	4

The table reveals that the majority of the respondents think that the government is not succeeding in implementing its language policy. The educators (50%) argue that the government does not implement its language policy because there are no visible changes in terms of the promotion of African languages in spite of their official status.

#### 4.10 Are the three African languages (Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) that are spoken within the district practically being used as official languages?

Groups	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Total
Learners	4	10%	36	90%	40
Educators	4	20%	16	80%	20
Residents	6	30%	14	70%	20
Junior officials	6	75%	2	25%	8

Managers	2	50%	2	50%	4
Language practitioners	2	40%	3	60%	5

According to the statistics as reflected above, a significant number of learners mention that African languages such as Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sepedi are not used as official languages. Ninety percent of them say that their languages are regarded as official languages in terms of the Constitution, but they are still marginalised. The table confirms that most of the respondents are of the opinion that their languages are not used in official settings and are thus relegated to the periphery. Eighty percent of the teachers state that Xitsonga, Tshivenda, and Sepedi are only used as subjects at school and not as media of instruction. However, the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) states clearly that all official languages should be used equally. In contrast, as has been pointed out elsewhere only two languages are used as official languages, namely English and Afrikaans.

Furthermore, from the available evidence one can conclude that some languages are just there to augment the number of official languages. Learners also point out that if they can be granted a chance to be taught in their mother tongue the failure rate in schools will be reduced. Seventy percent of the residents are in agreement with the learners because they too find it hard to use English and Afrikaans. In chapter two it was stated that most of the residents of Mopani District are semi-literate and therefore have little or not competence in English and Afrikaans.

#### **4.11 What is your opinion of English being regarded and used as a lingua franca in Mopani District?**

The following table indicates the opinion of the respondents with regard to the use of English as a lingua franca.

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Learners	25	63%	15	37%	40

Educators	15	75%	5	25%	20
Residents	16	80%	4	20%	20
Language practitioners	5	100%	00	00%	5
Manager	00	00	4	100%	4
Junior officials	6	75%	2	25%	8

The above table illustrates that the majority (69%) of the respondents supported the use of English as a lingua franca. In contrast, 31% percent of the respondents did not support the use of English as a lingua franca. The first group of respondents argued for English because many people of various cultures and tribes are able to understand it. They regarded English as an international language. Furthermore, according to these respondents, English continues to dominate as a national and international means of communication while local languages are only used as home languages. Again learning and teaching is taking place through English. At institutions of higher learning, a variety of learners from various cultures and ethnic groups meet together in one lecture room where English binds them together. Of course these are views of lay people who have imbibed the notion that English is a superior language that everyone should know. Ironically, the same group of people's knowledge of English is not up to scratch.

On the other hand, a big portion of those who are educated such as educators do not regard the use of English as panacea to communicative problems in Mopani District. This is why 30% of educators argued that the use of English as a lingua franca in Mopani disadvantages people within the district. They are of the view that it makes communication difficult to most of the residents, especially to those who are illiterate. They also argue that English is an official language like Xitsonga, Sepedi and Tshivenda; it should thus be used and given equal status like any other language in the district and even in South Africa. One respondent even suggests that one African

language should be chosen amongst the official languages of the district (Xitsonga, Sepedi and Tshivenda).

In spite of this positive development, one should not ignore the fact that 70 percent of educators states that English is an international language that is well known by the majority of the residents in Mopani and therefore, it should be used as a lingua franca. One of the respondents stated that “it enables one to communicate, participate, share and access information from all spheres of life and also to interact freely with other people who are not natives to our district.” According to one educator, Mopani District is a trilingual district and the use of English as a lingua franca will make communication simple. It will also be an advantage to use English as a shared language as the residents of Mopani come from different ethnic groups.

Furthermore, most of the residents point out that the use of English is an advantage since they can interact with people from other ethnic group or people from other countries. In contrast to this, 20% of the residents are of the view that the use of English as a lingua franca will overpower their mother tongue. But they also argue that the use of English will destroy their culture because they will forget about their languages. Mutasa (2006:83) observes that “many speakers of African languages view the knowledge of European languages as a sign of intelligence and a major achievement for the child”. Most black parents take their children to multiracial schools and learn English as their first language and forget about their languages. The residents also contend that the use of English and Afrikaans ruined their future because they were forced to study in English and Afrikaans only. They also believe that if they are given the chance to study in their mother tongue, they will be able to pass.

The majority of learners state that English should be used as a lingua franca because education is going to be taken for granted in their own languages. One of the respondents mentioned that to teach some subjects such as life orientation, mathematics and biology in their mother tongue would result in many of them failing. One hundred percent of managers of declare that the use of English as a lingua franca will disadvantage the promotion and development of official languages of the district.

They also argue that in their municipality, they make use of official languages of the district (Xitsonga, Tshivenda, and Sepedi).

#### **4.12 Mention places that you know where your mother tongue is used as an official language in Mopani District**

The learners who responded to the questionnaire stated that Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sepedi are used at home to communicate, at school as subjects, but not in official gatherings. In some churches, the services are run in their mother tongue. In churches where the services are conducted in English, an arrangement for translations and interpretation is organised. Communicate Radio Station broadcast in *Selobedu* which is a dialect of Sepedi. Speakers of Xitsonga and Tshivenda are not catered for. Government schools are offering Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi as a primary language. In government departments, especially in the Mopani District, verbal communication takes place in those three languages because most of the residents are speakers of those languages. It is also indicated in the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) that the national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the purpose of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole, but the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages.

However, the teachers who completed the questionnaires indicated that Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Tshivenda were used at schools as subjects. Furthermore, residents also argue that their African languages are undermined. There are only a few places where these languages are used as official languages. African languages are mostly used in informal settings. The respondents also mention that they have magistrate courts within the district which present cases in English and the interpreters have no knowledge and background of the residents' languages.

#### 4.13 Is there any development of previously marginalised languages in Mopani District?

The following table indicates the responses to this important question:

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Learners	15	37%	25	63%	40
Educators	12	60%	8	40%	20
Residents	4	20%	16	80%	20
Language practitioners	1	20%	4	80%	5
Managers	2	50%	2	50%	4
Junior officials	2	25%	6	75%	8

The aforementioned table illustrates that a percentage of about 63% of the learners who responded to the questionnaire stated that there was no development of previously disadvantaged languages. They complain about the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in the way it broadcasts African languages such as Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sepedi. Programmes of African languages are given less time, for instance, Xitsonga and Tshivenda news on SABC 2. According to the response of the respondents, they broadcast less in African languages and more in other languages such as English and Afrikaans. Despite the fact that only a few were being broadcast, they were encouraged that something was being done about the use of African language programmes on TV. In spite of this positive view, the learners are still concerned that their African languages are not being used as media of learning, science, technology and of business; they are only used as subjects. Other group of learners (37%) who responded to the questionnaire state that there is a development of previously marginalised languages because their languages are used in formal situations within the district.

The educators (60%) responded that there is development in previously disadvantaged languages. The new democratic government named eleven (11) languages as official languages (Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi are included). Before 1994, there were only two official languages; English and Afrikaans. Learners were forced to learn English and Afrikaans and educators were also forced to teach in these media. Currently, there are programmes that are being established with the idea of developing the previously disadvantaged languages. The Department of Arts and Culture has established lexicographic units that are developing dictionaries in African languages.

All this shows that there is progress regarding the development of African languages. The educators pointed out that learning and teaching were still taking place in English. Circulars and all information documents forwarded to educators were in English. The same applied to learning tools and resource materials.

Furthermore, most of the residents declare that there is no development of marginalised languages because they still receive information such as electricity and water statements and letters from the municipalities in English. The languages of the district are not used for official purpose. One of the respondents mentions that the use of African languages should be improved and a lot should be written in these languages. Few residents (20%) of Mopani District responded to the question that there is development of previously marginalised languages because they have got ATMs that use their mother tongue. They also mentioned that the government is doing a lot in promoting African languages since they would soon be taught in their home languages.

#### **4.14 Is information accessible in all Africa languages? Substantiate your answer**

The following table illustrates whether or not information is accessible in all African languages.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Learners	15	37%	25	63%	40

Educators	4	20%	16	80%	20
Residents	6	30%	14	70%	20
Language practitioners	00	00	5	100%	5
Managers	00	00	4	100%	4
Junior officials	2	25%	6	75%	8

As indicated in the above table, 63% of the learners responded that information is not accessible in all African languages because they do not have material that is written in their mother tongue, as most of it is in English. Furthermore, Hansard documents which are produced by government are still in one language which is English. The statistics reveal that learners were not happy that posters for elections were all in English. Most of them did not get the message clearly as a result. Another group of learners that makes 37% argues that there is a lot written in African languages, the fault is with the people themselves as most of African language speakers do not read material that is written in their languages. For instance, one of the respondents gave an example about the speech of the president that has been written in all official languages.

According to the above table, 80% of educators indicated that information was not accessible in all African languages, whereas 20% of the educators agreed that information was available in African languages. They pointed out that textbooks and literature materials for Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi as primary languages were supplied by the Department of Education and were made available to learners and educators free of charge.

Most of the residents interviewed state that the government is doing little for African languages. After the 1994 elections, the government declared eleven official languages as official but the residents of Mopani are still struggling to access information in their languages. One of the respondents argued that the district is trilingual and in this regard one language should be chosen amongst the three to be

the medium of communication. The majority of the residents hold the view that African languages should be elevated in order for them to receive and access information such as letters, electricity and water statements in their home languages. Only 30% of the residents affirm that information is accessible in their languages because there are lot of books in their languages. They also mentioned that their children should receive education in their mother tongue.

One hundred percent of managers say that it is still difficult to access information in African languages. African people are still struggling to watch programmes on SABC in their languages as most of programmes are in isiZulu and English. The government has established many agencies such as PanSALB, Language Research Centres, and Lexicography Units in order to promote African languages but, still some languages are marginalised.

Language practitioners argue that information is not accessible in African languages because if it was there, there would not be a need to have interpreters in official or formal gatherings such as courts of law.

#### **4.15 Is there any interpretation and translation from English into African languages in Mopani District?**

The following table shows the statistics regarding whether there is interpretation and translation from English into African languages.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Learners	22	55%	18	45%	40
Educators	12	60%	8	40%	20
Residents	5	25%	15	75%	20
Language practitioners	2	40%	3	60%	5
Managers	1	25%	3	75%	4

Junior officials	3	37%	5	63%	8
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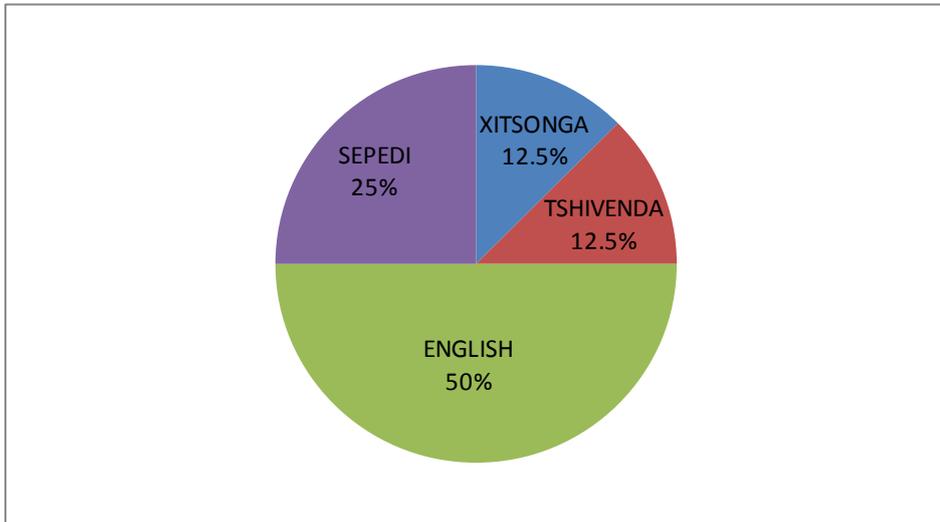
According to this table, 60% of the educators, 55% of the learners, 25% percent of the residents, 40% of language practitioners, 37% of junior officials and 25% of managers indicated that interpretation from English into African languages was done in courts and in parliament. For instance, in the National Parliament and the Provincial Legislature, the speeches of members of parliament were interpreted from English into all the African languages. This is possible because there are people who have been employed as language practitioners. One of their responsibilities is to interpret and translate the members of the parliaments' speeches. The language workers, who were not working in these sectors, indicated that even though there were language workers in the legislature, they were sometimes asked to translate the speech of the Premier. The respondents stated that in most of the places where the people were dealing with language had gathered together, interpretation from English into all the official languages occurred.

In contrast to 40% of the educators, 45% of the learners, 75% of the residents, 63% of the junior officials, 60% of the language practitioners and 75% of the managers argue that there is no translation and interpreting services in African languages. People are speaking for themselves in court because of unqualified interpreters who misinterpret their statements. Many people receive unjust sentences because of misinterpretation. One of the learners mentioned that documents from the government are largely in two languages, which are isiZulu and English.

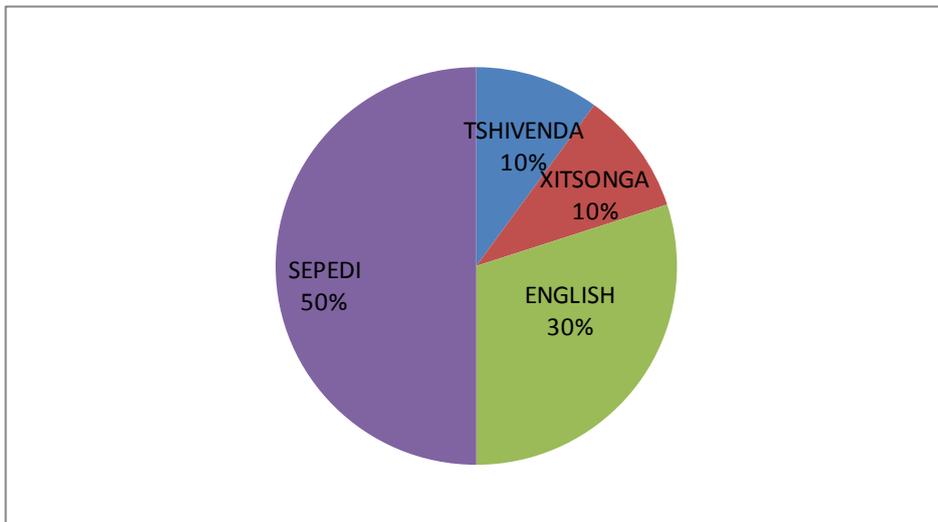
The following pie charts indicate the language preference for official communication in the Mopani District.

**4.16 As a resident, which language do you prefer for official communication in Mopani?**

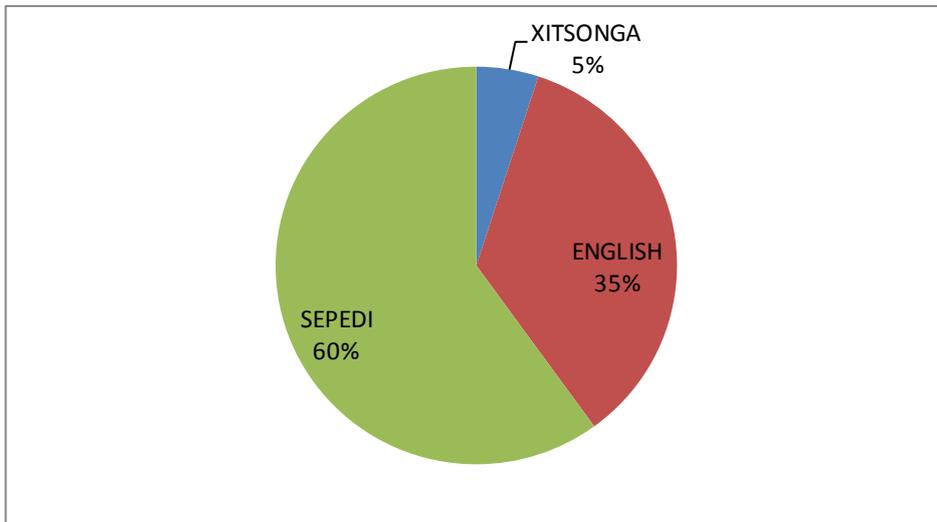
**4.16.1 Learners**



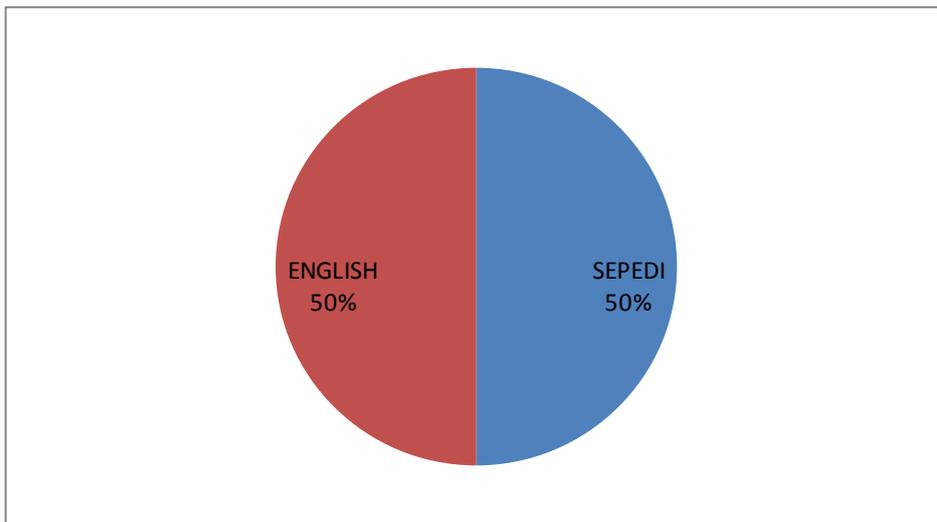
**4.16.2 Educators**



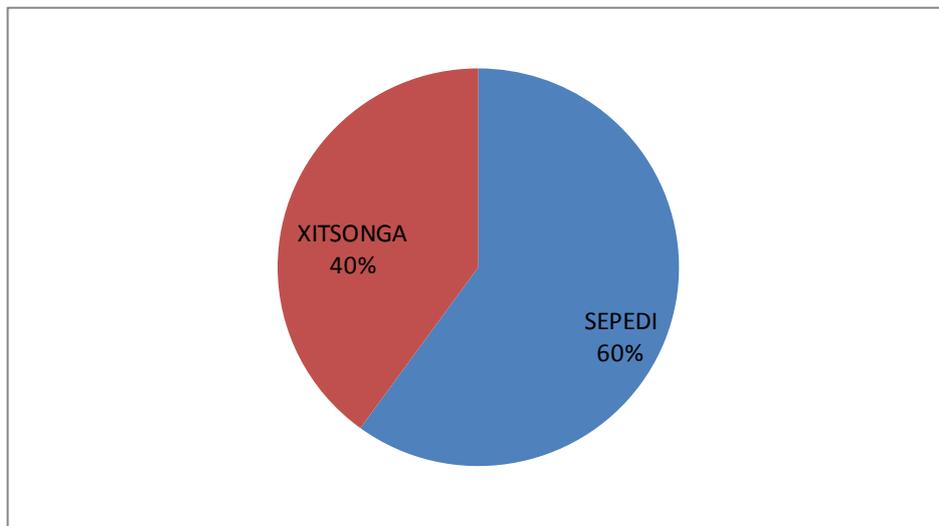
### 4.16.3 Residents



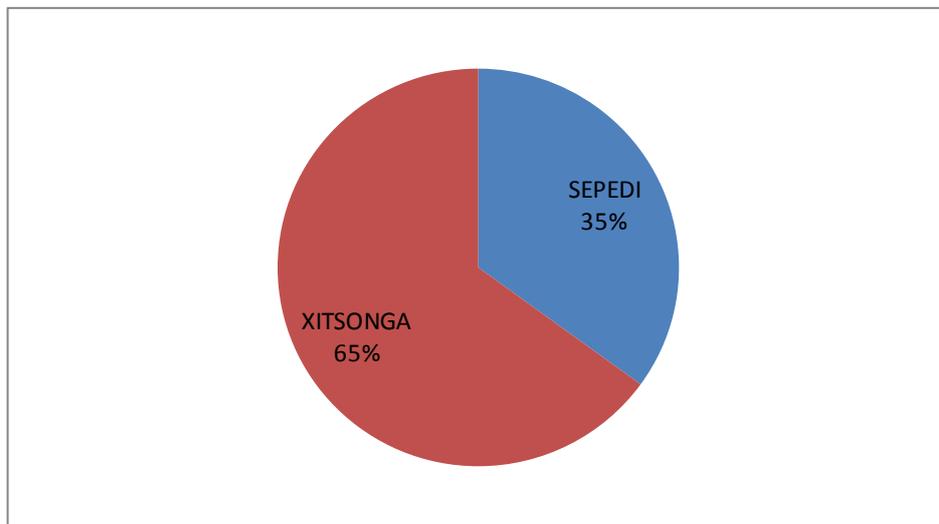
### 1.16.4. Managers



#### 4.16.5 Language practitioners



#### 4.16.6 Junior officials



The majority of the respondents preferred the use of their mother tongue for official communication because they believe that they express themselves better in their home languages. As for learners, 50% of them stated that the use of African languages as languages of learning and teaching will disadvantage them at the tertiary level as English is the medium of instruction. They also argue that English is superior to any other official languages and that through the medium of English, they will function effectively nationally and internationally.

However, 50% of managers mentioned that the Constitution of South Africa affirms that all official languages should enjoy the parity of esteem and must be treated equitably and as the managers of Greater Letaba and Greater Tzaneen, they make use of all official languages of the districts. They also mentioned that the use of language has been assured in the Constitution which says that “the national government and provincial government may use any particular official languages for the purpose of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned; but the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages.” Managers mentioned that they intended to provide for the district in their languages only when it is applicable.

#### **4.17 What do you think should be done to improve the position of African languages in Mopani District?**

The majority of educators hold the view that language practitioners who are responsible for the development of languages should share the knowledge and the research results with the public. Language practitioners should co-operate with all the citizens and language teachers as part of strengthen African languages. The use of translation and interpreting will no longer play any role because all languages will be used equally. Educators and learners proposed that African languages should become the languages of teaching and learning in all government schools and more cultural integration among Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda population groups. Literature books in African languages should be available in libraries. Many more African languages’ programmes should find their way to be established on SABC in African languages as they are the disadvantaged languages among the eleven official languages. African languages should share equal time with English and other dominant African languages on television.

Furthermore, educators and learners argued that the following should also use African languages:

- More programmes in African languages particularly those that were marginalised.

- African languages should be the languages of learning and teaching.
- African languages should be used in court and parliament as official languages.
- Newspapers and magazines should be written in African languages.
- More textbooks and dictionaries should be written in African languages.

The residents also responded to this important question arguing that the government should state it clearly that the three African languages namely Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sepedi should be the medium of instruction within the district. One of the respondents mentioned that documents or materials such as billboards, posters, and ballot papers during election should be written in all official languages. Most of the residents have just voted because they were able to recognise the person whom they are going to vote for but what was written on the paper, they have no idea as they cannot read. A resident proposed that the government must employ language practitioners who would be able to translate and interpret all documents in the district from English into African languages.

The municipalities should establish workshops to teach the younger generation the importance of mother tongue. The district must also make sure that if they have a meeting with a particular community, they must use the language that is spoken by the majority of the residents.

The majority of language practitioners, junior officials and managers assume that if the municipalities can provide relevant information to the residents in all official languages, this will go a long way in helping to develop and improve the status of African languages within the district. It will also be important if parents encourage their children to learn their mother tongue. One of the language practitioners mentioned that everyone has the right to use any of the official languages.

#### **4.18 CONCLUSION**

The responses from the respondents confirm that most of the residents in Mopani were not aware of the new language policy since their languages were not used as official languages within their district. The statistics indicate that African languages in Mopani District are marginalised because of the exclusive use of English and Afrikaans. The findings of the study indicate that the majority of Mopani District residents speak Xitsonga and Sepedi. Therefore, the district should use these two official languages as media of communication. Official information in African languages was not always available. Documents were not always translated and interpreted from English into African languages. The information that is translated was not accessible to the majority of the people. Numerous official documents are in English and only a few documents appear in African languages.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter supplies the conclusion of the study and gives the findings and recommendations of the study.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

**Chapter one** points out what led to the undertaking of the study and indicates the problematic areas prevailing in the use of official languages in the Mopani District.

**Chapter two** presents the literature review of the study. The main attention is based on the following items: language policy in the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996), language policy and culture, language policy and planning, language policy in education, the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF), Language Policy Implementation Plan (LLPIP) and language policy and religion.

**Chapter three** outlines the language policy in business and social life. The main concentration is on the following areas: justice, politics, media, formal and informal settings. The chapter emphasises the fact that African languages should be used in writing formal documents, for example, Hansard documents, newspapers, advertisements, and the notices.

The chapter shows that the established languages of the courtrooms in South Africa are English and Afrikaans even though the majority of the residents are semi-illiterate. The use of English and Afrikaans in court makes the lives of most of the Mopani residents difficult since they cannot speak for themselves in court. Furthermore, in South Africa English is seen as the language of politics because in almost every political gathering of politics English is used.

Lastly, the chapter indicates that the official language that is used to communicate with customers within the district is English. African languages are hardly used in

business, a clear indication that African languages in Mopani are still marginalised. For example, banks and shops prefer to use English as the means of communication.

**Chapter four** presents the responses of the respondents who participated in the study. The study has discovered that the majority of the residents were not aware of the new national language policy. They were not aware that their African languages are allowed to be used in all formal and informal settings.

### **5.3 FINDINGS**

The findings of the study are as follows:

- The majority of the residents of Mopani were not aware of the new national language policy as reflected in the Constitution of South Africa (1996).
- Most of the residents prefer to use their own languages as a medium of communication within the district.
- Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda are still marginalised within the district as they are not used as official languages.
- English is used as a lingua franca in the district.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

- All official languages of the district should be used equally.
- African languages such as Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sepedi should be used as languages of learning and teaching.
- The district should ensure that official documents are available in all official languages.
- The district should make use of African languages on the media particularly in the newspapers.
- The district should encourage the children to learn their mother tongue as a first language subject in schools.

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## Language Policy survey

Before 1994, African languages were marginalised and only English and Afrikaans were regarded as official languages. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) adopted a democratic language policy in order to promote the use of all official languages. *This new language policy has helped to promote a new idea and inclusive view of language planning.* The main aim of this questionnaire is to investigate the use of three African official languages (Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) which are stated in the Constitution of South Africa (1996) to monitor the progress made with regard to the implementation of language policy in Mopani District.

In reference to the information above, you are requested to answer the questions truthfully as what you say will be used to determine the success of language policy. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Please fill in the required information

1. Home language-----
2. Other language (s)-----  
Speak-----  
Read -----
3. Race -----
4. Gender -----
5. Age -----
6. Highest qualification obtained-----
7. Occupation -----

Please make a cross in the relevant block

8. Are you aware of the new language policy in South Africa?

YES	NO
-----	----

9. Is government succeeding in implementing its language policy?

YES	NO
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10. Are the three African languages namely Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga which are spoken within the district practically being used as official languages?

YES	NO
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Please complete the following:

11. What is your opinion of English being regarded and used as a *lingua franca* in Mopani District?

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12. Mention places that you know where your mother tongue is used as an official language in the district

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13. Is there any development of previously marginalised languages in the district?

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14. Is information accessible in all Africa languages? Substantiate your answer

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15. Is there any interpretation and translation from English into African languages in Mopani District?

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16. As a resident in the district which language do you prefer for official communication in Mopani? Substantiate your answer

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17. What do you think should be done to improve the position of African languages in Mopani District?

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Thank you for your time and co-operation.