

**ATTITUDES OF INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNERS, EDUCATORS,  
AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES TOWARDS XITSONGA AS MEDIUM  
OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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(i)

## DECLARATION

I declare that the study: ***ATTITUDES OF INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNERS, EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES TOWARDS XITSONGA AS MEDIUM OF LEARNING AND TEACHING*** is my own work in design and execution and that all the sources used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references. The study has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or other university.

.....  
**M.J. MONA**

.....  
**DATE**

(ii)

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated:

To the Mona and Mabuza clans,

To my parents, Majarimane and Lena (nee Mabuza).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Last but by no means least, like Prophet Isaiah I say: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper...” (*Isaiah 54:17a*).

## **ABSTRACT**

This research study dealt with specific aspects relating to attitudes of intermediate phase learners, educators, and SGB members towards Xitsonga as medium of learning and teaching in Limpopo.

The statement of the study's problem was articulated against clearly defined contexts. As a foundational slab for the study, the thesis deemed it fit and necessary to give the background to the problem on attitudes in general and language attitude in particular. When the foundation had been laid, the statement of the problem was clearly articulated so as to open a curtain on the niche and the exact problem the thesis sought to investigate. The aim of the study was derived from the title, fine-tuned in the niche and focused on clearly defined objectives which informed the research lanes the whole project operated in. The significance of the research project was not a stand alone entity, but spoke to the aim and objectives. The police officer of the thesis was the theoretical framework. It directed the process by means of indicating that mother-tongue education as an ideal practice should also be considered for the post foundation phase studies also in South Africa. On its wings, was the behaviourist theory. Unlike its counterpart the mentalist theory, the former was a vehicle through which the study elicited valuable data by observing the behaviour of the target subjects in the Mopani District. Without a well-indicated scope of the study, the investigation would had been too general to address a specific niche. The distinct niche of the thesis was further uncovered and demonstrated by the evaluation of literature survey of various studies on language attitudes in the country as well as the world over. The search design of the study was also a context against which the qualitative approach was used for data gathering instruments, and sampling process. The ethical considerations were clearly outlined and applied accordingly prior and during the data collection process.

The thesis would had been incomplete if relevant and up to date literature review was not done. In order to contextualise the thrust of language attitudes among the target research respondents, Chapter Two provided a brief but inclusive overview of

historical data. The data were evaluated against language attitude theories, home language instruction principles, attitudes towards a sample of three dominant Limpopo official languages (that is, Xitsonga, Sepedi and Tshivenda), completed research studies that focused on language attitudes, language policy matters and curricula development and implications from the first post apartheid **Curriculum 2005** up to the current **Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**. The review or survey ended up with a critical evaluation of the concept of multilingualism in South African schools against language attitudes, four periods of language policy in the RSA, as well as the language phenomenon from divine creation to date.

Before the fieldwork was undertaken, description was made in some detail on how the research data were collected, possible limitations to the research exercise were spelt out, coupled with counter-measures taken to ensure reliability, validity and objectivity in collecting data, and how analysis and interpretation of research data were actualised. The analysis and interpretation of the research data elicited from learners, teachers, and SGB members yielded almost similar results. The majority of all the respondents across the Mopani District (an average of 80%), displayed very strong negative attitudes towards mother-tongue instruction at Intermediate Phase level. Though learners and teachers had challenges with the use of the source language in class, they still did not favour the target language medium. Only 20% of their counterparts favoured the mother-tongue medium. The volunteer system in the composition of parent component of the SGB members was discovered by the study to be a serious challenge. This challenge does not assist the institutions they are governing to be what they should be. Almost 100% of them exposed themselves through the research tool used that they were not performing the core duties they were expected to perform save signing cheques and solving petty disputes.

In conclusion, relevant and appropriate recommendations were made to affected stakeholders. They were addressed mainly to: communities, managers, teachers, government, community leaders, academics, researchers and writers on ways and means of addressing the deep-seated negative attitudes towards Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level of the Mopani District.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	:	AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
C2005	:	CURRICULUM 2005
CAPS	:	CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT
DoNE	:	DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
FAL	:	FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
FET	:	FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
FP	:	FOUNDATION PHASE
HL	:	HOME LANGUAGE
IP	:	INTERMEDIATE PHASE
L1	:	FIRST LANGUAGE
L2	:	SECOND LANGUAGE
LiEP	:	LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY
LoLT	:	LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING
LO	:	LEARNING OUTCOMES
MD	:	MOPANI DISTRICT
Mol	:	MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION
NCS	:	NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT
NLP	:	NEW LANGUAGE POLICY
PanSALB	:	PAN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE BOARD
RA	:	RURAL AREA
RNCS	:	REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT
RSA	:	REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
SABC	:	SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION
SKAVS	:	SKILL, KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, VALUES
SOWETO	:	SOUTH WEST TOWNSHIP
SP	:	SENIOR PHASE
SUR	:	SEMI-URBAN AREA
TESOL	:	TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Many years of neglect and under-resourcing of African languages by the colonial and apartheid regimes have left a legacy and mind-set of inferiority about their use, specifically as media of learning and teaching across the phase levels. This is evident in the attitudes displayed by speakers of these languages. Such display does not augur well for the successful implementation of the language of learning and teaching policy as contained in the LiEP (Language in Education Policy) (1997). One shares the view of Bamgbose (1998:16) when he avers that it is virtually impossible to talk of the role of languages in postcolonial Africa without mentioning the role of the imported and erstwhile colonial languages such as English, French and Portuguese. These languages have held a dominant position as official languages - a role that has largely been continued in the post-colonial period. The result of this continued dominance could be seen in alienation, resulting in unfavourable attitudes to African languages. These attitudes may be illustrated in the preference for early acquisition of these languages, taking pride in proficiency in the imported languages at the expense of a sound knowledge of one's own mother tongue (Bamgbose 1998:16).

An opinion that is very similar to this is Beukes' (1994:22) who holds that: "Clearly attitudes towards indigenous languages will in future be of great importance to the profession. In fact, attitudes towards languages, as it may be argued, are extremely important in determining the language education any multilingual society requires." Makua (2004:12) is of the view that the mind-set of many South Africans has been so rigorously colonized and indoctrinated to such an extent that he does not see a successful implementation of the mother-tongue education principle expressed in the policy.

Malherbe (1996:1) shares Makua's (2004) view when he says "the future of any language depends more on the attitudes and actions of its speakers than on its official status." The extent to which language attitudes have impacted on the native

speakers of such languages is captured by Vedder (1981:275) as quoted in Ohly (1992:65):

Language prejudice is of two types: positive and negative. Negative prejudice is image affecting. It is characterized by negative evaluation of one's own language or speech patterns and preference for someone else's. An example of this kind of self-denigration is the case of David Christian, the Nama Chief in Namibia who, in response to the Dutch missionaries, attempt to open schools that would conduct their teaching using Nama as a medium of instruction, is reported to have shouted, 'Only Dutch, Dutch only! I despise myself and I want to hide in the bush when I am talking my Hottentot language'.

*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) and the *Language in Education Policy* (1997) have declared the eleven languages spoken in the country as official. Ntsoane (2008:1) argues that despite this government pronouncement, it remains questionable when it comes to the issue of the language of instruction and indigenous languages in schools. In most cases, the language of instruction becomes an issue with new governments that come into office in countries that are multilingual. This tendency has been so, not only in South Africa, but also in other countries of the world, such as other parts of the African continent, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea (Makua, 2004:71-82).

The preference of exoglossic languages as media of instruction at the expense of endoglossic languages accentuates the extent to which language attitudes are embraced by the language speakers in general and target language speakers in particular. This is consistent with the views of language education scholars like Webb (1999), Babane (2002); Dyers (1997:24); Nel, Muller, Hugo, Helldin, Backmann, Dwyer and Skarlind, (2013:1-12).

The legacy of oppression has generated deep-seated attitudes towards African Languages in general and also their use as media of learning and teaching in particular. Their declared official status needs to be put into practice because what the *Language in Education Policy* (1997) says is not what the reality is at school level.

Given the informed opinion of the scholars cited so far, the current study is based on the assumption that there are attitude tendencies that warrant investigation. The findings of the study proved beyond doubt that indeed there are strong negative attitudes towards African Languages in general and Xitsonga as a medium of instruction in particular, (See Chapters 4 and 5 of this study).

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Even after twenty years of South African democracy, which witnessed the birth of *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act 108 of 1996) - which has been labelled as one of the most progressive in the world; and the Language in Education Policy (1997) to match, much is still to be done on the language front, specifically at provincial level, in terms of key stakeholders' attitudes towards Home Language instruction at the basic education level in the Limpopo Province. The findings displayed in the fifth chapter of this thesis revealed that the majority of the target stakeholders were not in favour of a Xitsonga medium in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

The central problem that underpinned the study was the attitudes towards the use of African Home Languages as media of instruction in the school system in general and Xitsonga Home Language as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level in particular. Global and local research has proved that the extended use of learners' Home Languages in schools enhance their capacity to learn a First Additional Language (FAL), (*UNESCO, 1953:2003; Halaoui, 2003; Macdonald, 1990, 2002; PanSALB, 2001; NCCRD, 2000, and Davis, 2013:1-4*).

Macdonald's (1990) ground-breaking project proved that learners were ill-prepared to cope with the use of English as the language across the curriculum when they transit from African Languages to English as medium of instruction. The attitudes towards endoglossic Home Language is further worsened by what Makua (2004:1-223) and Davis (2013:5-8) opine as the continuation of the preference of English as medium of instruction in spite of widely published research supporting the mother-tongue principle of the use of HL as a medium of learning and teaching.

This study, therefore, successfully argued that language attitudes are a major problem worthy to be investigated. Despite new and democratic legislative provisions that followed in the wake of the shift in the socio-political power-base, language attitudes seem to be in favour of previous paradigms of marginalizing the Home Language as a medium of instruction in favour of English as a medium of instruction in South Africa in general and Limpopo Provincial schools in particular.

### **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.3.1 Aim**

The aim of the study was to investigate attitudes of key stakeholders (learners, educators, and SGBs) at intermediate phase level towards the use of Xitsonga Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching in primary schools in Limpopo Province.

#### **1.3.2 Objectives**

The study endeavoured to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) To examine prevalent attitudes among Intermediate Phase learners, educators and SGBs towards Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching;
- (b) To give possible reasons for the occurrence of such attitudes;
- (c) To come up with strategies that may contribute towards the successful implementation of a LiEP that strives for favourable attitudes towards the use of Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in Limpopo; and
- (d) To provide some informed recommendations that may contribute effectively towards the use of Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in Grades 4 to 6 of the Limpopo Province.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.4.1 Main question**

What are the attitudes of the Intermediate Phase learners, educators and School Governing Body members of the Limpopo Province towards the use of Xitsonga Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching?

### **1.4.2 Sub-questions**

1.4.2.1 What are the prevalent attitudes among Intermediate Phase learners, educators and SGB members towards the use of Xitsonga Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching?

1.4.2.2 What are the reasons for the occurrence of such attitudes?

1.4.2.3 Which strategies may contribute towards the successful implementation of the Language in Education Policy that strives for favourable attitudes towards Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching?

1.4.2.4 What are the recommendations that may contribute effectively towards the use of Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in Grades 4-6 of the Mopani District?

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

- a. The study will contribute towards the pool of Language Education valuable reference sources for academics, students and researchers in the field.
- b. Language Education planners will gain insight and understanding of the key stakeholders' Language attitudes that work against or for the successful implementation of language medium for content delivery at Intermediate Phase level.

- c. The study will generate Language Education articles for publication on the impact of key stakeholders' attitudes towards Xitsonga as a medium of learning and teaching at Grades 4 to 6 sample schools in the Limpopo Province.
- d. The importance of mother-tongue Education beyond the Foundation Phase was highlighted by the study as one of the critical solutions to the learners' under-performance.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of the study is grounded on the behaviourist language attitude theory. Webb (1979) and Freeman (2013:2-20) argue that the behaviourist theory holds the view that attitudes are found in the responses people make to social situations. This view does not necessarily require self-reports. For a behaviourist, one can observe, tabulate and analyse overt behaviour, for example, on what people say and how they respond to questionnaires or interviews (Williams, 1974:12-14 & Freeman 2013:21-26). This theoretical framework is relevant to the current study in the sense that, through the target instruments, language attitudes were observed, quizzed (through interview instruments) tabulated, analysed and interpreted in order to justify the findings and recommendations on the attitudes towards Xitsonga as a medium of learning and teaching.

## **1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.7.1 Language attitudes theories**

Psycho-linguists advance two main theoretical approaches about the nature of attitudes. These are the mentalist's theory and the behaviourist theory, ( Williams, (1974:12). For the mentalists, attitudes are a state of readiness on intervening variable between stimulus affecting a person and his/her response (Fasold, 1984:147; Appel and Muysen, 1990:16; and Babane, 2003:14-15). Mentalists

believe that a person's attitudes prepare him/her to react appropriately to different stimuli. Attitude is "an internal state aroused by stimulation of some type which may mediate the organism's subsequent response." In other words, for Williams, attitude is an internal state of readiness rather than an observable phenomenon. The behaviourist theory, on the other hand, holds that attitudes are found in the response people make to social situations. This point of view does not necessarily require self-reports (Williams, 1974:12).

### **Language attitude tendencies displayed by the LiEP on the language of learning and teaching.**

With regard to the language of teaching and learning, the preamble of the *National Education Policy Act* (Act No. 27 of 1996) stipulates:

- The principle of multilingualism;
- The right of learners to use languages of their choice as language of teaching;
- The development of historically disadvantaged languages in schools; and
- The roles of School Governing Bodies in promoting multilingualism through USING more than one language of learning and teaching.

This study's interest was on all the bullets of Act No. 27 of 1996 above. What these bullets suggest is not what is being practised on the ground. According to Makua (2004:69), LiEP only amounts to "simple political correctness. As a result, mother-tongue instruction is not yet realized across the target phase levels. The policy merely states a vague commitment to redress historically disadvantaged languages without saying how and when this will be done.

This is more evident in the last clause of the preamble where, on one hand, the policy endorses the individual's right to choose a language of teaching and learning and, on the other, neutralizes this right by limiting it within existing possibilities. The researcher shares Makua's (2004) analysis of the challenges at hand when he says

“the general lack of a policy implementation strategy with time frames is the major flaw of the LiEP “. Babane (2003:6) articulates the LiEP flaws as follows:

Legislative provisions and Policy Guideline in respect of language matters in an emerging democracy may be idealistic at the level of spirit and intend, but, at the ground and logistical level of actualization and delivery of such idealistic provisions and guidelines, the reality often turns out to be incongruous to the ideal.

### **1.7.2 A Sample of language attitude research studies**

Nxumalo (2000), in his thesis, articulates language attitude findings that impact negatively on the status and role of the minority African languages in the South African new Language Policy. He is of the view that language attitudes need to be addressed by the powers that be in order to realise their functional status and role in a range of set ups. The current research project distinguished itself from Nxumalo’s study in that it investigated language attitudes of a specific minority language (that is Xitsonga), as well as school-based key stakeholders’ perspective and attitudes in as far as the language of learning and teaching is concerned at Intermediate Phase level. The former’s thesis is general in scope, whereas the current study interrogated language attitudes as a niche that underpins it. The following are some of the key findings of the former thesis (that is Nxumalo`s):

1. The target research subjects of his study had not read the language provisions in the new constitution. His target subjects were: High school teachers, High school learners, Colleges of Education, and University students and lecturers. The current research project focused on Intermediate Phase learners, educators and SGB members mainly on language attitudes.
2. He discovered that his target research subjects were aware of the on-going debates on the official languages vis-a-vis those which were not. The current project did not deem it necessary to investigate language debates since its focus was the impact of attitudes towards Home Language medium at I.P.

3. Through the administration of his research instrument, he discovered that the overwhelming majority of his research subjects thought that the apartheid government had a negative attitude towards African languages in general. The current study's focus was to interrogate prevalent attitudes post-apartheid Government era on a school concentrated research respondents.
4. The researcher also discovered that the majority of his respondents were of the view that minority African languages had been treated less favourable than the majority languages. Again, the researcher's focus was on favour between minority languages and majority languages whereas the current study's focus was on a specific minority language and its role in learning and teaching.
5. He further discovered that his research subjects varied in being proud of speaking their languages. His research report showed that High school learners and teachers were very proud of speaking in their native languages whereas college and university lecturers and students did not feel proud to express themselves in their native minority languages. The current study did not delve into language pride per se but elicited data on language attitudes, preference, favour, opinion, choice and perspective on a single language of learning and teaching.
6. Last but not least, the researcher's finding was that his university research respondents were pessimistic about the future of minority languages in comparison to other target subjects of his research study. The current study has discovered that the research respondents are very optimistic about Xitsonga as a minority language at Intermediate Phase level but the majority were pessimistic about its future as a language of learning and teaching.

It is against this background that the current study distinguishes itself from the former.

Similarly, Babane (2003) researched on secondary school learners' attitudes towards Xitsonga as a learning area in general and his findings are that learners have negative attitudes towards it as a learning area as well as its function as medium of curriculum delivery at secondary school level. Though Babane's (2003) study is very similar to the current project in terms of investigating attitudes towards a specific language, however, the two differ in terms of target phases, research stakeholders (groups), scope of target areas and central research problem. The current study investigated the attitudes of stakeholders towards a Home Language as medium at post Foundation Phase, as well as pre Senior Phase band. Babane's (2003) research project discovered two main aspects for attention as compared to not less than six (6) discovered aspects for attention by the current study. His (that is Babane's) are outlined as follows:

1. The former discovered that his target learner respondents had a negative attitude towards Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at secondary school level. The current study discovered that this attitude problem towards a target language medium was not a prejudice of secondary school learners only but an attitude of Intermediate Phase learners, teachers, parents and School Governing bodies in the Province.
2. Babane also discovered through his research tools that though his target group favoured the English medium, they nonetheless strongly felt that their native language should be kept as a school subject at secondary school level. The current study's finding on the retention of a target language as a school subject is similar to Babane's, however, the difference lies with scope, quantity, quality, reliability, validity and objectivity of data on the aspect. The current study also made it very clear that the influence of media, parents, teachers, norms, values and beliefs played a crucial role in enforcing attitudes towards the source language medium. The other four aspects discovered by this study (that is the current one) were fully discussed and commented on in chapters four and five.

The effect of language attitudes has prompted Makua (2004) too to investigate how best the African languages' role in various settings can be re-defined. He discovered that unfavourable attitudes against them are one of the critical challenges that hinder them from fulfilling their new role in education in general. However, his study does not concentrate on language attitudes as the problem statement as it was the case with the current project.

In like manner, Michael (2004) researched on attitudes of student-teachers towards mother-tongue medium and the respondents of his study displayed negative attitudes towards mother-tongue medium in Nigeria. The Nigerian student-teacher respondents do not think that their African languages have the requisite capacity to function as media of learning and teaching in their schools. The researcher's focus was on the first four years of schooling in that country (known as Foundation Phase in the RSA), whereas the current project targets respondents in Grades 4 to 6 for data collection on attitudes of key stakeholders towards, a Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching, as opposed to English First Additional Language as a medium.

Tertiary students' attitudes towards African languages have also been investigated by Makamu (2010). In his research project, he discovered that the majority were for the use of English as opposed to a tiny minority who were in favour of the use of African languages. The current study conducted a research on the magnitude of language attitudes at Intermediate Phase level, as well as to assess the impact of using an exoglossic language of learning and teaching in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

Contrary to the negative attitudes findings towards African languages displayed by the majority of the respondents cited so far, Dyers' (2008) study investigated language patterns of isiXhosa first-entering university students. He discovered that these students identified strongly with their Home Language as opposed to English. It was the intention of this project to find out the attitudes of the target respondents towards Xitsonga Home Language as possible medium specifically for Intermediate Phase curriculum delivery. Though the current study's respondents were not

opposed to their native language as one of their cultural building blocks, the majority of them were however, opposed to its use as medium of instruction in their schools.

Langa (2005) researched on the attitudes of Capricorn High School learners towards the introduction of North Sotho as one of the official languages. The researcher's findings are that learners preferred English as opposed to the option of North Sotho Home Language. Though Langa's (2005) study focused on language attitudes, it did not interrogate the aspect of the attitudes of learners, teachers and SGB members towards an endoglossic language medium and its implications.

Like Nxumalo (2000), Makua (2004:1-223) and Makamu (2010), Maqadzhe and Sepota (2007) also conducted studies on the status of African languages in education in South Africa. The study attributes African languages' enrolment drop at tertiary institution level in particular to negative attitudes towards them. Though these scholars made a valuable contribution towards language attitudes challenges, they did not investigate the HL as medium at Primary School (Intermediate Phase Phase) level in Limpopo.

Contrary to the rest of the foregoing studies, Maseko (1995:1-68), in his research work, advocates a monolingual official language practice as opposed to the multilingual concept. He goes on to suggest that the multilingual concept is a political gimmick. To him, only English should be used as an official language in various domains in South Africa. On the other hand, Alexander (2000:1-65) suggests a progressive language medium Policy model. He terms the model "an additive bilingual approach". It is a policy that attempts to promote African languages as alternative media of learning and teaching in a progressive manner. The research at hand distinguished itself from the two scholars' perspective in the sense that it sought to establish language attitudes towards an African Language as a vehicle through which curriculum delivery can be facilitated in a multilingual context as opposed to monolingual and bilingual context.

Maponya (2011:1-43) conducted a research on Using Mother-Tongue as a Language of Learning and Teaching in the Foundation phase. She discovered that the use of mother-tongue in schools has been a bone of contention for a very long time in South Africa, including parliament. She also made it very explicit that most learners in South African schools face a language barrier in the classroom. They cannot use the language they are most familiar with, namely, their home language, and, as a result, they are unlikely to perform to the best of their ability. She concludes her findings by appealing thus: “All people of the world: English, French, German and Spanish learn in their own languages. This should include South Africans as well”. What makes the current research study different from Maponya’s (2011:1-43) is that it investigated language attitudes beyond Foundation Phase and how specific stakeholders viewed Xitsonga HL as medium of learning and teaching for Learning Areas that traditionally use English First Additional language as a medium.

Phaswana (1994:44) projected his research study to the University of Venda’s Language Policy and its impact on African languages in general as media of instruction. He observes that African languages continue to be marginalized in terms of their function in various domains. The scholar, like other language Education researchers, attributes this challenge to a preference of English as medium of instruction because it is perceived by his target respondents that it is the language of success in the economy, politics and education. Though Phaswana’s (1994) study touches base on language bias, it does not focus on language attitudes in the context of curriculum delivery in Intermediate Phase classes as is the case with the current study.

Like Phaswana (1994:44); Nieman and Matsela (2001:55); Gumede (1996:129); Baker (1993:175); Mabila (2007:29); and Hohenthal (2012:1) interrogate language attitudes in varying degrees. Their focus varied from Foundation Phase context to institution of higher learning context. The study at hand focused on the transitional Phase (i.e., Intermediate Phase, according to NCS, 2002). The observation made by Zimmerman, Botha, Howe and Long (downloaded on 29-10-2012), in Dyers

(2003:6), strengthens the need for investigating the language attitude problem at Intermediate Phase level thus:

... teachers in certain schools in the country feel that the current South African LiEP, which calls for the switch to English instruction after Grade 3 in schools where the majority of learners are English 2<sup>nd</sup> language speakers and learners, is contributing to educational failures among learners.

Makua (2004:iii), in his Language Education's executive summary, articulates the extent of the challenge this way:

...limited exposure to mother-tongue education and the subsequent early transition to English is equally a major source of disadvantage for African learners who have to contend with both language and content whereas their counterparts only have to deal with the latter.

The scholar concludes by indicating the specific Phase level that needs urgent attention: "...this study argues for the extended exposure beyond the Foundation Phase until, at least, to the part of Senior Phase that falls under primary education".

In the light of the historical data on language attitudes covered so far under literature review, none of them investigated attitudes of Intermediate Phase learners, educators and SGB members towards Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in the Limpopo Province. It is against this background that the researcher feels that the completed study will make a valuable contribution towards the role of the endoglossic languages in fruitful curriculum delivery in general and Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in particular.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.8.1 Research design**

This study is qualitative in design and application. The details of the whole process is outlined in Chapter Four. The application of the process is well captured in Chapter Four. Further, this research project adopted the descriptive design

because it endeavoured to describe attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga home language as medium of learning and teaching in the Limpopo Province.

### **1.8.2 Research approach**

The study opted for a multi-method research approach. The reason for opting for more than one research methods was to facilitate the collection of a wide variety of data in order to answer the different research questions. Further, it was intended to achieve a better understanding of the target stakeholders' attitudes and to increase the credibility of the findings.

### **1.8.3 Population and sampling**

#### **(a) Population**

The completed research project was located in a district (that is Mopani District) with a population of over one thousand eight hundred and eighty (1880) possible respondents. The teacher respondent population consisted of a total of 840 candidates; the total possible SGB member respondents consisted of 320 participants; whereas learner respondents consisted of 720 subjects. A total of 120 classrooms completed a possible target scope for lesson observation on the attitudes of the target respondents on the use of Xitsonga as medium of learning and teaching. This exercise was consistent with Huysamen's (1998) observation that by population is meant a group of participants to which the results of a study may be generalized.

#### **(b) Sampling**

From the total population (i.e., 1880 respondents), the researcher sampled a total of 20 educators (for ethical research reasons, the teacher respondents were each given codes like: respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively under each research area) from 5 rural (with codes like R-School 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), and 5 semi-

urban schools (the latter was coded SU-School 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively) for one on one interview data elicitation. These educators represented 4 Intermediate Phase learning areas; Social Science, English First Additional Language, Science and Technology, and Mathematics that were sampled from Grades 4, 5 and 6 of each target school. In like manner, a total of 10 SGB members were sampled (represented by codes) from 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools (also represented by codes) for semi-structured interviews on Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching. The interview instrument was engaged to elicit data from a sample of 10 rural school learners and 10 semi-urban school learners in the Limpopo Province. An observation schedule was utilised as a supportive measure to elicit data from 15 rural school classes and 15 semi-urban school classes. The study's sampling exercise was in line with Mulder (1989:1-5) who defines it as a group which is selected from the population and is thus less than the target population, while remaining as representative as possible. Further, the sampling approach subscribed to purposive sampling in the sense that all the respondents cited above were selected in terms of their involvement in the language of learning and teaching. The reason for engaging this type of sampling method was twofold; to guard against sacrificing quality, and to make sure that the respondents did not influence each other during the instrument (tool) administration at the target schools.

#### **1.8.4 Data analysis**

As already indicated in the research design, this study engaged the qualitative method for data collection. This method was engaged for analysing the observation and semi-structured interview data that were elicited from the respondents, namely: SGB member-respondents, teachers, and learners. Bless (2006:163) elaborates further that data analysis is the process which allows the researcher to interpret and generalize the findings from the sample used in research, to the larger population in which the researcher is interested. The process of data analysis in this study was informed by the qualitative research approach practice. The practice focused on at least three progressive steps. Step one focused on; coding data, description,

defining themes and commenting and interrelating themes. Step two outlined the data coding processes. Step three focused on findings as follows:

- Comparison of table,
- Hierarchical theme diagram,
- Connectivity between themes,
- Layout of setting,
- Personal or demographic information for each respondent or site, and
- Data interpretation.

#### **1.8.5 Collection of data**

In collecting data for the completed study, various methods and techniques were used. The reason for opting for more than one research methods was to facilitate the collection of a wide variety of data in order to answer the different research questions. Further, it was intended to achieve a better understanding of the target stakeholders' attitudes and to increase the credibility of the findings.

##### **1.8.5.1 Historical Method**

The study utilised the historical research method involving documents related to language attitudes such as books, articles in journals and periodicals, Websites (IT), dissertations and theses (Huysamen, 1994:106).

##### **1.8.5.2 Focus Group Interviews**

The Focus Group interviews were engaged to elicit data from learner respondents sampled from rural and semi-urban schools in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province. Gender equity was observed and applied in the sampling process which was carried out by the researcher on random basis in each target school. This is consistent with a research practice uphold by researchers who engage the qualitative approach. The Free Encyclopaedia (2011:1), states that:

A simple random sample is selected so that all samples of the same size have an equal chance of being selected from the entire population. Secondly, a self-weighting sample, also known as an EPSEM (Equal Probability of Selected Method) sample, is one in which every individual, or object, in the population of interest has an equal opportunity of being selected for the sample....

Gay (1996:224) informs that in focus group interviews respondents share their opinions and the aim is not debate, argument or consensus, but rather expression of ideas and feelings.

#### **1.8.5.3 Observation Method**

Borg and Gall (1983) inform that the observation method is the primary way of collecting data whereby the researcher may choose to be a participant or a non-participant observer in a particular research study. The most common observation involves sight or visual data collection. The researcher engaged this method for observing the language of teaching and learning in the target grades.

Learner data were gathered through classroom observation of 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools of the target phase. The grades sampled were 4, 5 and 6 of Learning Areas that use English medium (that is, a total of 30 classes were observed in the Mopani District).

#### **1.8.5.4 Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were utilised in order to get deeper understanding of attitudes towards Mother-Tongue instruction. The interviews were conducted to elicit data from both SGB and teacher respondents at the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

According to Light (1990:40), in semi structured interviews, the general and specific issues to be covered are worked out in advance but the subjects are free to talk about the topic in terms meaningful to them. The interview items sought to elicit

information on the research topic at hand. SGB members from the target rural and semi-urban schools were interviewed on language attitudes. In like manner, a sample of Grades 4, 5 and 6 educators in rural and semi-urban schools in the Phase were interviewed by the researcher. Apart from using the interview method for getting deeper understanding of language attitudes as indicated by Light (1990:40), this study also wanted to allow the researcher a chance to probe for more information during the interaction sessions (Terreblanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006:286).

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The study subscribes to the ethical principles of research in general and Language Education ethical principles in particular.

### **1.9.1 Permission and approval**

Application for permission to conduct research was addressed to the Provincial Directorate of the Limpopo Department of Education. School visits were undertaken on receipt of letters of approval from the latter as well as the Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo (See **Addenda 1, 2, 3, and 4**).

### **1.9.2 Voluntary participation**

All key stakeholders (participants) partook voluntarily without any amount of coercion.

### **1.9.3 Respondent consent**

Each respondent consented verbally before participating in the research exercise. This was done in order to insure that the participants' rights were protected during data collection. They were also briefed that it was within their right to terminate participation or refuse to answer any question they felt like not responding to.

#### **1.9.4 Confidentiality**

The respondents were assured that the data would only be used for the stated purpose of the study. The subjects were also assured of the confidentiality and privacy of information generated (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:101).

#### **1.9.5 Release or publication of study**

The end-product of the completed research exercise will serve as a guide for future scholars and researchers who will conduct studies on the same and related topics. It is anticipated that the findings will be displayed in the Africana for reference, and some publicised through accredited National Language Education journals.

### **1.10 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

In order to render a study of this nature manageable and researchable, it was delimited on the following aspects: Grade-focus was Grades 4, 5 and 6; the target Phase was Intermediate; the Home Language was Xitsonga; and the province and district were Limpopo and Mopani, respectively

.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

This thesis endeavoured to present the research problem in context. The context ranged from the detailed background of the attitudes of key stakeholders towards Xitsonga as a medium of learning and teaching in the Province of Limpopo, Statement of the research problem, Aim and objectives, Research Questions, Significance of the study, Theoretical Framework, Literature Review, Research Design and Method of Investigation, Ethical Consideration, to the Delimitation of the scope to be covered or investigated.

## 1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

**Chapter One** dealt with the introduction of the study's problem in various contexts. The topic of the study gave birth to the background knowledge on language attitudes. The statement of the problem was derived from the topic of the thesis. The problem statement justified the need of a research of this nature which gave birth to the niche which was contextualised in the aim and objectives. The significance of the study was located within the general aim and objectives. A sample of literature was interrogated against the theories (language theories) ;completed research studies on language attitudes; the importance of mother-tongue instruction; the influence of English medium vis-à-vis mother-tongue education; multilingual concept in the R.S.A schools. The research design spelt out the type of approach (qualitative approach) and methodology for data collection in the Mopani District. The last focus was on ethical consideration and delimitation of the field study.

**Chapter Two** focused on literature review. The review ranged from, language attitude theories; the significance of mother-tongue education beyond Foundation Phase, evaluation of language attitudes pattern towards three dominant Limpopo languages and completed research studies on language attitudes.

**Chaper Three** dealt with the implication of curricula changes from C2005 to the current CAPS; interrogation of the multilingualism practice in the classroom as a norm; brief comments on the history of language policy of different eras, reflection on the language phenomenon aspect; to the application of the LiEP in the target District.

**Chapter Four** fully elaborated on the research design and methodology. The design was influenced by the qualitative research approach and the methodology looked at sampling, research tools, limitations and corrective measures. It also explicitly indicated how analysis and interpretation were engaged for research findings.

**Chapter Five** is one of the key chapters of the study. The analysis, interpretation and findings were based on it. It confirmed the thesis' assertion that there are challenges of language attitudes in the Limpopo Schools. The findings indicated clearly that the learners, teachers and SGB members have deep-seated attitudes against the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction.

**Chapter Six** dealt with the researcher's concluding thoughts on the thesis. Findings were articulated in point form in order to highlight the degree of the impact of language attitudes against mother-tongue education. Recommendations were spelt out and addressed to specific stakeholders in an attempt to improve teaching and learning in the classroom as well as research output in Limpopo in particular.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter endeavours to review literature that deals with a variety of aspects vis-à-vis language attitudes. In order to achieve this goal, the chapter puts emphasis on the following matters: language attitude theories, factors that contribute to the underutilisation of African Languages, mother-tongue instruction, as well as a reflection on a sample of completed academic research studies and the current's niche area.

#### 2.2 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

According to *Collins English Thesaurus* (2010:18), language attitude refers primarily to: "opinion, view, position, approach, mood, perspective, point of view, stance..." on a particular language. Vedder (1981:275) as quoted in Ohly (1992:65) defines language attitude as a two-fold deep-seated prejudice. He goes on to indicate that the first type of prejudice is a positive one, whereas the second type is a negative one. "Negative prejudice is image affecting. It is characterized by negative evaluation of one's own language or speech patterns and preference for someone else's", concludes the author. It is the researcher's view that negative language attitude works against the development of a target language as well as its native speakers in various domains.

Fasold (1984:148) avers that some language attitudes studies are strictly limited towards the language itself. However, most often the concept of language attitudes includes attitudes towards the speakers of a particular language. If the definition is even further broadened, it can allow all kinds of behaviour concerning the language to be treated (for example, attitudes towards language maintenance and planning efforts). This type of language prejudice will be evident in the official state documents that the study will scrutinize in this chapter.

Attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay, restoration or destruction: the status an individual derives is largely from adopted or learnt attitudes. An attitude is individual, but it has origins in collective behaviour. Attitude is something an

individual has which defines or promotes certain behaviours. Although an attitude is a hypothetical psychological construct, nevertheless it touches the reality of language life. Baker (1988:112-115) stresses the importance of attitudes in the discussion of bilingualism. Attitudes are learned predispositions not inherited and are likely to be relatively stable and they have the tendency to persist. However, attitudes, are affected by experience, thus attitude change is an important notion in bilingualism. Attitudes vary from favourability to un-favourability. Attitudes are complex constructs, for example, there may be positive or negative feelings attached to a language situation (Baker, 1988:112-115 and Hobenthal, 2008:1).

According to Lambert (1967) attitudes consist of three components: the cognitive effective, and conative components. The cognitive components refer to an individual belief structure, the effective to emotional reactions and the conative component comprehends the tendency to behave in a certain way towards the attitudes (Gardner, 1975:1). The major dimensions along which views about languages can vary are social status and group solidarity. The distinction of standard and nonstandard reflects the relative social status or power of the groups of speakers and the forces held responsible for vitality of a language can be contributed to the solidarity value of it. Another dimension in group solidarity or language loyalty reflects the social pressures to maintain languages or language varieties, even the ones without social prestige (Edward, 1982:20).

Ellis (1991:117) correctly argues that when studying language attitudes, the concept of motives is important. Two basic motives are called instrumental and integrative towards motives. If L2 acquisition is considered as instrumental, the knowledge in a language is considered as a passport to prestige and success. The speaker or learner considers the speaking or learning of English as functional. Ellis (1991:117) on the other hand maintains that if a learner wishes to identify with the target community, to learn the language and culture of the speakers of that language is essential for him in order to be able to become a member of the group. In such a case, the motivation is called integrative motivation in the sense that it is more beneficial for the learning of mother-tongue. On the other hand, Ellis (1991:118) informs in his study that Gardner and Lambert have found out that where L2 functions as a second language, instrumental motivation seems to be

more effective. Moreover, motivation derived from a sense of academic or communicative success is more likely to motivate one to speak a foreign /second language.

### **2.2.1 Language attitude theories**

Fishman and Agheyisi (1974) have suggested that there are mentalist and behaviourist viewpoints to language attitudes. According to the mentalist view, attitudes are a mental and neutral state of readiness which cannot be observed directly, but must be inferred from the subject`s introspection. Dittman (1976:181) says: “Difficulties arising from this view point include the question that from what data can attitudes be derived and in what way are they quantifiable”. According to behaviourist, attitudes are a dependent variable that can be statistically determined by observing actual behaviour in social situations. This also causes problems, it can be questioned whether attitudes can be defined entirely in terms of observable data, (Hobenenthal, 2008:2). What is important however, for the current study about the language attitudes theories, is not their perfection, but what they perceive as attitude features.

Babane (2003:14–15) attests to the fact that the mentalists and behaviourist theories are useful in understanding language attitudes though he prefers the latter than the former. He advances the following reasons for his non-preference and preference of the mentalist theory and the behaviourist theory respectively. The way the mentalist defines attitudes poses some problems because we have to depend on a person`s report of what their attitudes are or infer attitudes directly from behaviour patterns. He goes on to explain why he embraces the behaviourist theory this way: “For the behaviourist, attitudes are found in the response people make to social situations. This viewpoint does not necessarily require self-reports for the behaviourist. One can observe, tabulate and analyse overt behaviour”, says the writer (Babane, 2003:14-15).

The above scholars are agreed that in education, attitudes are very important because they can affect the teaching and learning process in general and the target phase in particular. “Evidence suggests that attitudes are a question of the learner`s preferences towards his/her language over the language of others, or preferences

towards the language of others over his/hers,” avers Babane (2008:14). In the language situation in South Africa, however language preference of the exoglossic languages seems to be the most common stance.

It is quite evident from the two attitudes theories that no definition of attitude can be comprehensive or all inclusive enough. What is of interest for this study however, is the fact that Hobenenthal (2008:1) makes it explicit that if the concept is further broadened, it can allow all kinds of behaviour concerning the language to be treated (For example, attitudes towards language maintenance and planning efforts (see also Fasold, 1994:148).

### **2.2.2 Neglect as a contributory factor**

Makua (2004:11) attests to fact that decades of neglect and under-resourcing of African languages by the colonial and apartheid regimes have left a legacy and mind-set of inferiority about them. Beukes (1994:22) expresses a similar opinion: “Clearly societal attitudes towards indigenous languages will in the future be of great importance to the language teaching profession”. “In fact an attitude towards language it may be argued” are extremely important in determining the language education any multilingual society requires”, concludes Beukes (2004:12). The extent to which language neglect has impacted on the minds of native speakers is present by Makua (2004:12) in a rather pessimistic way. It is clear that the issue of attitudes seems to manifest itself in non-reference of the function of indigenous language in public domains. It is fair to say that the mind-set of the speakers of the language, as well as many South Africans has been so vigorously colonized and indoctrinated that one cannot help but hesitate to image the successful implementation of the mother-tongue education principle in the foreseeable future. (See also Chick and Wade,1998:4). This prevailing situation is further supported by the observation made by Jansen in Cook (2013:4) when he indicates that “black parents make the correct calculation that virtually the entire economy is now organised on English terms and therefore the chances of success are much greater in the colonial language”.

### 2.2.3 Dominance of English as a contributory factor

The most recent language education research study conducted by Nkwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2014) reveals that the native speakers of Xitsonga language are in favour of the use of English as medium of learning and instruction at tertiary level. The concluding remark on their finding hits the nail on the head this way:

It has been noted that the majority of Xitsonga speakers on campus reject the use of Xitsonga as medium of teaching and learning. The majority reasons for this state of affairs are economic in nature. It is English that promotes employability and provides access to the international and globalised world. Unless Xitsonga and other African languages acquire the requisite capacity to empower students to gain employment and be relevant to the current social and political context in the world, it will be a tall order to use them as languages of teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa (Nkwashu, Madadzhe & Kubayi, 2014:18-19).

Makua's (1996) research study on language preference indicated that, educators, learners and parents preferred to retain English as a medium of instruction. Language Education researchers like (Beuke 1994:10) point to the importance of a second language but not a replacement for other first (home) languages. African language speakers need English as a second /First Additional language (FAL). It is an important Lingua-Franca but not the only language for empowerment.

The dominance of English in an African context presents an interesting scenario. The highly skilled linguists and language education specialists find themselves invariably divided into two extreme language views. The first one upholds the view that English should be discarded in all domains and that it should be replaced by the indigenous languages. This view's exponents are the legendary Ngugiwa Thiongo and Nodolo. According to *The Teacher* (1997:3) Ngugi is not only against English being used as a language of literature but also as a Language of Education. The second extreme view upholds the retention and use of English as a weapon of fighting colonialism. Its exponents are the legendary Eskia Mphahlele and Abram Mawasha (both late). Makua (2004:31) informs that:

The position taken by Mawasha (1978) and Mphahlele (1984) seem to suggest that although English was initially an instrument of colonial rule and linguistic domination in South Africa, Black South Africans have in time adopted it and harnessed it to their advantage.

What strikes the researcher about the two English views is the former's silence about the secondary role of English in education in general. The latter English view also makes no effort to indicate the role of indigenous languages in language education.

#### **2.2.4 The consequences of Language Policy**

The *Eltic Report* (1992:2) laments that historically language policy in South Africa had stood out as a "problem area that had generated intense conflict, in the past." It was the political strategy of the colonial powers and subsequently of the apartheid government in South Africa to strip South African people of their identity and pride (as had always been in colonial countries) by insisting that African people should learn their colonial languages in order to use them in different domains in the country. Makua (1996:25) indicated that "other use of European languages in education in African schools has always been a debatable issue also in sub-Saharan Africa." According to Bamgbose (1998:19) South African's apartheid policy of bilingualism helped to entrance the dominance of English and Afrikaans. "While effectively relegating African languages to statuses of regional homeland languages, of great concern are the perceptions of inferiority (about African languages), that are held by many African people, especially the educated elite", avers Makua (Ibid). Our new language policy has embraced multilingualism as the focus on language learning in South Africa. The implementation of language policy in the other parts of South Africa has been opposed by mainly the elite class. Mother-tongues education exponents like the Honourable Dr Aaron Motsoaledi is cited in the *City Press* (Jan, 29 2006:2) as indicating that:

The black learners are struggling with English first language is something that is no surprising and that cannot get remedy by simple offering lessons to the learners, as the language is not their first (home). Black learners in public schools still are struggling

with English second language; and it is for this reasons that Mother-tongue based education is desirable to eliminate the struggle black learners have to go through in learning (see also Ntsoane, 2008:72).

### **2.3 MOTHER-TONGUE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

Mangena (2003:3) in his keynote address warns the academics about attitude tendencies that enforce language barriers in learning, this way: “When we enforce students to learn mathematics, history and other subjects in a language they are not proficient in, we are in fact taking away their right to all other rights because we are making language a barrier to their access to knowledge”.

The researcher`s experience of classroom observation and support to student-educators during the past seventeen years is that language barriers both at HL and FAL level top the list of challenges experienced by learners (see, *PRED Portfolios and Reports* by M.J. Mona, 1991-2014). South Africa as a Sovereign Country in the continent of Africa also went through the linguistic colonial experiences of the rest of the continent. Most countries that were under colonial rule faced (and some are still facing the problem) the problem of deciding which language to use for teaching and learning in schools when they become independent. In such countries, the masters` languages were the official languages for business, commerce, administration and education. In such countries and in other bilingual and multilingual/ multicultural nation the use of a child`s mother or indigenous language as medium of instruction has been found by the researchers and educators to be beneficial to him or her. According to a report of the *Hong Kong Education Department* (1965) curriculum research findings suggest that the use of mother tongue in teaching and learning assists the intake of knowledge, mastery of concepts, free flow of ideas and discussion in the classroom. The *Education Department* (1984) also attests to the fact that all other things being equal, mother tongue is the best instructional medium for teaching and learning. Similarly Kembo (2004) has argued that cognitive and effective development occurs more effectively in a language well known to the child. After a review of a research project on the use of mother tongue in education carried out in North and South America, West and Eastern Europe, India, South East Asia and Africa, a Ministerial Task Team on

home language instruction in Western Cape, South Africa stated that on both practical and empirical grounds all researchers agree that mother-tongue education results in cognitive advantages for school learner, especially in the first years of primary school. In addition, mother-tongue education affirms children in their self-worth and in their identity. Research findings also support the intuition that children who are obliged to learn in a language that they do not know are in most cases extremely disadvantaged and unable to catch up (see also Task Team, 2002). Ejien (2004: 78 – 80) in his language education study on attitudes of students teachers towards teaching in mother-tongue in Nigeria, justifies the current study's endeavours. Here is a brief reflection on the scholar's findings.

A great majority (about 84%) of the respondents would not like to teach in mother tongue after leaving the college. This negative attitude towards the use of indigenous languages for education may not be uncoupled with the inferior position accorded them during the colonial era. In Nigeria as in other formerly colonized languages the master's language has been given precedence over the study and official use of indigenous languages.

Another factor likely to be responsible for this attitude could be their experiences in school system having been educated in English from primary school days. It has been observed that because of the prestige attached to the colonial language, some Africans educated through it shun their mother-tongue (see also Sure and Webb, 2000). The subjects of this study seem to be no exception to this observation.

Lack of appropriate text books in mother-tongue and other materials for teaching in mother-tongue may also be contributing to this negative attitude. From the inception of formal education in that country, there has been a strong association between it and ability to write and speak English. Those able to write and speak English effectively were regarded as the elite, teachers among them. The student teacher's view that teaching in mother-tongue would degrade the teaching profession is probably a reflection of the fact that teaching in a language with which everyone in the locality is familiar will rob the teaching profession of one of its distinctive features.

One of the major problem of teaching in mother-tongue as preserved by most of the student teachers was that it would have an adverse effect on the learning of English language by pupils. Others were of the opinion that it would lead to the laying of a weak foundation for the pupil's education. If these findings on attitudes towards mother-tongue instruction represent 84% of the prospective primary school teachers, one wonders what the current study's finding will be like in South Africa. I share the country's view to the foregoing by Ejiah (2004: 83) when he points out that: "There is increasing research evidence showing that the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predator of their second language development and that teaching and learning in mother-tongue facilitates learners cognitive and effective development, including their learning of a second language" (see also Kembo, 2000 Task Team, 2002; Thondhlana 2000).

## **2.4 BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THREE LIMPOPO LANGUAGES AS LEARNING AREAS AND MEDIA OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

### **2.4.1 Xitsonga as a learning area and medium of instruction**

According to Babane (2003: 76 – 82) South Africa is a linguistically diverse country with eleven official languages. In a multilingual country like South Africa, it is important to choose languages which can be used as the media of teaching and learning in schools. The language through which knowledge is imparted to learners plays a vital role by shaping learners' academic achievements. Research indicates that using a second language as a medium of instruction in schools is problematic (Dekker and van Schalkwyk, 1989:309-310). Therefore, in this section greater attention should be paid to the mother-tongue (home language) medium of instruction. According to the *Eiselan Commission* (1953:86), mother tongue is the language through which learners form first ideas. A report by *UNESCO* (1953:47) is of the same opinion that:

It is through his mother-tongue that every human being first learns to formulate and express his ideas about himself and about the world in which he lives.

In South Africa the question of medium of instruction has been debated for so long by the government, media and black schools. According to Nkondo (1997), throughout the history of South Africa there has always been a relationship between the choice of the medium of instruction and a particular political ideology. In many instances the principled defence of mother-tongue instruction easily becomes a defence of the weak and disadvantaged against the strong and the advantaged languages of power and economy.

It is problematic, as said previously, when learners have to make a transition from their home language to an additional language as the language of teaching and learning in their early stages. In fact, educationally, learners learn more quickly through their mother-tongue than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (UNESCO, 1953:11).

The question of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction has been debated during various periods. Since the 1930s a Commission, under the chairperson of Welsh, was appointed to look into the matter. The Commission reported, inter alia, as follows to the government:

On the vexed question of the medium or media of instruction which should be used in Native schools, the Committee desires at the outset to express its agreement with the general principles that a child's mother-tongue is the best medium for his school-instruction, and its conviction that during the first few years of a child's schooling the use of a foreign and poorly understood medium must operate as a very serious handicap to his progress (1936:83).

Although according to the Committee's observation the question of the application of the principle of mother-tongue was a matter of grave difficulty, given the diversity of languages spoken in the country, it however, recommended the following:

That for the present the mother-tongue of the pupils should as a general rule be the medium of instruction in all Native schools, except in the teaching of an official language, during at least the first four years of the child's school life (1936:83).

The Committee further pointed out that the extension of the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction beyond the above-mentioned stage would, however, depend on the development in the literature in each African language. Xitsonga was no exception.

Judging from the preceding quotation, it is clear that the Welsh Commission was of the opinion that mother-tongue as a medium of instruction should be used in the early stages of the learners' school life. Thereafter, an official language was to be gradually introduced as a medium of instruction as soon as learners were able to benefit from instruction in that language (Welsh Commission, 1936:15).

According to Nkondo (1997:8) in the 1980s the South African education debate centered on whether education for blacks should be through the medium of English or African languages. This was the period of apartheid and the Bantu Education Act (Act 47 of 1953). A Commission chaired by Dr W.W.M. Eiselen was appointed to look at matters pertaining to native education. In its report emphasis was made on the fact that African languages should be used in African education. However, Heugh (1995:42) notes that the principle of mother-tongue education was applied to promote the political interest of separate development. In fact the policy was to keep the African language speaking communities separate from one another and from Afrikaans and English speaking communities (Nxumalo, 2000:95). The speech by the then Minister of Native Affairs, Dr H.F. Verwoerd bears testimony:

The native must not be subject to a school system which draws him away from his own community, and misleads him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze (cited in Rose and Tunner, 1975: 266).

The preceding comment was taken seriously by blacks. Therefore, it is not surprising that the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction among black South Africans was viewed in a bad light (Nkondo, 1997:9). In fact, blacks preferred English as the medium of instruction. Just like the Welsh Commission, the Eiselen Commission, inter alia, recommended the following to the government:

That all education, except in the case of a foreign language, should be through the medium of the mother tongue for the first four school years (Commission on Native Education, 1949-1951:146).

It has also been emphasized that effective education is only possible through the medium of the mother tongue. *UNESCO* (1953:48) which observed that in education mother-tongue instruction is important made similar views:

In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother-tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother-tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible.

It needs to be emphasized that the use of the mother-tongue in instruction is vital because parents can easily get involved in the education of their children. To this effect *UNESCO* (1953:48) avers that:

....The parents will be in a better position to understand the problems of the schools and in the process take some measures to help the school in the education of the child.

The National Party Government supported the internationally accepted principle of mother-tongue instruction as provided by the *UNESCO* Report (1953). However, the effects of this policy in South Africa were different from that intended by *UNESCO's* recommendations.

During the 1970s the debate on the issue of medium of instruction as provided continued. In this phase it was centred on whether education for black learners should be in English or Afrikaans. The fact that Afrikaners were in power gave Afrikaans prominence in black schools both as a medium of instruction and as a school subject. From 1975, learners were to make the change from mother tongue to dual medium of instruction, namely, English and Afrikaans. English and Afrikaans were to be used on a 50-50 basis (Nkondo, 1997:9). According to a report entitled "*Republic of South Africa*" (1980: 41), the question of the medium of instruction and the application of the policy of 50-50 were the main cause of the 1976 June riots.

As regards the medium of instruction for black schools, a Report entitled *Republic of South Africa* (1980:557) states that:

In the primary classes up to STD VI, the pupils' mother-tongue was to be the medium of instruction. In the secondary classes, the mother-tongue was still to be used in non-examination subjects, and language itself, while equal use was as far as possible to be made of Afrikaans and English in the content subjects.

Heugh *et al* (1995:43) maintain that after the 1976 uprising, the Education and Training Act of 1979 was passed. Through the new Act mother-tongue instruction was curtailed to the first four years of schooling, that is, the end of standard 2. They further point out that the above Act was amended in June 1991, giving parents a right to decide on which language was to be used as the medium of instruction from the first year of schooling.

The democratic elections in 1994 brought about changes across many sectors of South African life, including education. The new Government recognises and respects the diversity of languages, language variety and language choice (Government Gazette, 1995:42). According to the *Department of Education* (2002:4) School Governing Bodies are given the responsibility of selecting school language policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and in line with the policy of additive multilingualism. With regard to the medium of instruction, the Department of Education (2002:5) recommends the following:

The learner's home language should be used... wherever possible. This is particularly important in the foundation phase where children learn to read and write.

In fact mother-tongue instruction should be used during the first four years of the learners' school life, that is, from Grade R until Grade 3. Thereafter, the additional language, which shall have been introduced as a subject in Grade 1, takes over as a medium of instruction. However, 'the home language should continue to be used alongside the additional language for as long as possible' (Department of Education, 2002:5).

Recommendation made by the different commissions during various periods, by bodies such as the Welsch Commission, the Eiselen Commission, and UNESCO, all emphasized the use of mother-tongue instruction during the initial stage of the learner's school life. It is also important to note that in some instances mother-tongue instruction is clearly political motivated. In fact mother-tongue instruction was used as a political tool to further the aims of the apartheid regime (Nxumalo, 2000:102).

According to Heugh (1995:43), mother-tongue instruction prior to the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was used for the first four years. Under the Bantu Education, it was extended to the first eight years. After the 1976 uprising, it was used for the first four years. Under the democratic government, it is used for the first four years. In conclusion, it can be stated that in most South African education systems, African languages are recognised and used as medium of instruction during the first four years of primary school.

Xitsonga like other African languages developed from a humble beginning. Missionaries played an important role in developing it to be what it is today. The initial aim of developing it was to use it as a medium of spreading the word of God among its native speakers. It is not easy to do justice to the full account of the Xitsonga language as a school subject and as well as a medium of instruction. However, brief accounts are captured in *Mbalango wa Matsalwa ya Xitsonga* (1983) by Dr C.T.D. Marivate; *Mbita Ya Vutivi* (1983), *Tibuku ta Xitsonga* (1883-1983) *Tsonga Bibliography* by M.C Bill and S.H Masunga. According to Marivate (1984:56-69), two Swiss missionaries are on record as being the pioneers of early Xitsonga orthography. They are recorded as Reverends Paul Berhoud and Ernst Creux. After their arrival in Spelonken in 1875, they set about working on Xitsonga orthography until in 1883, when they managed to produce the first publication in the Xitsonga language entitled *Buku ya Tsikwembo*. It is said it contained part of the Book of Genesis, extracts from the Gospels according to Saints Matthews, Mark, Luke and John as well as 53 hymns in words without musical notes. From what the researcher has gleaned from this historical Book is that it had a remarkable Sesotho orthographical influence. This could be attributed to the fact that the authors spent three years in Lesotho learning the Sesotho language. When they

proceeded to the Northern Transvaal, they hoped to work among the native speakers of the language they had learned. Little did they know that they were to work among the Vatsonga people of the then Northern Transvaal.

According to Babane (2003:92-93), Deprez and Du Plessis (2000:96), African languages are represented by 76,7% speakers. Of this total number, the Xitsonga language is represented by 4.4% speakers. *The Free Encyclopedia*, (2014:1) indicates that:

Tsonga is spoken by 2.3 million people in South Africa, 1,5 million people in Mozambique, and 25,000 in Swaziland. There are 100,000 speakers in Zimbabwe. In South Africa, Tsonga people are concentrated in the following Municipal areas; Greater Giyani Local Municipality 248,000, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality 306,000, Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality 180,000 people, Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality 70,000 people, Makhado local Municipality 150,000 people and Thulamela local Municipality 202,000 people. In the following Municipalities, Tsonga people are present but not large enough or are not significant enough to form a dominant community in their share of influence, in most cases, they are less than 50,000 people in each municipality. At the same time, they are not small enough to be ignored as they constitute the largest minority language group. They are as follows; Greater Letaba local Municipality 28,000 people. Mbombela Local Municipality 26,000 people. Nkomazi Local Municipality 28,500 people, Mogalakwena Local Municipality 31,400 people, Madibeng Local Municipality 51,000 people, Moretele Local Municipality 34,000 people and Rustenburg Local Municipality 30,000 people.

The source (*The Free Encyclopedia*, 2014:2) further informs that the provincial breakdown of Vatsonga speakers according to the 2011 census (most recent) are as follows:

- (a) Limpopo Province 906,000 people,
- (b) Mpumalanga Province 415,000 people,
- (c) Gauteng Province 800,000 people, and
- (d) North West Province 110,000 people.

There is an agreement between Babane (2003) and *The Free Encyclopedia*(2014) about the percentage the Xitsonga people constitute out of the total Republic of South Africa`s population ( they constitute 4.4%).

The Vatsonga contributed remarkably towards the development of their own language. “ It took them 55 years before the Vatsonga people could write in their own language since their language was reduced to writing in 1883”, says Marivate (1984:19). Though the Vatsonga authors have increased in numbers since 1938, to date (i.e. 2014), it would be unfair for the researcher not to mention a few pioneers of Xitsonga Literature in general. Dr D.C. Marivate was the first Mutsonga writer to write and publish a Xitsonga novel (*Sasavona*) in 1938. He was followed by Baloyi`s novel *Murhandziwana* (1945) and Ndhambi`s (1949) volume of poetry (anthology) entitled *Swiphato swa Vatsonga*.

The late Professor H.W.E Ntsan`wisi and Rev Junod enriched Xitsonga literature in writing novels, textbooks for specific standards, folklore, and volumes of the native speakers` idioms. The former also played a remarkable role in improving the Xitsonga standard language and its modern orthography.

History would not forgive me if I do not acknowledge the contribution of Professor N.C.P. Golele and Mr G.S. Mayevu for their role of pioneering the introduction of Xitsonga as a medium of teaching and learning at tertiary level. There were some criticism from misguided academics who felt that their efforts were tantamount to lowering the university standards since teaching in the Queen`s language enriched pedagogy and exposure to English texts and literature for both students and academic staff. This type of attitude towards the initiative supports the current study`s statement of the problem. They also contributed in publishing many textbooks, genres, guides, articles and Dissertations and Theses. The Vatsonga literature would be poorer without their critic and shaping expertise: they served in many structures that edited and evaluated 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century writers` manuscripts.

Co-authorship would not have seen the light without the efforts of the late Prof Mathumba and now retired Prof C.T.D. Marivate (1985). They served the language with distinction in various forums. Their contribution at UNISA is without rival. Their

introduction of co-authorship enforced cooperative writing among the Vatsonga which in the process dispelled the spirit of self centredness. Their promotion of postgraduate students in the native language is also remarkable. Both former students and academics of the University of Limpopo are beneficiaries of their contribution and efforts. Despite the literature authorship of the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, new authors emerged and soldiered on through pen and paper. The now late writer, Mr F.A. Thuketana (1969 & 1983) enriched the language through his unique talent of engaging suspense in the plot structure of all his novels. His talent is also realised in his art of characterisation. He amazingly allowed the characters to express themselves naturally in their own dialects as opposed to narrating their interaction in a standard language. His talent will be missed by the current and the future generations. Ms Mary Mabuza (1986) also contributed a lot in engaging humour in her short story collections. What makes her a shoulder higher than the rest is her ability to engage the art without compromising the essence of the moral lesson intended. Very few Vatsonga writers succeed in putting the message across through the art of humour without diluting the intention. Mr M.M. Marhanele (1978) brought class and value in his poetry authorship. The food of the eyes and ears equally matched the food of the mind. His anthology *Swifaniso swa Vutomi* bears testimony to his talent. Mr J.M. Magaisa (1981) is also one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century poetry writers of note. His poetry anthologies reflect the typical Xitsonga modern poetry in style and content. He plays the game by rules but at the same time not sacrificing the intended subject matter. Young authors like Dr M.T Babane (1991), Dr M.C Lubisi(1991), Mr Meckson Mpenyane (1991), Mr P.P. Chauke (2013) Mr Tsakile Ndlovu (2014) and the late Prof S.J Malungane(1991), and others, represent a generation that focuses its themes on the modern skills, knowledge, ethics, norms, values and attitudes that work for or against moral regeneration.

The Xitsonga language is used as medium of instruction and also taught as a subject. The number of Matric candidates that take Xitsonga as a first language subject has dropped with more than 2000 from 1998 to 1999. Both the spoken and written forms of the language are used in elementary and higher education. The University of Limpopo and the University of Venda use the language as a medium of facilitating lecture hall activities. Attempts are being made to encourage masters

and doctorate students to conduct their research projects in Xitsonga also. A number of candidates have already completed some research studies in Xitsonga in these institutions.

The attitude of the majority of the members of this community is positive and eager to support the development of the language in all spheres.

The language is one of the minority languages in South Africa. Therefore it is not regarded as an important language to learn and to speak by the members of the neighbouring communities. The separation of the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Vatsonga by means of legislative imperatives has not helped in enforcing linguistic developing for its language speakers. This has resulted in the temptation of some of the parents` decision to encourage their children to enrol for other Home languages than theirs. One can assume at this stage that such a decision borders on language attitude (A significant number of learners in Mpumalanga in particular take siSwati, isiZulu and English as their Home Languages).

#### **2.4.2 Sepedi as a learning area and as a medium of instruction**

Sepedi is a Southern Africa language spoken predominantly in South Africa. It is, since 1994, one of nine indigenous languages to enjoy official recognition in South Africa's first post-apartheid Constitution. According to *Trip Down Memory Lane* (2013:1) South African census estimates the number of Sepedi speakers to be 4, 200,980. At 9% of the population, Sepedi speakers make up the fourth largest language group in South Africa. Most of the speakers of this language are situated in the Limpopo Province. There are also significant numbers of speakers in the Gauteng and Mpumalanga. This summary explores the linguistic derivation of the language, the history of written codification and dialectal variation, and recent attempts to standardize the language in South Africa.

Sepedi forms part of the "Southern Bantu" group of African languages, which in turn forms part of the larger Niger-Congo language family. The Central subgroup is further subdivided into geographical regions, each designated by a letter. The S-Group covers much of Southern Africa and includes the two major dialect continua of South Africa: the Nguni and the Sotho-Tswana language groups. Sepedi forms part of the Sotho-Tswana language group and is therefore closely related to the

other major languages in this group, Setswana and Sesotho. Linguists commonly drop the language prefix when referring to these languages. Hence Sepedi is also commonly known as “Pedi.” This practice is, however, contested and in South Africa the official use of the prefixes has increased during the post-apartheid period. In many official South African publications the language is also commonly referred to as “Sesotho sa Leboa.” This literally means “Northern Sotho” - the name by which it was commonly known in earlier years. See the note on dialects below.

As a political unit, the term “Pedi” refers to the people living within the area that was ruled by the Maroteng dynasty during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. This period nevertheless saw many fluctuations in the boundaries of the domination, and following this the processes of relocation and labour migration scattered its former subjects widely during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The present-day Pedi area, Sekhukhuneland, is located between the Olifants River (Lepelle) and its tributary the Steelpoort River (Tubatse) and is bordered on the east by the Drakensberg mountains. At the height of its power the Pedi kingdom under Thulare (c. 1790 - 1820) included an area stretching from present-day Rustenburg in the east to the lowveld in the west, and as far South as the Vaal River. The kingdom was defeated by British troops in 1879.

Sepedi is an agglutination language, in which suffixes and prefixed are used to alter meaning in sentence construction. Like the other indigenous South African languages, Sepedi is also a tonal language, in which the sentence structure tends to be governed by tone. The language speakers are found in these regions; North Western (Tlokwa, Hananwa, Matlala, Moletsi, Mamabolo), North Eastern (Lobedu, Phalaborwa, Kgaga, Dzwabo) Eastern (Pai), and East Central (Pulana, Kutswe). Examples of phrases in the language include: *Dumela* (hello); *O kae?* (How are you?); *Ke gona* (I am fine).

Like the other official African languages, the written form was developed by European missionaries during the nineteenth century. Missionaries adopted the dialect of the people of Sekhukhune as the basis of the written standard. This region is strongly associated with the term “Pedi”, for which reason the term “Sesotho sa Leboa” is preferred by many as a coverall-term for related dialects.

Most of the literacy works that have been produced in Sepedi date from 1940. These include novels, drama, short stories, essays, poetry, traditional literature, grammar manuals and dictionaries. Significant works include E.M. Ramaila's *Tsa bophelo bja Moruti* Abram Serote and D.M Phala's *Kgomo a thswa* (see <http:Kwekudee, 2013/06/>). More recent writers include P. Mamagolo (see <http:Kwekudee, 2013/06/06/>), O.K Matsepe, S.P.P Mminele, J.R. Maibela, M.M. Sepota and others (\*All Sepedi books, see <http:Kwekudee,2013/06/>).

During the apartheid period, the ruling National Party's policy of Grand Apartheid was built on a vision of ethno-linguistically discrete territories for South Africa's indigenous population. Beginning after 1960, the widely condemned "Bantustan" policies of Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd resulted in the creation of ten self-governing territories in predominantly rural areas of South Africa. Thus the independent territory of "Leboa" was created in the northern part of the country and designated as the homeland of Northern Sotho speakers.

Under apartheid separate language boards were also created for each of the nine standardized indigenous languages. These boards effectively appropriated the language development work that had previously been done by missionaries. Although the Northern Sotho Language Board helped to standardize the language, this effect was counteracted by its association with the apartheid education system.

Following the democratic transition in 1994, responsibility for language policy and development now rests with the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. A new body - the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) - was also created and charged with responsibility for language planning. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 Of (1996)*, has sought to facilitate the further development of the language, both in terms of structure and in terms of everyday use. The Sepedi Lexicography Unit has therefore been created and is responsible for developing terminology in the language. The development of the language in education in education has proven to be especially difficult. While the language is taught as a subject at all levels, it is only used as an instruction in certain schools from grade 1 to grade 3.

The development of Sepedi has proved to be a difficult task as the heartland of the language is located in a predominantly rural and relatively poor region. Migration to urban areas has grown and Sepedi speakers living in the larger cities are compelled to learn other languages. Sepedi remains a predominantly spoken language. While it is well represented on TV and radio, there are no newspapers in the language.

The language is used as a subject of study in senior primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The subject statistics for the senior certificate for the years 1998 and 1999, as given by the Department of Education, indicates that Northern Sotho was registered as a subject by 84 346 and 78 055 candidates respectively. According to the Department of Education the use of Northern Sotho as a medium of instruction is 4%. In some schools it is used as medium of instruction from Grade 1 to Grade 3 while others use English as medium of instruction. There is also some code switching in classes during teaching.

The majority is proud of being Northern Sotho speakers and they use it openly. The only problem that has recently emerged is that of naming the language Sepedi instead of Northern Sotho which is accommodative of all the dialects of this language. Sepedi stands in the English text of the Constitution, while in its translated version Sesotho Sa Leboa is given as the name of this language. This is a problem that needs urgent attention, since other dialect speakers are of the opinion that their dialects have been marginalised. Pedi is a dialect like all other dialects, and it should not be elevated above other dialects. Concerns about this issue have been written to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and to the Pan South African Language Board by some academics and other people in the community. Some of these reports can be found in the Supplementary Documentation.

Some communities like the Venda, Tsonga, Afrikaans, English, Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele speakers do speak the language and even study it at school and at tertiary level as their second language.

### **2.4.3 Tshivenda as learning area and language of learning and teaching**

Tshivenda is a Southern African language spoken predominantly in South Africa. In 1994 Tshivenda became one of the nine indigenous languages to obtain official recognition in South Africa's first post-apartheid Constitution. The 2001 South African census estimates the number of Tshivenda speakers to be just over a million. At 2% of the population, Tshivenda speakers therefore constitute the second smallest official language group in South Africa. Most of the speakers of this language are situated in the Northern Province. There is also a significant number of Venda speakers in the industrialized Province of Gauteng. This summary explores the linguistic derivation of the language in South Africa.

Tshivenda forms part of the "Southern Bantu" group of African language, which in turn forms part of the larger Niger-Congo language family. The Central subgroup is further subdivided into geographical regions, each designated by a letter. The S-Group covers much of Southern Africa and includes the five major dialect continua of Southern Africa: the Nguni languages; the Sotho-Tswana languages, the Chopi languages, the Shona languages, the Tswa-Rongo languages and the Venda languages. Tshivenda is not clearly related to any other Southern African language and is therefore classed as an isolated language. Tshivenda speakers are nevertheless considered culturally closer to Shona speakers than any of the other major groups. Linguists commonly drop the language prefix when referring to these languages. Hence Tshivenda is commonly referred to as "Venda". This practice is, however contested and in South Africa the official use of the prefixes has increased during the post-apartheid period. The language is also commonly referred to as "Chivenda." Venda speakers first settled in the Soutpansberg mountainous region. The ruins of their first capital, Dzata's place, can still be found there. This region is situated in the northern-most reaches of South Africa, just South of Zimbabwe.

Tshivenda is an agglutinating language, in which suffixes and prefixes are used to alter meaning in sentence construction. Like the other indigenous South African languages, Tshivenda is also a tonal language, in which the sentence structure tends to be governed by the noun. Region dialects include Tshipali, Tshiilafuri, Tshimanda, Tshimbedzi, Tshilembethu, Tshironga (Southern Venda) and Tshiguvhu (South-Eastern Venda). Examples of phrases in the language include:

Ndaa/Aa (hello); *Vho vuwahani?* (How are you?); *Ne ndo takala vhukuma* (I am fine).

Like the other official African languages, Tshivenda was first codified by European missionaries during the nineteenth century. Members of the Berlin Missionary Society first reduced the language to writing in 1972. The standardized language was based on the Tshipani dialect. Translations of the Bible and school readers were the first literacy works produced. The first modern literary work was *Elelwani*, published in 1954 by T.N. Maumela. Literature in the language includes poetry, drama, novels, short stories, essays, works on traditional literature, grammar manuals and dictionaries. The most prolific authors in the language are T.N. Maumela, E.S. Madima, P.S.M. Masekela, M.E.R. Mathivha, P.R. Ngwana and W.M.D. Phophi (For all the books see <http://Kwekudee-2013/06>).

As with the other indigenous languages, the apartheid era has had an ambiguously legacy with respect to language development in Tshivenda. During the apartheid period, the ruling National Party's policy of Grand Apartheid was built on a vision of ethno-linguistically discrete territories for South Africa's indigenous population. Beginning after 1960, the widely condemned "Bantustan" policies of Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd resulted in the creation of ten self-governing territories in predominantly rural areas of South Africa. Thus the independent territory of "Venda" was created in the Northern Transvaal (today the Limpopo Province), to serve as the designated homeland of Tshivenda speakers. This regional authority was subsequently reincorporated into the Northern Province administration/ Limpopo Province administration.

Under apartheid, separate language boards were also created for each of the nine standardized indigenous languages, including Tshivenda. These boards effectively appropriated the work of language development that had previously been done by missionaries. The Venda Language Board sought to standardize the spelling and grammar of the language, thereby establishing a standard for printing and teaching. The language board nevertheless also had a control function, restricting a range of issues that were allowed to be published. Thus political protest literature tended to be screened out.

Following the democratic transition in 1994 responsibility for language policy and development now rests with the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. A new body - the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) - was also created and charged with responsibility for language planning. PanSALB has sought to facilitate the further development of the language. The Tshivenda Lexicography Unit has therefore been created and is responsible for developing terminology in the language. The development of the language in education has proven to be especially difficult. The language is used in the administration of the Northern Province (currently Limpopo Province). This being one of the poorest provinces, however, the capacity for language development at regional level is limited. The heartland of the language is also located in a predominantly rural area and increasingly the younger generation is compelled to migrate to the urban areas in search of work. Here they are compelled to learn other languages. The oral tradition remains strong in the rural areas and has exerted strong influence on prolific writers such as T.N Maumela, E.S. Madima, and T.N Makuya. Most written work is however still produced for schools and the culture of reading among Tshivenda speakers is still very low. While the language is taught as a subject at all levels, it is only used as a medium of instruction in certain schools from grade 1 to grade 3. Tshivenda has one radio station, Radio Phalaphala, but no significant presence on television and no newspapers.

The language is used as a subject of study in senior primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. For example, the Department of Education's subject statistics for senior certificate examinations in 1998 and 1999 show that Venda was registered as a subject by 18 173 and 15 683 candidates respectively. The language is used as the teaching medium of instruction in junior primary schools, i.e. Grade 1 to Grade 3. According to the Department of Education the use of Venda as medium of instruction is 1%. There is both the spoken and written use of the language in both the elementary and higher education.

The majority of the members of this community are proud of the knowledge and use of the language. It is only a few members of the community who look down upon their language when they mix with other population groups in urban areas to such an extent that they do not communicate with the language.

The language is one of the minority languages in South Africa. Therefore, the majority of the members of the neighbouring communities look down upon it. They are reluctant to learn and use the language. It is claimed that the language is difficult.

## **2.5 A SAMPLE OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES RESEARCH STUDIES**

Nxumalo (2000:1-222), in his thesis, articulates language attitude findings that impact negatively on the status and role of the minority African languages in the South African new Language Policy. He is of the view that language attitudes need to be addressed by the powers that be in order to realise their functional status and role in a range of set ups. The current research project distinguished itself from Nxumalo's study in that it investigated language attitudes of a specific minority language (that is Xitsonga), as well as school-based key stakeholders' perspective and attitudes in as far as the language of learning and teaching is concerned at Intermediate Phase level. The former's thesis is too general in scope, whereas the current study interrogated language attitudes as a niche that underpins it.

Similarly, Babane (2003:1-168) researched on secondary school learners' attitudes towards Xitsonga as a learning area in general and his findings are that learners have negative attitudes towards it as a learning area as well as its function as medium of curriculum delivery at secondary school level. Though Babane's (2003) study is very similar to the project at hand in terms of investigating attitudes towards a specific language, however, the two differ in terms of target phases, research stakeholders (groups), scope of target areas and central research problem. The current study investigated the attitudes of stakeholders towards a Home Language as medium at post Foundation Phase, as well as pre Senior Phase band. The effect of language attitudes has prompted Makua (2004:1-223) to investigate how best the African languages' role in various settings can be re-defined. He discovered that unfavourable attitudes against them are one of the critical challenges that hinder them from fulfilling their new role in education in general. However, his study does not concentrate on language attitudes as the problem statement as it was the case with this study. In like manner, Michael (2004:73-81) researched on attitudes of student-teachers towards mother-tongue medium and the respondents of his study displayed negative attitudes towards mother-tongue medium in Nigeria. The

Nigerian student-teacher respondents do not think that their African languages have the requisite capacity to function as media of learning and teaching in their schools. The researcher's focus was on the first four years of schooling in that country (known as Foundation Phase in the RSA), whereas the current project targeted respondents in Grades 4 to 6 for data collection on attitudes of key stakeholders towards a Home Language as a medium of learning and teaching as opposed to English First Additional Language as a medium.

Tertiary students' attitudes towards African languages have also been investigated by Makamu (2010:1-58). In his research project, he discovered that the majority were for the use of English as opposed to a tiny minority who were in favour of the use of African languages. The study at hand sought to research the magnitude of language attitudes at Intermediate Phase level, as well as to assess the impact of using an exoglossic language of learning and teaching in the Mopane District of the Limpopo Province.

Contrary to the negative attitudes findings towards African languages displayed by the majority of the respondents cited so far, Dyers' (2008) study investigated language patterns of isiXhosa first-entering university students. He discovered that these students identified strongly with their Home Language as opposed to English. It was the intention of this project to find out the attitudes of the target respondents towards Xitsonga Home Language as possible medium specifically for Intermediate Phase curriculum delivery.

Langa (2005:1-45) researched on the attitudes of Capricorn High School learners towards the introduction of North Sotho as one of the official languages. The researcher's findings are that learners preferred English as Home language as opposed to the option of North Sotho Home Language. Though Langa's (2005) study focused on language attitudes, it did not interrogate the aspect of the attitudes of learners, teachers and SGB members towards an endoglossic language medium and its implications.

Like Nxumalo (2000:1-222), Makua (2004:1-223) and Makamu (2010), Maqadzhe and Sepota (2007) also conducted a study on the status of African languages in education in South Africa. The study attributes African languages' enrolment drop at

tertiary institution level in particular to negative attitudes towards them. Though these scholars made a valuable contribution towards language attitudes challenges, they did not investigate the HL as medium at Primary School (Intermediate Phase Phase) level in Limpopo.

Contrary to the rest of the foregoing studies, Maseko (1995:1-68), in his research work, advocates a monolingual official language practice as opposed to the multilingual concept. He goes on to suggest that the multilingual concept is a political gimmick. To him, only English should be used as an official language in various domains in South Africa. On the other hand, Alexander (2000:1-65) suggests a progressive language medium Policy model. He terms the model “an additive bilingual approach”. It is a policy that attempts to promote African languages as alternative media of learning and teaching in a progressive manner. The research at hand distinguished itself from the two scholars’ perspective in the sense that it sought to establish language attitudes towards an African Language as a vehicle through which curriculum delivery can be facilitated in a multilingual set up as opposed to monolingual and bilingual set up.

Maponya (2011:1-43) conducted a research on using Mother-Tongue as a Language of Learning and Teaching in the Foundation phase. She discovered that the use of mother tongue in schools has been a bone of contention for a very long time in South Africa, including parliament. She also made it very explicit that most learners in South African schools face a language barrier in the classroom. They cannot use the language they are most familiar with, namely, their home language, and, as a result, they are unlikely to perform to the best of their ability. She concludes her findings by appealing thus: “All people of the world: English, French, German and Spanish learn in their own languages. This should include South Africans as well”. What makes the current research study different from Maponya’s (2011:1-43) is that it investigated language attitudes beyond Foundation Phase and how specific stakeholders view Xitsonga HL as medium of learning and teaching for Learning Areas that traditionally use English First Additional language as medium.

Phaswana (1994:44) projected his research study to the University of Venda’s Language Policy and its impact on African languages in general as media of instruction. He observes that African languages continue to be marginalized in

terms of their function in various domains. The scholar, like other Language Education researchers, attributes this challenge to preference of English as medium of instruction because it is perceived by his target respondents that it is the language of success in the economy, politics and education. Though Phaswana's (1994) study touches base on language bias, it does not focus on language attitudes in the context of curriculum delivery in Intermediate Phase classes as is the case with the current study.

Like Phaswana (1994:44); Niemann and Matsela (2001:55); Gumede (1996:129); Baker (1993:175); Mabila (2007:29); Wikipedia (2012:1); and Hohenthal (2012:1) interrogate language attitudes in varying degrees. Their focus varies from Foundation Phase context to institution of higher learning context. The study at hand focuses on the transitional Phase (i.e., Intermediate Phase, according to NCS, 2002). The observation made by Zimmerman, Botha, Howe and Long (downloaded on 29-10-2012), in Dyers (2003:6), strengthens the need for investigating the language attitude problem at Intermediate phase level thus:

... teachers in certain schools in the country feel that the current South African LiEP, which calls for the switch to English instruction after Grade 3 in schools where the majority of learners are English 2<sup>nd</sup> language speakers and learners, is contributing to educational failures among learners.

Makua (2004: iii), in his Language Education's executive summary, articulates the extent of the challenge this way:

...limited exposure to mother tongue education and the subsequent early transition to English is equally a major source of disadvantage for African learners who have to contend with both language and content whereas their counterparts only have to deal with the latter.

The scholar concludes by indicating the specific Phase level that needs urgent attention:

... this study argues for the extended exposure beyond the Foundation Phase until, at least, to the part of Senior Phase that falls under primary education.

In the light of the historical data on language attitudes covered so far under literature review, none of them investigated attitudes of Intermediate Phase learners, educators and SGB members towards Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in the Limpopo Province. It is against this background that the researcher felt that the completed study would make a valuable contribution towards the role of the endoglossic languages in fruitful curriculum delivery in general and Xitsonga HL as a medium of learning and teaching in particular.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

Literature review in this chapter sought to reflect on language attitudes in various contexts. Foremost, the study articulated two main theories that characterise attitudes in Language Education. The intention was not to indicate the best theory between the two since each has its peculiar way of displaying attitudes. However, the behaviourist theory seems to be more relevant to the study of this nature.

Mother-tongue instruction was also supported by a bulk of the literature interrogated so far. Scholars whose areas of specialization are out of Language Education per se like Dr Motsoaledi and Dr Mangena lament the practice of the use of a medium of instruction for the African child whose Home Language is not English.

The scrutiny of a sample of three Limpopo African Languages revealed a pattern of language attitudes of their native speakers in varying degrees. Neighbouring communities display a degree of attitudes towards these languages, whereas native speakers exhibit language attitudes that are self-defeating in most cases. What is shocking in the literature review on this aspect is the perception of some academics who are custodians of knowledge on their role as media of instruction.

It would be a futile exercise on literature review if completed research studies are not evaluated so as to spell out the areas they have covered as well as the niche the current study intends to address and research on. The next chapter interrogates the curriculum, language policy issues and the language phenomenon vis-à-vis language attitudes.

## CHAPTER THREE

### OVERVIEW ON LANGUAGE POLICY ISSUES, CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS AND THE LANGUAGE PHENOMENON

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This third chapter made an overview of the incompatibility of the intended goals of the post-apartheid official state policy documents with practice in schools in general, commentary on the RSA language policy of different eras and the language phenomenon.

The mother of all policy documents, from which all other policy documents emanated (i.e. RSA Language Policy), states categorically that:

1. Everyone has the right:-
  - (a) to basic education, including adult basic education; and
  - (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.
2. Everyone has a right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public education institutions, where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account:
  - (a) equity;
  - (b) practicability; and
  - (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.
3. Everyone has a right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that:-

- (a) do not discriminate on the basis of race,
  - (b) are registered with the state; and
  - (c) maintain standards that are not inferior to standards of comparable public education institution.
4. Subsection (3) does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institution. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Bloch and Mahalalela (1998) provide a well-balanced background to the LiEP as follows:

European colonization oppression, separation and segregation of its native inhabitants under a system known as Apartheid, South Africa now has black majority rule, a new constitution and a new spirit. While it is true that post-apartheid South Africa still faces many problems, there appears to be urgency and a strong commitment to validate and give legitimacy to all language and cultural groups in a spirit of equality under the new constitution. Hence, the country now recognizes 11 languages (including English, Afrikaans and sign language) as being official languages of South Africa and has given all of them equal status. The idea is that if children do not know their language, they do not know their history and culture. This is an antithesis to monoculturalism which is defined as “the practice of catering to the dominant or mainstream culture, providing second-class treatment or no special consideration at all to persons of non-stream” (see Heas, 1992: cited in Recento Wiley, 2002, p.1).

The observation of Bloch and Mahalalela, (1998:20) on the LiEP’s classroom medium presents an interesting set up. They aver that the country uses what is known as additive approach to multilingualism. In this approach all learners use their home language and at least one additional official language. Learners become competent in their additional language while their home language is maintained and developed. In addition, by the end of grade 9, all learners will have studied an African language for a minimum of three years. In some cases, the African languages may be learned as second additional language.

Impression given is that multilingualism as concept is practiced whereas bilingualism is what is encouraged and practiced. In some schools, the mother tongue instruction right is denied through the admission school policies that are applied by the ill-informed SGB structures. The additive 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> languages learned and through which instruction is carried out in some cases are one-sided. They do not enforce the spirit of reconciliation. The African learners have no opinion but to do two official languages from grade 3 to 12 which might not be their mother tongue and 1<sup>st</sup> additional language. Their white colonial peers are presented with a situation which invariably allow them to learn through the medium of their mother tongue and an additional language which most of them command as their 2<sup>nd</sup> mother tongue. The latter do not see any need of learning one of the 9 official languages of their fellow South African as a reconciliatory gesture. What makes the situation even worse is that the LiEP is silent about this. On paper the LiEP is ideal but in practice, it leaves much to be desired. The researcher attributes these tendencies to “mental language attitude” (see also Fasold, 1984:148; Hobenenthal 2008: 25; Ntsoane, 2008:25).

### **3.2 BRIEF CURRICULA STIPULATIONS (*CURRICULUM 2005, REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT AND CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT*)**

#### *(a) Curriculum 2005*

Curriculum 2005 as a brand name introduced a new focus in education through its vehicle known as Outcomes Based Education. The emphasis brought about the paradigm shift is that teaching and learning should be informed by clearly defined specific outcomes. Each learning area has its specific outcomes that are expected to be achieved at the end of the learning process. At the centre of the learning process is the learner. *Curriculum 2005 in a Nutshell* (2001:9) informs that “learners are put first in the curriculum development, which recognises and builds on their knowledge and experience and responds to their needs”. The approach further focuses on learner-centredness which invariably suggests that the teacher assumes a role of a facilitator rather than teacher-centredness as a norm. *C2005 in a Nutshell* outlines the Intermediate Learning Areas as follows:

\*Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC)

\*Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Science (MLMMS)

\*Human and social Sciences (HSS)

\*Natural Sciences (NS)

\*Technology (Tech)

\*Arts & Culture (A & C)

\*Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)

\*Life Orientation (LO)

### **The Specific Outcomes**

The specific Outcomes for Intermediate Phase LLC are 7 in number (C2005 in a Nutshell).

They are tabled as follows:

- \* Make and negotiate meaning and understanding: Reading, writing, comprehension.
- \* Show critical awareness of language use.
- \* Respond to aesthetic, effective, cultural and social values of text.
- \* Access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations.
- \* Understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.
- \* Use language for learning.
- \* Use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations

(b) RNCS

The RNCS (2002:9-10) outlines some interesting LiEP guidelines for the foundation phase. It states that all learners come to school with prior knowledge about and a high level of proficiency in their home language. An assumption is made by the document that these learners have developed this through a variety of interactions with others in their environment in the context of care, nurturing and play. Because home environments differ, the knowledge children bring with them to school also differs. However, whatever they know should be used in their development. The researcher finds this assumption very interesting in the sense that an African child does not necessarily come to a formal school encounter with adequate language knowledge. The process of early childhood language exposure is a privilege of very few well-to-do families who can afford ECD private institutions. When these poor learners exit the FP (Foundation Phase) programme, they find themselves burdened with the new language of learning and teaching as subject as well as a medium of instruction of not less than seven (7) learning areas at Intermediate Phase level. These poor African learners find themselves with two options: **drown** or **swim**. Unfortunately the former option affects a big number of learners. The revised curriculum named the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to be achieved at the end of the learning process Learning Outcomes as opposed to Specific Outcomes. For the Intermediate Phase Language Outcomes we find six of them. The RNCS (2002) tables them as follows:

- \* Learning Outcome 1: Listening
- \* Learning Outcome 2: Speaking
- \* Learning Outcome 3: Reading and Viewing
- \* learning Outcome 4: Writing
- \* Learning Outcome 5: Thinking and Reasoning
- \* Learning Outcome 6: Language Structure and Use

These Outcomes are not tabled in order of importance but they should be achieved through wider range of texts, integrated learning activities, broader and varied

content (*RNCS*, 2002). The revised curriculum tables more Intermediate Phase Learning Areas as compared to the *C2005* Learning Areas. They are tabled as follows:

- \* Languages
- \* Mathematics
- \* Natural Sciences
- \* Social Sciences
- \* Arts and Culture
- \* Life Orientation
- \* Economic and Management Sciences
- \* Technology (*RNCS*, 2002:2)

This study would like to establish how effective the stakeholders manage to engage the Language of Learning and Teaching in delivering content of the seven above mentioned Learning Areas.

(c) *NCS*

In 2003, the *RNCS* was adopted as a *National Curriculum Statement* for all the phases. The *RNCS* covered the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase. Whereas the *NCS* was meant initially to take care of the FET Band which ultimately resulted in the adoption of a National Curriculum Statement across the board. According to the *NCS* (2003: vi) the FET Learning Outcomes for languages are outlined as follows:

- \* Learning Outcome 1: Listening and Speaking
- \* Learning Outcome 2: Reading and Viewing
- \* Learning Outcome 3: Writing and Elaborating
- \* Learning Outcome 4: Language Structure and Application

The overriding philosophy of all the three curricula is the Outcomes Based Education: an approach which is learner-centred; assessment strategies are formative and summative; continuous feedback is used as a crucial tool for realising achievement of specific and learning outcomes. The research instruments that this study engaged indicated as to whether the language medium at Intermediate Phase level assisted the stakeholders to achieve the outcomes or not.

(d) *CAPS*

The current and operational curriculum is called *CAPS (National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement)*. According to the source “The amended National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12: Curriculum and Assessment Policy (January 2011) replaces the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9,2002, and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12, 2004”, *CAPS (2011:2)* . It further makes interesting statements about the role of language as follows:

Language is a tool for thought and communication. It is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed. Learning to use language effectively enables the learners to think and acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and their ideas, to interact with others and to manage their world.

The source (Ibid) further states as a matter of policy that “.... learners may learn through the medium of their first additional language in South Africa”. We are aware which FAL language the policy document is referring to. This current document seems to put more emphasis on skills, knowledge and value as essential elements to be achieved at the end of a learning process. The previous three curricula put more emphasis on skills, knowledge, values and attitudes as essential building blocks of specific/learning outcomes. It would appear that the three replaced curricula took into account in their design the impact of **attitudes** in curriculum delivery in general. The researcher like other seasoned researchers takes the position that language attitudes may work for or against content delivery in a

classroom situation. The Curriculum planners in CAPS (Ibid) prescribe four learning outcomes which they term **skills**. They are outlined in this order:

- \*1. Listening and speaking
- \*2. Reading and viewing
- \*3. Writing and presenting
- \*4. Language structure and use

The curricula changes brought about during the democratic dispensation do not suggest in any way the possibility of mother-tongue instruction at Intermediate Phase level in a foreseeable future. The researcher was alarmed by the announcement made on one of the Public Channels (SABC 403) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2014 at 18h00 that former model c schools which do not offer African languages will be obliged to introduce them as Additional languages to learners who learn other Home languages. The programme will according to the announcement kick start in 2026. Nothing was mentioned about the possibility of the introduction of programmes that will enable African learners to learn content subject in the medium of their mother-tongue across phase levels in general and Intermediate Phase level in particular.

### **3.3 THE MULTILINGUALISM DEBATE AS CAPTURED IN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY DOCUMENTS**

According to Ntsoane (2008:82-113) it is an undisputable fact that South Africa is a multilingual country. This fact can be witnessed almost everywhere within the borders of the country. There is, however, an uncomfortable recognition of foreign languages that prevail beyond that of indigenous languages of the country, especially in matters academic.

The government's intention to promote all the official languages to equal level of utility remains questionable as it is believed that the indigenous languages are failing in the academic domain. The belief creates a chasm between European languages and the indigenous languages of South Africa, and it makes the

European languages legible for a further promotion. A further promotion in the sense that the two languages have all along been serving as Languages of Learning and Teaching, as well as in governmental correspondences in general.

Multilingualism, as a practice, aims at the promotion of all the official languages of South Africa. The aim is provided for in the Constitution of South Africa (1996) and is further promulgated in language policies of various institutions and establishments. It is the intention of this chapter to scrutinize the clauses in the Constitution (1996), Language-in-Policy (1997), the National Curriculum Statement (2003), and other related documents with regard to multilingualism so as to establish the verity of multilingualism in the Mopani District Schools of the Limpopo Province.

It is also a matter of urgency that we realize the fact that language is a 'tool' for thought and communication, and that it is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed (RNCS- Gr. R – 9, 2002: 9). Valid information regarding the promotion of multilingualism will be extracted and clauses that are susceptible to misinterpretation in the implementation of policies that advocate for the promotion of multilingualism will be redefined.

#### **A. A Scrutiny of Clauses**

A thorough scrutiny of clauses will be done in a systematical order for each of the documents mentioned in this study.

#### **B. The Constitution of South Africa**

It is maintained in the Preamble of the Constitution (1996:1) that;

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and build a united and democratic South Africa able to

take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

As the supreme law of the Republic, the Constitution (1996:4–5) in Chapter 1, Founding Provisions under the sub-section: Languages, states with an in clause no. 1 that;

Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.

The national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expenses, 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.

Municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.

The national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must regulate and monitor the use of official languages. Without detracting from the provisions of sub-section (2), all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.

A Pan South African Language Board established by national legislation must –

- a. promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of –
  - i. all official languages;
  - ii. the Khoi, Nama and San Languages and
  - iii. Sign Language; and
- b. promote and ensure respect for -
  - i. all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu; and

- ii. Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa (Constitution, 1996:4– 5).

The founding provisions cited above recognize all the official languages of South Africa, including others that are used for purposes other than governmental and official correspondences. The provision further protects individual language's rights and wishes to see all official languages enjoying parity of esteem and equitable treatment. It is also a positive move to note that the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution (1996:14), under the sub-section: Education reinforces the Founding Provisions by stating, among others, that;

29 (2) everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account-

- (a) equity;
- (b) practicality; and
- (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices (Constitution, 1996:14).

The Constitution further states, under the sub-section: Language and Culture (15), that;

Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights (Constitution, 1996:15).

Under the sub-section: Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, the Bill of Rights of the Constitution (*ibid*), provides that;

1. Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community-
  - a. to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language; and

- b. to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic association and other organs of civil society.
2. The rights in sub-section (1) may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights (Constitution, 1996:15).

It could be said that the Constitution of South Africa has been drafted in such a way that everyone would feel satisfied in as far as their language rights are concerned. It is also worthy of note that culture, which is inseparable with language has been considered. Indeed, this makes the Constitution the supreme law and a sound base for all other policies to emulate and further its mission, especially language policies. It is, thus the researcher's intention to also scrutinize clauses in language policies to find out whether they are actually propounding what the Constitution is set out to achieve.

### **C. Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP)**

In the Preamble of the *Language-in-Education Policy* (LiEP) (1997:1), it is stated, among others, that being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African. While it is also mentioned that the LiEP is constructed to counter any particularistic ethnic chauvinism or separatism through mutual understanding, it is further mentioned that;

A wide spectrum of opinions exists as to the locally viable approaches towards multilingual education, ranging from arguments in favour of the cognitive benefits and cost-effectiveness of teaching through one medium (Home language) and learning additional language(s) as subjects, to those drawing on comparative intentional experience demonstrating that, under appropriate conditions, most learners benefit cognitively and emotionally from the type of structured bilingual education found in dual medium (also known as two-way immersion) programmes. Whichever route is followed, the underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence, the department's position that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our language-in-education policy. With regard to the delivery system, policy will progressively be guided by the results of comparative research both locally and internationally (LiEP, 1997:1).

In the Founding Provisions of Chapter 1, the Constitution (1996: 4) states that the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages. The LiEP (1997:1), on the other side, has considered the cost-effectiveness of teaching through one medium and learning additional language(s) as subjects and taking the position that an additive bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our Language-in-Education Policy.

It is not surprising to see a situation such as this in a country with eleven official languages because the issue of language in South Africa is not seriously regarded as a cultural thread as most of the people still believe that indigenous languages are failing in the academic domain. Maintenance of a home language in this context is merely a 'feel-good' approach because an African learner is free to choose a European language at home language level and an indigenous language at first or even third additional language level.

Much as it was indicated elsewhere in the study that there is a tendency to modify multilingualism to mean something like bilingualism. It could be said that the LiEP is better understood when it provides that;

The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. This right has, however, to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism. This paradigm also presupposes a more fluid relationship between languages and culture than is generally understood in the Eurocentric model which we have inherited in South Africa (LiEP, 1997:1)

It is further stated in the LiEP (1997:2) that the main aims of the Ministry of Education's policy for Language-in-Education are:

1. to promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education;
2. to pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth amongst learners, and hence establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education;
3. to promote and develop all the official languages;

4. to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purposes, languages which are important for international trade and communication, and South African Sign Language, as well as Alternative and Augmentative Communication;
5. to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching;
6. to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages (LiEP, 1997:2).

The researcher has, earlier on, indicated that the Constitution (1996), in its Founding Provision, forms a sound base for other policies to emulate and further its mission. It is now understandable that the LiEP (1997) has taken such a bold point of departure by stipulating aims such as the above-mentioned. It is, nevertheless, still questionable what the LiEP wants to suggest because the Preamble thereof provides that an additive bilingualism should be seen as a normal orientation of our Language-in-Education Policy, while in its aims the policy is for an additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education.

It is also uncomfortable to note that the same LiEP (1997: 2) requires, under section 6: Policy: Languages as subjects, that from Grade 10 to Grade 12 two languages must be passed, one on first language level, and the other on at least second language level. The provision is further weakened by the fact that at least one of the two languages must be an official language.

One may wonder at the saying that 'at least one of these languages must be an official language' because it is tantamount to enforcing a language that, to the majority of present-day learners, is regarded as important for international trade and communication. On the other side, one may question the status of the second language - would it be acceptable as a foreign language? If it should be so that the second language is a foreign language then the 'at least one official language' would serve also as a language of learning and teaching. In South Africa this 'one official language' would inevitably be English or Afrikaans.

In most cases African learners take two official languages in a Grade for pass requirement, where the second official language is the mother-tongue. But since indigenous languages are regarded as futile in matters academic, there exists a slim opportunity for these languages to serve as media of instruction in schools. This in itself, forces an African learner to learn through the use of that 'one official language' and opt for a second language which, in affluent schools, would scarcely be an indigenous language. In public schools, which are in the rural and semi-urban areas, the situation that prevails in affluent schools is not likely to be experienced.

Section 8, Policy: Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), of the LiEP (1997: 2), further reiterates the fact that the language(s) of learning and teaching in a public school must be (an) official language(s).

While an African learner's mother-tongue is taken at first or home language level, little will the home language be used for international trade and communication. This means that very few learners in schools benefit less educationally because their mother tongue serves only as a subject. The second language to an African learner is usually English which also serves as a Language of Learning and Teaching. It is also a language for international trade and communication. So, learners are forced to take it for these reasons. It is not evident to the researcher as to how the policy on LoLT intentionally promotes multilingualism and develops programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages in schools. It seems, also, as though the LiEP (1997) has nothing to do with mother-tongue issue since reference is only made of first or home language whereas the latter could be any language of a learner's choice.

One other confusion is sown in the second aim of the Norms and Standards regarding Language-in-Education Policy (1997:2), published in terms of Section 6 (1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996, wherein it is stated that the aim thereof is;

The facilitation of national and international communication through promotion of bi- or multilingualism through cost-efficient and effective mechanisms (LiEP, 1997:2).

Here, it implies that individuals will have to make a choice between bi- and multilingualism. While the third aim is the redress of the neglect of the historically disadvantaged languages in school education, the policy is not vocal enough as to how.

The artisanship invested in the policy reveals some elements of hiding behind the 'just' provisions of the Constitution, which the Policy emulates.

On the Rights and Duties of the School, where implementation takes place, the LiEP (1997:3) states that;

1. Subject to any law dealing with language in education and the Constitutional rights of learners, in determining the language policy of the school, the governing body must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning and teaching, and/or by offering additional languages as fully-fledged subjects, and/or applying special immersion or language maintenance programmes, or through other means approved by the head of the provincial education department. (This does not apply to learners who are seriously challenged with regard to language development, intellectual development, as determined by the provincial department of education) (LiEP, 1997:3).

The authority vested upon schools by the department of education is far surpassing and blindfold as the school governing bodies at schools are responsible for the determination of how the schools will promote multilingualism. School governing bodies are largely not constituted by the type of personnel the government envisages, and as such this determination of how schools will promote multilingualism is over-looked.(See also Chapter 4 of this study).

The government only lists ways in which multilingualism could be promoted without detailing out each of the ways for schools. Taking into consideration issues such as the requirement for two languages for cost-effective purposes, practicality with developmental perspective, regional circumstances and the choice between the promotion of bi- and multilingualism, it could be hard to determine how to promote multilingualism, hence most of the schools' option for two languages in a curriculum. This is a basic academic requirement and schools find themselves

without a slot to fit the promotion of multilingualism in, and an idea of how to promote it.

Before the LiEP of 1997, most schools, if not all, offered at least three languages. The policy had long recognized the language fabric of the country and was ready-made for the promotion of multilingualism, though too Eurocentric because two of the three languages had to be the former official languages, English and Afrikaans in this regard.

#### **D. Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grades R-9, (2002)**

The first chapter introduces the *Revised National Curriculum Statement, Grades R – 9 Languages (Home Language) (2002:1)* by indicating the fact that the adoption of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)* provided a basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa. It is also stated that the Preamble states that the aims of the Constitution are to;

- Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human right;
- Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; and
- Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations (RNCS, 2003:1).

The RNCS document (*ibid*), further states that the Constitution further states that “everyone has the right... to further education which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible”.

The fact that South Africa has a dynamic constitution cannot be denied as it can be witnessed that reference is constantly made to it. It would, therefore, be a good thing to have implementation that constantly relies on the provisions and directives that the RNCS constantly quotes. It is also encouraging to note that the RNCS is based on principles, amongst which only four that the researcher deems relevant to the research project will be scrutinized, that is; Social transformation, High

knowledge and high skills, Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice, and Valuing indigenous knowledge systems.

Thus on Social transformation, the RNCS (2002:2) states that it is aimed at ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our population. It is further stated that if social transformation is to be achieved, all South Africans have to be educationally affirmed through the recognition of their potential and the removal of artificial barriers to the attainment of qualifications.

But to say a foreign language can serve as Home Language and as Language of Learning and Teaching to an African child could, to some extent, be regarded as an artificial barrier to the attainment of qualifications. Such means of social transformation are social transformation for transformation's sake because Africans have since been following the same route of learning through the use of English. The practice had not educationally affirmed them as African learners and their potentials were scarcely recognized and not fully unleashed. (See findings in chapter 4 of this study).

It is also said that the RNCS (p.2), aims to develop a high level of knowledge and skills in learners by specifying minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each Grade and by setting high, achievable standards in all subjects. It is here argued that social justice requires the empowerment of those sections of the population previously disempowered by the lack of knowledge and skills.

Languages indigenous to South Africa have never enjoyed the status that is awarded to the imported European languages which eventually occupied high platforms of usage and publicity. Despite this fact, little is being said about empowering those sections of the population previously disempowered by allowing them access to high knowledge and high skills through the use of indigenous language(s) as medium(s) of instruction in schools.

It is highly commendable that the RNCS (p.5) (as well as the NCS and CAPS) seeks to promote human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice. This, it is argued, can be achieved by infusing all newly-developed Subject Statements with the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as

defined in the Constitution (1996). The new curriculum is perceived as sensitive to issues of diversity such as inequality and language, in particular. The bottom line is that learners should be able to develop to their full potential provided they receive the necessary support in this regard.

The sensitivity that the curriculum should be perceived as acknowledging is rather cumbersome in that it is not frankly communicated with regard to multilingualism. There seem to be some elements of inequality with regard to utility of languages that still reign supreme and languages are not as yet promoted and developed to equal levels as envisaged.

In a curriculum that is dominantly Eurocentric, one would not expect indigenous knowledge system to be valuable, and this is what the RNCS (2002) is doing. The indigenous knowledge systems in the South African context, according to the source, refer to a body of knowledge embedded in African philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years. This is in line with what should be the case in South Africa, where African learners are forced to make language choices based on international intentions, forgetting their culture and relegating their birth-right home languages to informal uses.

The principle seems to be inconsistent with the practice in schools, especially in the former Model C schools. In these schools, a large number of African learners offer English as Home Language.

It is surprising to also learn that the RNCS (2002:3) envisages a teacher who is qualified, competent, dedicated and caring. The attributes mentioned of the teacher are not what can be expected because the system is presently 'littered' with educators who did not receive any formal training for implementation of the new curriculum. Only workshops are what teachers have at their disposal. An approach such as this can only be enforced onto teachers who will come to implement the curriculum appropriately when they shall have done an enormous amount of damage. Workshops do not do well in their assessment stage and, more often, follow-ups are not done. It can be said that without formal training it would be hard, if not impossible, to document that workshop is one of the effective means of changing the way education had been dispensed of in the past. Another point of

concern is the issue of the levels of languages, that is, Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language. It is stated in the RNCS (2002:4-8) that the Home Language will provide a sound foundation for learning an additional language. The learning of a home language lays emphasis on developing learners' reading and writing skills in particular.

#### **E. Other Related Documents**

There are several documents that have been drafted by various departments and organizations and bodies, which are to do with issues of language(s) that will also be scrutinized with regard to the promotion of multilingualism.

##### **1. Statement by Prof SME Bengu, the then Minister of Education on a New Language Policy in General and Further Education, 14 July 1997.**

In outlining the historical context of the New Language Policy in General and Further Education and Training (1997:1), it is maintained by Prof SME Bengu, the then Minister of Education that;

The inherited Language-in-Education Policy in South Africa has been fraught with tensions, contradictions and sensitivities, and underpinned by racial and linguistic discrimination. A number of these discriminatory policies have affected either the access of learners to the education system or their success within it. Our constitution however recognizes cultural diversity as a valuable asset, and tasks the government, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism, the development of official languages, and respect for all languages used in the country.

The minister confirms the researcher's doubts mentioned earlier on that there are elements of hiding behind the 'just' provisions of the Constitution as mention is made of our Constitution recognizing cultural diversity as a valuable asset, *et cetera*. Nothing on our Language-in-Education Policy is mentioned yet the historical context is deliberated in a statement that stands to announce a new language policy.

The context within which the minister proclaims the language policy emulates the Constitution and the Language-in-Education Policy cited in the document. By the development of all official languages, the policy is seen as being in line with desire to promote multilingualism. Whichever way the department propounds on the language policy, there is only one standing room in the Language-in-Education (1997) for the offering of at least one official language.

The minister (*ibid*) further proclaimed, in his statement, under section; Multilingualism: Laying foundations for a new nation and society, that;

the new language in education policy is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa (Language Policy in General and Further Education and Training, 1997: 1).

The statement resonates with the Constitution's directive to recognize all the eleven official languages including others used in the country. This is also in line with the fact that "both societal and individual multilingualism are a global norm today" especially on the African continent. While this is true a practice on the African continent, it is sad to learn that other African countries affiliate to policies that stipulate a requirement for at least one official language or at least two languages for exit requirements at Grade 12 level. These policies are more Eurocentric than African.

Ntsoane (2005: 15) cites a situation in Nigeria where there is the requirement that three major Nigerian languages be used, in addition to English. It is further required that every school child learns at least one of the three major Nigerian languages, in addition to his or her mother tongue. The Nigerian Language Policy documents not only provisions and/or directives, but also a genuine commitment to promote its indigenous languages.

Contrary to the situation in Nigeria, the South African Language Policy is heavily doped with Eurocentric conceptualization. In its intention to promote all the official languages, South Africa shuns the fact that not all of its official languages need to be promoted, because English and Afrikaans have historically been serving as official languages. It means the country should be applying its prerogative of 'cost-

efficient and cost-effective mechanisms' by promoting only nine official languages. But, because the nine languages are the indigenous languages, the promotion thereof, according to the government, could be costly.

It is also mentioned that the underlying policy principle in our overhanging language policy is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). The maintenance of home language is a good move but come to ask what a home language is and the answer would be appalling. A home language could be any language of a learner's choice, a replacement for mother-tongue or a political asylum in matters academic, to mention but a few meanings. The additional languages that African learners should acquire are indigenous languages other than their mother-tongue because they have long embarked on the learning of English and Afrikaans at second language level and on using the two languages as official languages. In concluding his statement, the minister stated that;

Lastly, I have requested the Department of Education to launch a national information campaign to back up the announcement of this new language policy, and to develop strategy and action plans with our partners in the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and the Pan South African Language Board to develop all languages in the pursuit of this new language policy especially those previously disadvantaged under apartheid (Language Policy in General and Further Education and Training, 1997).

Seemingly, campaigns to back up the announcement of the new language policy are in place and successful, but the development of strategies and action plans are not adequately put in place to seriously say South Africa is developing all the indigenous languages, to levels equal in status with English and Afrikaans, in favour of multilingualism.

It is now twenty years since 1994 and seventeen since 1997, and the researcher is of the opinion that the move to promote indigenous languages in favour of multilingualism has not as yet been effected. All what is happening are statements that stand only in 'black and white'. No wonder Beukes, et al. (1994:9) in Ntsoane (2005: 15) indicates that:

It is easy to declare them equal, and that would be the worst thing to do, to say you are equal but not to create the means where-by in practice you are really equal (Ntsoane, 2005: 15).

With regard to the development of all official languages of South Africa, Ntsoane (*ibid*), indicates that:

The provision in the Constitution (1996) for regional dispensation, is not applicable to the official languages, as only indigenous African languages will be developed up to regional levels, while the imported European languages are developed up to national level (Ntsoane, 2005:15).

Indeed, English and Afrikaans will be developed in all regions of the country because the two languages are currently serving as medium(s) of instruction in schools. The indigenous languages stand no chance in this domain and in most former Model C schools these languages do not form part of the curricula.

It is presently in the Limpopo Province where the MEC for Education has forcefully introduced African languages as Home Language for African learners who attend in these affluent schools. A move such as this only emphasizes the learning of mother tongue as Home Language and not the use there-of as a Language of Learning and Teaching. So, learning an indigenous language in a former Model C school which did not offer same before does not necessarily mean the promotion of multilingualism but rather the creation of opportunities.

More has to be accomplished in a bid to pave way for the redress of the previously disadvantaged languages, especially the indigenous languages of South Africa.

## **2. PanSALB's Position on the Promotion of Multilingualism in South Africa: A Draft Discussion Document, February 1998**

In its introductory paragraph, PanSALB's draft: Discussion Document (1998:1), indicates, as the purpose of the document, that it explains the understanding of multilingualism and language development in the context of language legislation embodied in the Constitution and other legal documents. It is stated that the mission of the Board is to promote multilingualism in South Africa by:

- Creating the conditions for the development of and the equal use of all languages.
- Fostering respect for and encouraging the use of other languages in the country and,
- Encouraging the best use of the country's linguistic resources, - in order to enable South Africans to be free themselves from all forms of linguistic discrimination, domination and division; and to enable them to exercise appropriate linguistic choices for their own well being as well as for national development (PanSALB, 1998:1).

The PanSALB's Guiding Principles (*ibid*) for the promotion of multilingualism in South Africa are contained in the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, Clause 6 (1) – (5) ) and the PanSALB Act ( Act 59 of 1995). The PanSALB's Draft Discussion Document hints that the frequency of terms such as 'status', 'use', 'usage' points clearly towards a paradigm which is also based on the functional or instrumental use of the languages of South Africa. The Act devised by PanSALB includes the two perspectives of language as a right and as a resource. It is evident that the PanSALB's Draft Document also replicates the Constitution, and *visa versa*.

The responsibility of PanSALB, as spelt out under Section 6(5), is to create the conditions for the development of and equal use of all official languages. It is also stated that PanSALB must promote the positive environment for multilingualism in general, and includes, but is not limited to, the official languages. It is further maintained that;

PanSALB needs to offer advice to government on language policy and planning for advancing the status and use of the official languages; this should not detract its attention from a broader focus of facilitating the receptive environment for the promotion of multilingualism. This includes the promotion of inter-linguistic skills and development of the official languages as well as other languages used in South Africa (PanSALB, 1998: 1).

The above-cited injunctions by the PanSALB show the seriousness with which the promotion of multilingualism is being treated, particularly when it has been realized that:

...for language to survive, it must be used for a wide range of functions otherwise it begins to wither and die. The task at hand is to encourage the use of the official languages as well as all other languages used in South Africa, in a wider range of contexts and for an increasing range of purposes (PanSALB, 1998:1).

It is thus suggested that the over-estimated use and reliance upon English as a *lingua franca* needs to be reassessed. In so doing, our languages will be seen used in public contexts for high level functions, as *lingua francas* at local and even at regional levels of economic activity, and in relation to their usefulness towards uncovering indigenous knowledge.

It is interesting to note, as cited from PanSALB's Draft Discussion Document (1998:3), that isiZulu functions as a *lingua franca* for 70% of the country's population, while English can only be used efficiently by only 20% of the population. It is maintained that communication from government, for example, in English can only reach a minority of people who are likely to comprise the educated middle class urban dwellers.

It is important to realize the fact that South Africans should still ensure that maximum advantage is taken of what English and other international languages have to offer. Thus, English can never be wished away as it was stated elsewhere in the study, that English can never be under threat. In regard to our indigenous languages, the PanSALB (*ibid*), suggests a three-pronged approach which needs to be followed and which simultaneously;

- Engages in the development or elaboration of these languages, and
- Explores and builds on the ways in which the users of cognate languages apply their multilingual skills to communicate.
- Creates the conditions for extending the use of these languages (PanSALB, 1998:3).

Indeed, the PanSALB heralds signals of hope and confidence in the functionality of indigenous languages for important knowledge acquisition. It is maintained by the Board that their goal is always that of maximizing multilingual communicative competence rather than increasing language barriers amongst people. It is further cautioned, in the same source, that:

While the Constitution has identified 11 languages for official status, we need to understand that this arose out of a historical situation which had previously selected ten African languages and given limited official recognition to these. The official status of nine languages was extended to national level, adding them to the two former official languages (Afrikaans and English). This technicality may for the foreseeable future draw anger and resentment from linguistic communities who identify strongly with a language they believe to be different from the languages which now have official status (PanSALB, 1998:3).

It is further proclaimed that the Board's role is to ensure that in the promotion of multilingualism, it is promoting co-operation and easing the channels of communication, not fostering linguistic competition, division or separatism. The exposition of what is not in the last part of the latter utterance could serve as motivation for elite urban dwellers to want to compete, divide or separate, in order to be accepted to the 'group'.

On Language Policy Orientation, the PanSALB (1998:5), indicates that the selection of multilingualism over monolingualism, together with the principle of equal status of 11 languages fore-grounds the direction of language policy, Ruiz (1984 and 1988), is quoted by the PanSALB (*ibid*), as offering three different theoretical positions of viewing language, that is; Language as a problem, Language as a right, and Language as a resource.

It is argued that language planning specialists in Africa frequently refer to these views of language, where the latter two views have come under intense discussion in the Francophone and Anglophone countries of Africa. It should, therefore, be noted that the PanSALB is positive and conscious about the role it is tasked with. The question that remains could be how the directives in the LiEP and the RNCS documents will promote multilingualism with the requirement for two languages for exit at Grade 9? Could it be said that the three theoretical positions of viewing

language have been instrumental in the formulation of the South African language policies? If not, which theoretical position(s) had been instrumental in the formulation of SA language policies? The researcher considers it important that the three positions are further scrutinized so as to gain insight into each and to check on any correlation between each and the SA language policies.

**(a) Language as a problem**

This is experienced when the ruling party's ideology is segregation and or assimilation. Hence an option, in South Africa, for multilingualism where the response to de facto multilingualism is to promote a language policy based on monolingualism, that is the devotion of the language of the ruling class (PanSALB, 1998: 5). It is hinted that South Africa had, in the past, viewed languages other than Afrikaans and English as problems, and with the emergence of the new ruling elite, language as a problem continues to prevail, though it is manifested through assimilationist tendencies.

**(b) Language as a right**

Those who harbour the sentiments of the principles of equity will find this orientation in order. Thus, it is maintained that since the people's rights have been violated, one way of ensuring that language rights can be guaranteed is by viewing language from the perspectives of language as a right and language as a resource.

**(c) Language as a resource**

The orientation is said to be consistent with the principle of interdependence, where different communities/languages are seen to coexist interdependently. This requires that the value of each language and its speech community are acknowledged as part of the whole. The view that language is a resource to the nation carries with it the notion of the instrumental use of languages or functional multilingualism. It has been indicated under the paragraph that discusses the Guiding Principles that the Act devised by PanSALB includes the two perspectives of language as a right and language as a resource, and that the Act replicates the Constitution.

There is, however, more of the perspective of language as a problem filtering through the latter two perspectives adopted in South Africa. The pervasive use of English as one of the official languages and as Language of Learning and Teaching makes it a serious problem for African learners, especially those attending school in remote rural areas.

Could it be said that the South African Eurocentric model includes the three views of language? Apparently the fact that the last two views 'have come under intense discussion in the Francophone and Anglophone countries of Africa and the assimilation approach adopted by most countries which undergone colonialism have influenced the SA language policy. Also, the first view because of the fact that the economic 'ruling' nations of the world have English for purposes that education and economy could never have survived without in their countries. The sovereignty of South Africa as a country should not, as such, be through the adoption of Eurocentric language policy or English as a language that would come to be so dominant over her indigenous languages.

Is it a coincidence to find out that the SA language policy is greatly influenced by a view that 'everybody' is silent about? The view of language as a problem, - something that necessitates research on its own-, this is what PanSALB is not vocal about. Or could it be said that the issue of paradigm is a ruling factor in this matter? It is a matter of urgency that a scrutiny is done to ascertain the gist of the two issues in question.

#### **(d) The paradigm**

The PanSALB (1998:6) believes that the paradigm which needs to be followed in South Africa is one which includes the functional approach to languages which is inseparable from the view of language as a right and the view that all languages are resources. The paradigm is viewed as the one that requires attention of language policy that addresses the latter two orientations. Such a policy is said to;

- Acknowledge that there are sources of knowledge and expertise which speakers of all languages possess;
- Assume that effective measures will be taken to access and harness this knowledge for the maximum advantage of society;

- Unlock the potential of existing patterns of local and regional multilingual communication systems;
- Utilize international systems for communication across linguistic boundaries.
- Build a flexible network of multilingual communication systems to suit the domestic and international requirements for national plan for development (PanSALB, 1998:6).

It is, seemingly, the reason why the PanSALB could declare functional multilingualism as the way to go because it is viewed as aligned to the functional approach to languages. The approach is, according to the Board, inseparable from the view of language as a right and the view of language as a resource. The underlying principle that applies here emphasizes functionality of languages and functionality of approach.

What is the PanSALB's understanding of functional multilingualism? The understanding that the Board harbours needs to be traced in order to gain clarity that will aid in better establishing the verity of multilingualism specifically in the context of African languages as media of learning and teaching at post Foundation Phase level.

### **(e) Functional Multilingualism**

According to the PanSALB's understanding, functional multilingualism originates from a democratic, non-discriminatory perspective, where it is unacceptable, in South Africa, to limit the use of any language on social, democratic and economic reasons. It is, but, not easy to outwardly say that in South Africa the indigenous are economically and academically functional. The Board has realized that functional multilingualism requires responsible planning which will eradicate fear that irrational multiplication of language service is implied for each language group in South Africa.

It is maintained by the PanSALB (1998:7) that if functional multilingualism were knitted into a national plan for (economic) development, the following would take place:

- Identification of when, which and how languages are currently used;
- Evaluation of the degree of efficiency of use of these languages in those contexts;
- Indication of what further research is required to make better and more efficient use of languages; and
- Identification of which other languages could profitably facilitate this process (PanSALB, 1998: 7).

Could one deduce that the South African language planning debates overlooked above-mentioned steps? One is made to believe that way as PanSALB (p.7-8) hints that;

The modernization of those languages, which are presently prevented from functioning in domains such as international science and technology and regional and even national economies, should become an urgent priority (PanSALB, 1998:7-8).

The Board realizes also the value of multilingualism as utmost, and indicates that South Africans would be able to;

- Reclaim the value of linguistic pluralism in South Africa;
- Revalue assets of those who have access to indigenous knowledge and language systems and who are multilingual;
- Bring about a more balance perspective which recognizes not only those who only speak English but all who have knowledge and communicative skills;
- Participate more fully in the international/global community; and
- Bring about greater social tolerance and more likely, to have academic success that monolingual people have.

The PanSALB has fully elaborated its understanding of functional multilingualism and in no uncertain terms could it be said otherwise. It is clear that there has been some neglect of the functional promotion of functional multilingualism which emanates from approaches that are not functional. Apparently, indigenous

languages are politically recognized as functional and that proves insufficient in other domains, especially the academic and economic domains.

It is not clear, therefore, to unravel the concept multilingualism because apart from functional multilingualism, mention has also been made of additive multilingualism and additive bilingualism. This makes it hard to understand and implement multilingualism as a concept. The PanSALB (1998:8) has a storage of data regarding multilingualism, which if scrutinized should properly align the understanding and implementation thereof.

#### **(f) Multilingualism**

What the PanSALB indicates is the fact that there are about 6000 languages used in about 200 countries, which proves that multilingualism is a global reality. Crystal (1987: 360) in PanSALB (1998: 8) is quoted as saying:

the widespread impression that multilingualism is uncommon is promoted by government policies: less than a quarter of the world's nations give recognition to two languages, ...and only six recognize three or more (PanSALB, 1998: 8).

Not only Crystal is appalled by the way multilingualism is being down-played, but also Gogolin (1993) is being mentioned as referring to the monolingual habitus in which the general, Western perception about language resides. It is maintained that Gogolin is of the idea that the political, economic and military success of the West has resulted in a super-imposing of the monolingual habitus upon the multilingual countries it subjugated. No wonder the PanSALB's task to address the multilingual reality prevailing in South Africa, which needs to be understood against the overwhelming drive toward the monolingual habitus.

South Africa, like most countries, is multilingual, which means that many languages are used in the country in various contexts and for various purposes. It is only unfortunate that most of the South Africans speak languages which are indigenous to this country at home and in their immediate communities only. Little is realized that people would be motivated to learn other languages, such as South African

indigenous languages, especially when they need to communicate for reasons which relate to trade and economic activities.

PanSALB (1998:9) foregrounds languages such as Arabic, Kiswahili, Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri, and Kikongo as indigenous African languages which cut across national boundaries and which are used for purposes of regional trade and cooperation.

It is, thus, believed that the indigenous languages of South Africa are also similarly used as lingua francas across Southern Africa. For example, it is stated that isiNdebele is widely used in Zimbabwe and the Northern parts of South Africa, and is understood by speakers of other Nguni languages (isiZulu) is probably used as a lingua franca in South Africa by 70% of the population although its home language speakers constitute only 22%. Setswana predominates in Botswana as well as being spoken widely in at least two provinces of South Africa. Xitsonga is spoken in Mozambique as well as in South Africa. Afrikaans is de facto the lingua franca of Namibia and the Northern Cape, and it functions similarly in several provinces of South Africa as well.

It is strongly indicative of the fact that each of South Africa's official languages is spoken or understood elsewhere in Southern African region and hence functions as a regional lingua franca. Are indigenous languages promoted and developed to meet this regional functionality? The question should not be heard of within the borders of South Africa, but economic constraints make it even louder.

### **3. Recapitulation**

The scrutiny that has been done on the documents cited in this section has proved adequate in establishing how the issue of languages has been made complicated so as to 'lull' South Africans into believing that equity prevails amongst all official languages. One is made to believe that matters relating to languages are fairly handled.

Complications arise when policies are drawn by different bodies in a bid to achieve a common goal. It is usually not surprising that the approaches and interpretations that various bodies harbour will differ drastically. For instance, the Language-in-

Education Policy (1997) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) emulate the Constitution (1996) in providing for at least two official languages. While the Constitution provides these two languages for national government and each provincial government, the latter two documents should have taken it from two languages onward in order for them to be seen promoting multilingualism. It is not known what is implied by the inconsistent reference to 'additive bilingualism', 'additive multilingualism' or 'functional multilingualism' in the document. The same confusion is reaped in the use of 'at least two languages', 'more than one language' or 'at least one of two languages must be an official language'. Further abnormalities are witnessed in the use of words such as 'first language' and/or 'home language'; and nothing to do with mother-tongue, when people are so much awaiting mother-tongue based education system.

Olivier makes an observation that is similar to Ntsoane (2008) about the RSA language education situation. He maintains that language has always been a contentious issue in education in South Africa. From the drive for mother-tongue education to the ever pressing need to be able to use international languages such as English. To be able to understand the language and language education situation in South Africa today it is necessary to look at the historical background of languages in schools and tertiary institutions in this country. In addition this section also briefly looks at current national policies regarding language in education and the current language situation in South Africa.

### **Historical Background**

Language spread initially from settings where language was acquired through usage. The first people in Southern Africa were the San and Khoe followed by the Bantu speaking people moving from east, west, north of the continent. Little is known about the ways in which language was transferred by these peoples. What can be deduced is cross influence between these languages. Most written evidence of language in education comes from the arrival of Europeans in the Cape in particular the Dutch settlement in 1652. Mainly Dutch (Afrikaans after 1925) and English were used in schools – this implied ongoing mother tongue education for white and some of the so-called 'coloured' people. African languages only got a degree of recognition in policies during the Apartheid era in South Africa where

mother-tongue education was proposed for at least the first couple of years. The Bantu Education Act (1953) stipulated that black learners should receive mother tongue teaching in lower and higher primary grades with transition to English and Afrikaans thereafter.

## **Missionaries**

The first schools in South Africa were usually attached to Christian missionaries throughout the country. For years this has been a problematic issue as this so-called 'importation of European ideas has been regarded as colonisation of people in terms of religion, language, culture and thought. Yet the missionaries played a significant role in recording the languages of South Africa. Orthographies were established and grammars written down – sometimes with no regard for culturally similar ethnic groups. In this sense 'languages' were created by recording regional dialects differently. This happened mainly due to the fact that missionaries came from various countries and missions in Europe and not necessarily had the opportunity to communicate with each other. Translations of the Bible also served as a driving force in the written development of African languages, see the dates of the translations below (only complete translations are noted, with the exception of isiNdebele:

- \* Afrikaans [(1933,1983)]
- \* isiNdebele [1986 – the Old Testament still needs to be translated]
- \* isiXhosa [1859,1996]
- \* isiZulu [1883,1959]
- \* Northern Sotho [1904, 1951, 1998]
- \* Sesotho [1878, 1989]
- \* Setswana [1857, 1970]
- \* SiSwati [1997]
- \* Tshivenda [1936, 1998]
- \* Xitsonga [1907, 1929, 1986]

Also see: <http://www.biblesociety.co.za>

It is important also to note that European languages such as English also spread amongst the local South African people through missionaries.

### **3.4 LANGUAGE PLANNING DURING VARIOUS PERIODS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction**

There is no clearly documented South African Language Policy prior to the arrival of the Dutch in the Cape almost 363 years ago. There is need for a separate research project that will dig deep into the archives and oral literature of the time in order to enrich the RSA Language Policy data. This section will briefly comment on Language Policy under four historical periods, namely: Early Language Policy under the Dutch, the British Language Policy, language policy during the apartheid era, and language policy during the post apartheid era. The common denominator of all the four periods is the enforcement of unfavourable language attitudes towards the endoglossic languages in general. This type of attitude is captured by Vedder (1981:275) as quoted in Ohly (1992:65) when the Nama Chief shouted: "Only Dutch, Dutch only! I despise myself and I want to hide in the bush when I am talking my Hottentot language".

#### **3.4.2 Early language policy under the Dutch**

According to Babane (2003:115-117), the history of language planning and language policy in South Africa dates back to the colonial occupation of the Cape by the Dutch settlers. The Dutch language can therefore be regarded as the first exoglossic language to be introduced in South Africa (see also Nxumalo, 2000:80). Jan Van Riebeeck and his crew arrived at the Cape on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1652. His aim was to establish a halfway post for ships sailing to and from the East Indies. In this way Cape Town became the first part of White settlement in South Africa (Davenport, 1977:19; Fowler and Smit, 1969:242).

When the Dutch arrived at the Cape, indigenous African people who had settled at the Cape Colony before them were the Khoikhoi (formerly called Hottentots)

and the San (formerly called Boesmans). The obvious problem that arose was that of communication because the settlers did not know the languages of the Khoikhoi and the San and vice versa. Alexander (1989:12) points out that indigenous Africans spoke languages which to the Dutch 'sounded like the clucking of turkeys'. The Dutch settlers found it difficult to pronounce the Khoikhoi phonetics and due to their negative attitude towards the endoglossic languages, they could not even learn these languages. Alexander (1989:12) further states that:

There was never any serious or systematic attempt on the part of the Colonists to acquire a knowledge of the local languages ...

The early Dutch settlers found it easier to insist on the speakers of indigenous languages to learn Dutch rather than their languages. There is no recorded evidence of a strategy or plan to develop indigenous languages at this point in the history of the Cape. But as Steyn (1980:106) points out:

Van 1652 af het die Hollanders en Khoen met mekaar in aanraking gekom en van die begin af het die taal kontak Hollands beveerdeel ten koste van die Kho-tale.

Phaswana (2000:3) points out that for quality of communication to exist between the Dutch settlers and the indigenous Africans, three Khoe persons were used as interpreters. Alexander (1989:12) describes this situation as follows:

Thus, during the first few years of the rule of Dutch East Indian Company (DEIC) at the Cape, the officials were completely dependent on the linguistic skills of Autshomoa ('Harry'). Krtoa ("Eva"). Doman ("Anthony") and a few others for their very survival at this Cape of storms.

It is not immediately obvious how these three came to master Dutch quickly and sufficiently to act as interpreters save to assume that they might have acquired Dutch in the same way as untutored farm workers acquire the language of the farm owner well enough to communicate.

Since the official status of a language is determined by the government of the day, Dutch was made the language of the government, the church and the school. Maartens (1998:26) notes that the proclamation of Dutch as the only official language constituted the first language policy of South Africa. At schools Dutch was made a medium of instruction. According to Reagan (1988:4) language was not a major issue in these schools. Hence the growth and development of African languages was at best minimal or at worst zero and this is the reason why the period of the Dutch occupation of the Cape can be referred to as the “Dark Ages” in terms of status and development of indigenous languages (Nxumalo, 2000:83).

In 1688 many French Huguenots arrived at the Cape in quest of religious freedom and were settled with the Dutch. In order to achieve acceptance and perhaps integration, the French mingled freely with their hosts, the Dutch, with obvious advantages to the status of the Dutch language. And so, although the French were allowed to start their own French-medium schools, they were, however, required to learn, worship and communicate with the Dutch authorities through the Dutch language (Davenport, 1977:23). Given the domination of the Dutch language, French gradually declined in status as a result of being under-used (Reagan, 1988:14).

In 1803 during Governor Janssens and Commissioner-General J.A. de Mist of the Batavian Republic evidence in literature suggests that attempts at using Khoi and San languages for classroom instruction in schools for slaves failed because of the lack of colonial support and mutual acceptance of indigenous languages by the colonial teachers (Davenport, 1977:41).

To summarise, from 1652 to 1795 and then from 1803 until 1806 the dominant language in the Cape was Dutch. The first period was under the United Dutch East India Company while the second period was under the Batavian Republic. The imposed language policy during this period favoured the Dutch language at the expense of indigenous African languages.

### 3.4.3 The British Language Policy

The dominant status of Dutch was ended with the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806 in favour of English despite the fact that the Dutch population outnumbered the British population (Davenport, 1977:29). According to Muller (1969:129) on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1822 Lord Charles Somerset who was the British Governor of the Cape proclaimed that 'henceforth English shall be the sole official language used in government offices and in the courts of law'. This proclamation relegated Dutch together with African languages to an inferior status (Fowler and Dmit, 1969, 258; Phaswana, 2000:5). About 175 years later, the writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1995:35) commented on the concomitance of the 1822 Lord Charles Somersets' Anglicising policy and the military dominance of the British Empire as, *inter alia*, the custodian of the English language as follows:

Thus English and African languages never met as equals, under conditions of equality, independence, and democracy, and this is the root of all subsequent distortions. They met with English as the language of conquering nation, and ours as the language of the vanquished. An oppressor language inevitably carries racist and negative images of the conquered nation.

One could opine that the hegemonic status of English vis-à-vis African languages in particular reinforced by its status as the language of education in all state-aided mission schools. Education through the medium of English translated to English in all other state domains or work areas. That the missionary teachers were English speaking only served to entrench English in schools. In this respect Mawasha (1973), quoted by Mawasha (1977:74-75), avers that:

- Most of the missionary teachers who worked in Black education in its initial stages were English-speaking and therefore could not help giving prominence to their language in their teaching.
- The aim of the missionary teacher was not only to evangelise but also to westernize the African convert, this endeavour could hardly be attained without involving and giving prominence to the language of the tutor, which was in the main English.

In order to support the anglicising policy in these schools, teachers who were imported from England and Scotland came to fill influential positions and put their stamp on English education (Nxumalo, 2000:86). Indeed, Harrison (1986:48-49) notes that the Dutch-speaking children find themselves learning in English which was the language that they did not understand. The Dutch resisted the dominance of English in schools but the hegemony of English developed pace in the colony. In this connection Webb and Sure (2000:38) observe that:

Within a century, they had complete control over every aspect of public life in the country. Today although South Africa no longer belongs to Britain, the overwhelming Anglicization of everyday life suggests that, culturally, and linguistically, it is still colonized.

Though the British did not elevate the African languages to an official status, more attention was paid to the education of the indigenous folk than the Dutch authorities had done. For one thing, the British allowed the use of African languages as media of education in the lower primary schools and for another it was their missionary societies that started and developed education for the indigenous populace of the sub-continent (see for example Kgwane, Mawasha, 1969).

Phaswana (2000:6) points out that as late as 1909 at the Union Convention, negotiations were held at which language issues were at the centre of the debate. The major concern of the negotiations was to reconcile the conflicting interests of the European groups in relation to English and Dutch languages. The outcomes of the negotiations as that on 31 May 1910, the Act of the Union, uniting the Boer Republic with the Cape Colony and Natal was signed. As regards the mutually accepted language policy, that is, Article 137 of the Constitution of the Union, Grobler (1990:10) writes:

In 1910, when the British colonies and the Boer Republics became the Union of South Africa, provision was made for the equality of English and Dutch as the two official languages.

This stipulation in the 1910 Union Constitution of South Africa was to become a bilingual policy where bilingualism was defined in terms of the two exoglossic languages. However, the endless resistance waged by the Afrikaners who claimed that Dutch as enshrined in the Constitution referred to Afrikaans made Afrikaans to be recognised as a medium of instruction in 1914, and in 1925 Act 137 of the Constitution was amended accordingly. According to Muller (1969:401) through the amended Act Afrikaans replaced Dutch as one of South Africa's two official languages. Article 137 of the Constitution of the Union of South Africa and Article 137 as amended were both silent about the status of African languages in the Union. It was this 'silence' that probably led Nodoba (2002) in Duncan *et. al.*, (2002:331) to observe with grave concern in recent times that:

Daunting to us all is the tradition of bilingualism that promoted the exclusive use of both English and Afrikaans in carrying out official business. Unfortunately, this approach led to the suffocation of indigenous languages.

The effect of the above language policy was three-fold, viz. it enshrined the hegemonic status of English in all domains, it took Afrikaans on board as an alternative official language at par with English, it not only marginalised the endoglossic languages but also 'compelled' speakers of these languages to find sanctuary in English for utilitarian purposes.

#### **3.4.4 The apartheid era**

In 1948 the Nationalist Party won the elections in the Union of South Africa on the political ticket of separate development or apartheid. One of the major areas of focus for the Nationalist Party was the growth and development of the Afrikaans language equal or surpass its rival English in various domains.

State money was invested in, for example, the Afrikaans Dictionary and the development of Afrikaans generally for use in all domains. Pride in being an Afrikaner and in the use of Afrikaans was promoted through the writing of

different genres of literature including Afrikaans Newspapers and popular Magazines. Newspapers such as *Beeld*, *Zoutpansberger*, and *Noordelike Review* and Magazines such as *Rooi Rose*, *Wild and Jag*, *Huisegenoot* and *Veld Toe* still enjoy wide circulation among speakers of Afrikaans.

In order to ensure that Afrikaans gain parity with English in African education, the Nationalist government passed legislation which made it compulsory for 50% of the subjects in the curriculum of African education to be taught in Afrikaans and the other 50% in English (Nxumalo, 2000:93). The dual-medium policy was an imposition and never found favour with or was accepted by teachers, parents and learners in African schools. The African Teachers Association of South Africa (ATASA) for example, made persistent representation against the policy to no avail. Indeed ATASA described the policy as 'educationally indefensible' and that the policy 'cannot be justified on educational grounds'. Human Sciences Research Committee's Language Committee (1981:48) described it as 'unjust' to impose Afrikaans (a foreign language) in addition to English (another foreign language) in African education. Leonard Mosala, a member of the Urban Bantu Council, speaking as a parent, warned that enforcing Afrikaans in African education could result in another Sharpsville (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1978:1-12, Hartshorne, in Young, 1985:75).

The enhancement of the status of Afrikaans was also encouraged at a purely political level of 'divide and rule'. During this apartheid era the National Party introduced ethnically divided homelands and so-called independent states in which indigenous languages together with English or Afrikaans were used as official languages. However, the status and level of development of these languages were not equal (De Cluver, 1992:114). De Cluver further noted that to strengthen the policy of divide-and-rule, the government set-up the Black Language Committee in the mid-fifties and later Language Boards:

These language boards were responsible for orthography, spelling rules, and the creation of general technical terms as well as the promotion of literature.

The main aim of the Afrikaners to divide Blacks along ethnolinguistic lines was politically motivated because they wanted to use the 'advancement' of African languages to keep Africans under control and in isolation. Nxumalo (2000:102) notes that any efforts that appeared to be geared towards the development of African languages were clearly planned to fit-in with the policy of separate development.

Because Afrikaans was the language through which apartheid was implemented and practiced, it was then stigmatized as the language of the oppressor. Consequently, despite its equal status with English in Black schools, it nonetheless declined in use, in favour of English.

### **3.4.5 Post-apartheid language policy**

The linguistic reality as sketched so far is interwoven with the conflicts and tensions which need to be addressed by the changing society. Therefore, linguistic tolerance presents a challenge for language planners and policy makers and also speakers of different languages alike. However, given the history of South Africa, namely, the divisiveness of previous language policies as applied under the Dutch, the British and the Nationalist Government, the post-apartheid language policy finds it difficult to deal with the linguistic remnants of the above policies (Nobola, 2002, in Duncan, *et al.*, 2002).

In 1990 South Africa changed its course in respect of language policy. The new policy represented a shift in political power. Alexander, as quoted by Heugh (1992b:18) says:

We need to understand how language policy, language practice and language usage reinforce power relationships in a particular society. The reason why the language issue has become important in South Africa today is precisely that there is a shift in power relations.

As part of the transition to democracy, South Africa recognised its language pluralism as a valuable national resource which enhances and enriches its previously marginalised languages. By giving nine endoglossic or African

languages official status, Black people were in a way reclaiming their cultural heritage by advocating a linguistic space in society for these languages. On this note, South Africa did not follow in the footsteps of other African states as Deprez and Du Plessis (2000:96) state:

Contrary to the “African tradition’ the new South Africa has opted for an endoglossic solution to the language question.

The above scenario implies that African people should be ready to take advantage of and to restore their linguistic pride and also to reawaken awareness of the value of their language. Unfortunately, despite the changes in the Constitutional provision and the resultant language policies, indigenous people still hold that learning English and knowing it well is a gateway to economic advancement. To this effect, Nodaba (2002), in Duncan *et al.*, (2002:344-345), avers that:

The emerging trend of portraying English as the only *de facto* and the *de jure* language is slowly but surely leading to a further devaluation and marginalisation of indigenous languages.

Maartens (1998:33) states that the period from 1990-1993 can be regarded as a period of negotiations between the government (Nationalist Party) and different political parties such as the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). During this period, many issues were debated. Of particular importance to this research, the language question was one of the items on the agenda. The position of the ANC on language issues in this debate was spelt out in the documents such as the Freedom Charter, the Constitution Guidelines and the Proceedings of the ANC language workshop held on 21 – 24 March 1990 in Harare-Zimbabwe (Desai, 1990). According to Hartshorne (1992:208):

In the Freedom Charter it is stated that ‘all National Groups shall enjoy equal rights’ and that ‘all people shall have equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs’.

The Harare Workshop (21-24 March 1990) also shares the same sentiments with the one above, that no one should be excluded from participating in the political, social and economic affairs of the country on the basis of language. In short, the position of the ANC was to recognise the multilingual reality in the country.

During the transition period, from an educational point of view, it was proposed that not more than two languages should be compulsory, one of which should be the medium of instruction and the second one should be the regional dominant language (Maartens, 1996). This has also been stated in the Education White Paper 2 (1996:4) as follows:

We will not promote under any circumstances, the use of only the official language of learning (medium of instruction) in all public schools. Language policy in education cannot thrive in an atmosphere of coercion. No language community should have reason to fear that the education system will be used to suppress its mother-tongue.

After the multi-party negotiations for the period of three years, a new democratic Constitution was established in which the eleven languages were made official. The languages recognised as official are stipulated in Section 6(1) of the Constitution as follows:

Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu (Act 108 of 1996:4).

The new democratic Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) as amended by the Constitutional Assembly signals a very clear intention to provide special support for the nine African languages as a way of compensation for the effects of the long-standing legalised domination of English and Afrikaans. To this effect, it makes a number of provisions which guarantee and safeguard the equality of major languages spoken by South Africans at the national level. The provision will redress the past racial discrimination and practices on issues of languages. Since languages in South Africa were unequal at national policy level, the new Constitution in its preamble advocates that it will:

Heal the division of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights (Act 108 of 1996).

The Constitution makes provision on how languages which were marginalised can be promoted and developed. To address the implementation of the language policies as enshrined in the Constitution, an independent statutory body, the Pan African Language Board (PanSALB) was established in terms of the PanSALB Act (Act 59 of 1995) to be the “watch dog” on language issues. Its primary aim (Deprez and Du Plessis, 2000:9) was to promote multilingualism and the development of the previously marginalised languages. Section 6(5) of the Constitution asserts that:

A Pan South African Language Board established by National legislation must:

- (a) Promote and create conditions for the development and the use of-
  - (i) All official languages;
- (b) Promote and ensure respect for-
  - (i) All the languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek ..... (Act 108 of 1996:5).

Before the establishment of PanSALB, the promotional and developmental role in language matters was filled by the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (South African Academy for Science and Art), the English Academy of Southern Africa and the Language Boards for the African languages (Deprez and Du Plessis, 2000:10).

As stipulated in the Constitution, PanSALB should see to it that all language-related matters are effectively attended to. Although the Board might be doing its best there are some languages that are still marginalised and most complaints coming to the Board are from speakers of these languages. Duprez and Du Plessis (2000:132) note that:

There was unfortunate perception that PanSALB was a “toothless body” since it was not delivering on its mandate. People started pointing fingers at PanSALB as being the culprit for the government failing to implement a multilingual language policy but functioning in English.

Together with PanSALB, the National Language Services (NLS) in the Department of Culture, Science and Technology (ADACST) was mandated to develop and implement a language policy for the country. According to DACST (1998:24) it must “contribute to the practical implementation” of the language provision of Section 6 of the Constitution and “promotes the linguistic empowerment of all South Africa’s people”.

Through the Constitution, the government is charged with the responsibility of utilising equitably all languages. This is done in conformity with Section 6(4) which stipulates that all languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.

As far as education is concerned, the Constitution in Section 29(2) stipulates that:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable (Act 108 of 1996:14).

It can be deduced from the above stipulation that the Constitution provides that education be conducted through the language preferred by learners and their parents. However, by and large, the linguistic reality in schools is such that either English or Afrikaans is used as language of instruction.

Despite the fact that many people outside South Africa have hailed the new language policy of eleven official languages as progressive and far-reaching, many South Africans are concerned about the lack of promotion and development of some African languages. Generally, English has become the language of political discourse and fulfils all the official functions, through this is not spelt out formally (Nodoba, 2002) in Duncan *et al.*, 2002:333). Many critics argue that the policy is impractical and unimplementable. On this note Maartens (1998:16) observes that it is:

... becoming increasingly apparent that a considerable mismatch appears to exist between emerging language policy on the one hand, and actual language practice in the spheres of government and education on the other hand.

Maartens further states that there is a contradiction between the Constitution and the commitment to empower African languages. This contradiction makes speakers of the marginalised languages complain that their languages are marginalised even much more than in the past. Nodoba (2002) in Duncan *et al.* (2002:333) says:

Practically, the 'officialdom' of the nine indigenous languages at best amounts to arousing a sentimental linguistic awareness. At worst, it amounts to pulling the wool over the eyes of speakers of these languages, as both Afrikaans and English ... presently dominate in the country.

Heugh (1995:340) who maintains that the ANC has taken a Laissez-faire position on the question of languages also shares this opinion. In fact, the ANC lacks strategies to ensure that the policies as formulated are implemented. Due to a lack of strategies with which to implement the policy-decision, the dominant languages, namely, English and to a lesser extent, Afrikaans, are still empowered at the expense of African languages. In many African countries the same situation has been experienced and this has been noted by Schmied (1991:24).

... there is a huge discrepancy between official declaration and actual practice in language policy. Many government pay lip service to African languages by giving them the status of national languages, but they do not necessarily promote their active development or use.

To determine the extent to which the language provision mismatches the practical implementation, the language attitudes of key stakeholders towards Xitsonga was looked at in Chapter Five of this study.

## 3.5 THE LANGUAGE PHENOMENON

### 3.5.1 Introduction

The aspect of the language phenomenon has been reflected on by a number of seasoned and young researchers, in sociology (Goode 1984:64), anthropology, (Plog:19..318-335), linguistics or applied linguistics, (Fromkin & Rodman 1984:1-353), psychology, (Lavson1974:81-145) and language education, (Mawasha 1976:17-52). Mawasha (1976:17-52) has analysed this aspect in the context of the teaching of English as a second language to North Sotho-speaking children in the junior secondary school with special reference to oral communication. Babane (2003:18-53) continued with the analysis of the language phenomenon specifically in the context of secondary school learner language attitudes towards Xitsonga. The current study (2014) interrogates the language phenomenon further against the intermediate phase learners, teachers and SGB members' attitudes towards Xitsonga as a medium of learning and teaching. Language attitudes are not a challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century only, but could be traced back to the creation of the heavens and the earth almost 4,6 billion years ago, *htt:www.ted.com* ( Page 1 of 37), (See also Genesis 1:1-31). The researcher is aware of the school of thought that estimates the creation to almost 6000 years ago specifically among the literal Biblical interpretation theorists, but he takes the position that a scientific interpretation seems to be more credible than the literal one, *htt://www.talkorigins.org* (down loaded on 2014/11/21).

The pedagogical encounter presupposes communication between the educator and the educand. The role of language in such an encounter can never be overemphasised (Mawasha, 1976:17).

Education has to do with the whole person. By the whole person we mean more than the unity of the body, mind and soul: we mean man-in-the world. This being-in-the-world encompasses the vital element of communication which not only brings man into dialogue with his fellowmen, but also with his God, (1 John 1:3). An example of this instance is in prayer (Matthew 5:5-15). The educator-educand relationship also has recourse to such dialogue which includes the use of language.

The language phenomenon provides a medium through which the human child can give verbal interpretation to the reality that constitutes his environment. This reality is not initially accessible to him, but is acquired largely through the agency of language.

In a pedagogical encounter, the educator is able to move into the world of the educand mainly with the aid of language. The educator informs, names, questions, suggests, demands, gives orders, listens to the educand and in turn expects the educand to listen to him and to react accordingly. In this way, the educator gets to know the educand - his needs, shortcomings, desires, fears and so forth and so plan his guidance more relevantly (Mawasha 1976:17 & Van der Stoep 1984).

Formal education depends to a large extent on the child's ability to manipulate verbal symbols advantageously. In many educational systems, schools readiness is often coupled with reasonable language proficiency. Preference of mother tongue instruction in the elementary school is grounded principally on this consideration.

In the case of Black children, the acquisition and use of English as a second language (English FAL) is vital, since it is through the agency of this language that the child is to acquire the bulk of his higher formal education and to maintain dialogue with his South African fellow citizens in the first place and with the rest of the English-speaking world in the second place. For the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner, it is also used as medium of instruction for almost 99,9 % of the Intermediate Phase subjects specifically for the Republic of South African black community schools. The type of learner in the 21<sup>st</sup> century differs with the type of learner of the 20<sup>th</sup> century presented by Mawasha (1976) and Van der Stoep (1984) in terms of educational philosophy, approach, methodology, interaction, knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, outcomes, learning content, assessment, attitude, objectivity, perspectives, personal growth and team-work. It is no more an educand who is blindly led by an adult called "educator" then, but both teacher and learner assume new progressive roles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These new teacher roles are captured in *Norms and Standards for Educators* (1997), the envisaged learner and teacher for the 21<sup>st</sup> century are explicitly outlined in RNCS (2002), NCS (2003) & CAPS (2011).

### 3.5.2 The concept language

According to Sapir (1926:16-128), language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of various items of experience which seem to be relevant to the individual, but rather a self-contained, creative, symbolic organization which not only refers to experience acquired without its help, but actually defines experience by reason of its formal completeness and because of our conscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience. Language is man's most distinctive achievement it is purely human and non-instinctive and provides a mode of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced sounds.

Although language comprises arbitrary vocal sounds, yet it is a purposeful activity which must never be separated from the speaking individual and the reason why he acts the way he does.

Man is the only creature capable of abstracting by using symbols to stand for aspects of the existential environment in which he tries to survive. This in turn permits him to transcend space and time in that he is free to move, symbolically, backwards and forwards in time. This unique attribute of man is enshrined in his ability to use language. Recalling the past, recounting the present and speculating on the future are by their very nature brain-children of language. Fromkin and Rodman (1984:19).

Ong (1965:32) summarises the concept of language as follows:

Man communicates with his whole body, and yet the word is his primary medium. Communication, like knowledge itself, flowers in speech.

Words are also useful in affecting other human beings. The best understood of these effects is in the case in which the word causes someone to act as if he has direct experience of the word's referent. But human language behaviour has no direct instrumental effect on the inanimate world.

### 3.5.3 Some common theories about the origin of language

According to Jenkins (1970:5-162), when Christopher Columbus set sail “in the sunset” in 1492, his ship carried an under-officer who was assigned to the expedition because he spoke fluent Hebrew. The under-officer was to act as interpreter anywhere in the world because then it was believed that Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures, was the original tongue of all mankind.

This belief in Hebrew was re-iterated in 1680 by Cotton Mather who wrote in defence of the fact that in the beginning “the whole earth was of one speech” . In 1808 the philosopher Friedrich von Schlegel “persuaded himself that the ancestor of all languages was the Sanskrit of ancient India” . In the 1830’s the lexicographer Noah Webster gave it as his opinion that the prototype of language must have been “chaldee”, that is, Aramic - the language of the Holy Land in Christ’s day (See also Fromkin and Rodman 1986:19-29).

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century along came a new generation of linguists who were a little more disposed to the scientific approach than their predecessors with the idea of Divine Ur-language. At the same time along came Charles Darwin to dispute the whole concept of Creation as it was known and accepted. Some scholars were greatly impressed by this new Theory of Evolution so much so that they strained hard to apply it to the origin of language, just as much as they had previously strained to validate the Theory of Babel . One of these scholars was Friedrich Max Müller who earnestly suggested that the grunts and squeaks of man’s animal ancestors all over the earth had gradually evolved towards speech in the same way as their brains had evolved towards intelligence, and that the world’s languages would already have been infinitely varied even before the genus Homo had attained full Sapience . (see also Fromkin and Rodman 1986:26-28)

Although Müller’s theory was never really taken seriously, the Darwian theory opened up a new vista – about a million years of human evolution – in which scholars could manoeuvre, as against the Bible which provided them with only a few thousands years .

According to the Bible, language, in the form of The Word, preceded all else. In the Gospel according to Saint John we read as follows:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Genesis 1:1).

This creative Word through which everything was brought into being (Genesis 1:11) and through which order was made to replace chaos, was made flesh in the form of “the only Son from the Father (John 1:14). It is important to note here that the Word (also known as the Logos) is much more than mere speech: it is God in action, creating, revealing, and redeeming. Christ is the incarnation of this Word (John :14-28).

Although after Charles Darwin a host of anthropologists, archaeologists, and palaeontologists began to turn up evidence that a fair measure of human civilization had been achieved as long as 6 000 B.C. and that man must have been living in possible social intercourse - implying some degree of effective communication - a good three quarters of a million years before that, yet even today there is still no conclusive evidence regarding the origin on language. It is possible to trace satisfactorily the relatedness of languages, but the primary source of these languages is still shrouded in the mystery of the distant past. Indeed there are certain languages that are not easy to relate to other known proto languages and there is all reason to believe that others, long extinct, may have been equally difficult to classify (See also Babane 2003:18-23).

This research project has reflected on a broad historical perspective on the origin and development of language for two main reasons. The first one was to outline its origin and how this could easily impact negatively on attitudes in general and language attitudes in particular. The second reason was to highlight language as a special gift for mankind. About the latter reason Thomas (1947:89) avers:

The gift of language is the single human trait that makes us all genetically setting us apart from the rest of life. Language is, like nest-building or hive-making, the universal and biological specific activity of human beings.

To further outline the humble beginning of human language as well as possible need for linguists to delve deeper into language and attitudes research, the following positions are discussion or theories are discussed: The Bow-wow Theory, the Poo-Poo theory, the Ding-Dong theory, and the Yo-He-Ho theory.

### **3.5.3.1 The Bow-wow Theory**

According to this theory, man learned to talk by parroting the cries of animals. Considering the fact that man was originally a hunter, the notion has a certain degree of plausibility. Once a group of men had agreed, say, that a boar was an “oink” and that an auroch was a “moo”, they would eventually have aspired to naming other things.

### **3.5.3.2 The Poo-Poo Theory**

According to the Poo-Poo Theory, man’s first meaningful noises were involuntarily jolted out of him by sudden events or situations somewhat in the “manner of a duchess finding a worm in her salad”. It is a little hard to believe that a caveman ever uttered anything so finical as “poo-poo”, but considering the thorny environment in which he must have lived, it is quite possible that he could have made a sound like “ow!”.

### **3.5.3.3 The Ding-Dong Theory**

The Ding-Dong Theory is based on onomatopoeia just like the Bow-wow Theory except that the former surmises that man’s first words were echoes of natural sounds rather than those of animals. For instance, he might have cried “whack!” in merry mimicry of a club bouncing off a rival’s skull or muttered a fearful “bumble-boom” in imitation of the thunder.

### **3.5.3.4 The Yo-He-Ho Theory**

This theory maintains that the earliest effective speech was the result of man beginning to cooperate and coordinate with his fellowmen. That is, a group of men may have learned to lighten their labour by shouting some sort of cadence count like sailors' chants or soldiers' marching songs when they were hauling home a sabertooth's carcass or levering boulders down onto an invading war-party.

### **3.5.3.5 Gestures**

Paget (1957:3,131) and Wundt (1970:330,131) are two of those who support the theory that the human language originated in gestures. The premise is that the articulatory muscles can imitate motion and contours in the external world. Clark (1970:5,164) actually maintains that it "seems indisputable" that sign-language by gestures must have long preceded and accompanied the development of "any meaningful grunts and mumbles" . We still find gestures handy for beckoning, shooing, threatening and even as aids in explaining. In fact gestures today could be regarded as body-language and classified as paralinguistics.

The above theories indicate that it is not easy to trace language to its very origin; the reason is partly that there is no "primitive" language surviving that could be studied and used as a starting point. Attempts to use "primitive peoples" languages have always proved futile, since what is primitive for the researcher is not necessarily so for the speaker of that language.

Hardly surprising therefore that all the theories outlined above are taken with great reservations by modern linguists. Langacker (1973:8,22) describes them as "so untypical of the human language that it is hard to use why they should be postulated as the source of all language" . He, however, hastens to point out, and rightly so, that this area of linguistics will always be limited to speculation.

Langacker feels that a major inadequacy of most of the theories seeking to account for the origin of language is that they try to explain how primitive man was first induced to vocalize. The real problem according to him, is to explain how language

in all its present complexity and abstractness could ever develop from the very modest beginnings it must have had. He feels that without positing neural evolution as a major factor, there is no apparent way to explain how the intricate and highly complex grammatical and phonological system of human language could have arisen in accordance with reasonable psychological principles. It is Langacker's (1973:8,18) opinion that man must have acquired language as a result of evolutionary changes in the structure of the mind. It was not a matter of someone "getting the idea" and the others "catching on"; which is almost equivalent to the notion that "a group of primitive men sat down around a conference table and voted to invent language".

The present researcher's standpoint is that man was created by his Creator as a being with innate ability to manipulate verbal symbols, quite distinct from any other creature on earth. Man, like all other creatures, is a product of a biological fusion between a male and a female reproductive cell. Like all other creatures, he is born into the world and, like all other creatures, he must adapt to the environment. But unlike all other creatures he soon acquires language in such a way that he does not only produce parrot-wise what he hears around him, but rather internalises that system of language to such an extent that he is able to generate utterances some of which he has never heard before. This is a remarkable achievement that can only be interpreted and accounted for by the contention that the human child was born to speak.

But, we must hasten to add, language can only develop normally in a linguistic environment. Evidence of this is found in case of feral and isolated man. Brown (1957:3,186-193) discusses some of these cases.

In 1349 the Hessian wolf-boy was discovered, in 1661 the Lithuanian bear-boy was discovered and in 1724 Wild Peter of Hanover was discovered – in all these cases the individuals lacked language and moved on all fours because of isolation.

In 1850 Amala and Kamala were discovered among wolves in India. Both children had adopted the way of life of wolves and did not have any language. Interesting enough, when these children were exposed to language they showed all ability of coping with the problem of language acquisition, enough to convince anyone that given a linguistic environment a feral child can acquire language.

In recent years two cases have been reported: that of Anna (1937), who was discovered kept in isolation in a room in Illinois, and that of Isabella who was discovered at about the same time in Ohio. Both girls showed ability to acquire language as soon as they were exposed to it.

Lenneberg (1966:40-234) however, is rather sceptical about these languageless children. He points out that very little background information is available on them and therefore it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions about their linguistic position. He feels that the nature of the social and physical environment is never clear and the possibility of genetic deficiencies or congenital abnormalities can never be ruled out.

In the *Sunday Times Magazine* of April 11, 1976, David Barritt reported under the title "The boy who thinks he is a monkey" a touching story of a little Black boy who was found by a band of soldiers deep in the forests of Burundi in Central Africa living with a team of grey skende monkeys. Dr Viatcheslav Zarotchintsev, a Russian psychiatrist who examined the boy said: "His behaviour was entirely consistent with that of a monkey". Clinically the boy, named John, was classified as an idiot with an I.Q. of a one-year old child. He could hear normally but was unable to speak except to chatter and scream as do monkeys when excited or frightened.

Although Dr Zarotchintsev opined that the boy was not likely to live long enough to "communicate his experiences to us" yet the nurse who was responsible for his care said: "We have made a lot of progress in a short time. He now responds to his name and the phrase "come and eat!"

Like Lenneberg (1966), Zarotchintsev pointed out that it was not possible to establish whether or not there were congenital abnormalities in the child that contributed to his failure to acquire language.

The case of John is significant in that it corroborates other reported cases of feral children.

Barring all else regarding the origin of language, it can hardly be disputed that language acquisition is species uniform and species specific in that all human beings acquire language but no other animal does.

#### **3.5.4 Language and the human form**

Picard (1963:35, 116-120) put forward a beautiful case to illustrate that man was created to be a talking being. Man's entire physical make-up and the manner in which he relates to his environment speak of a being made to communicate primarily by means of language.

Picard points out that unlike the animal face, the human face is not a mere continuation of the rest of the body; it has not come from below, finally reaching its destination on top of the body, but rather it has been, as it were, set down from above. "The body comes to full stop here; there can only be a completely new beginning".

Just as a human face comes as a sudden surprise on top of the body, so too does language; it comes "unexpectedly, surprisingly - the surprise only lasts for a moment, for one immediately realises that the human face is the only thing possible on top of the body, and language is the only thing possible that can come out of the human face". The reaction of surprise is followed hard upon by the realisation that this is only a natural reaction of man to a phenomenon brought about by the direct act of the Creator.

Picard goes on to point out that man is upright - the suddenness and decisiveness of the act by which man was made to stand erect is present in the solitary vertical line of the human form. The movement by which this vertical was created is in solitariness and seclusion of the upright figure.

Straus (1966:9, 137-165) also discusses the significance of man's upright posture. For Straus, it is through the upright posture that man experiences himself in relation to the world. "The upright posture pre-establishes a definite attitude towards the world; it is a specific mode of being-in-the world". But to achieve the vital upright posture man "must oppose the forces of gravity" and win. The successful countering of the forces of gravity is a great achievement in the growth and development of man - one need only see a child who stands erect for the first time; the excitement of both the child and parents signifies the importance of the upright posture for man. From the attainment of the upright posture follows language as a logical sequence of human growth and development.

The decisiveness with which language breaks through silence, says Picard, and the decisiveness of the vertical in the human form correspond to one another. "Indeed, man keeps the vertical by means of language". Picard (1963) sees a direct link between the vertical statures of man and the idea of God - a reaching out towards heaven above where the Word resides.

The Word of Truth drawn man upward, to the Logos: the uprightness of the body is confirmed by language.

It is important to note at this stage that it is through language that man reaches out to and seeks to communicate with his God through prayer; with his face turned up and his hands raised man seeks to bring himself closer to his Creator. In this connection Picard contends that the decisiveness of the human language, its uniqueness as a mode of self-expression and communication, matches the uniqueness of form of the human face. He concludes that the "circumscribed act of decision and the circumscribed form of the face belong to one another".

Picard's discussion of the human form and language would be incomplete without reference to silence. He observes that what makes the human form dignified when the creature is silent is that his silence does not mean the absence of language but rather a pause before language occurs - silence is a harbinger of language, a dawn before sunrise. "The silence reaches out beyond man himself and gives him dignity".

One need only observe the over-powering dignity of a judge's brief silence before pronouncing judgement to appreciate Picard's thesis on this aspect of the talking man being silent.

### **3.5.5 Animal language**

The problem of studying animal language is that it is not always easy to tell for certain whether the behaviour has been learned or is instinctive. What we do know, however, is that animal communication is not in any way as complex as human language behaviour. For example, a six-year old child can watch a playmate carry out an intricate series of actions at one point and later he can give a running account of it. No other animal known can do this. It is for this reason that Langacker (1973:22) feels that "we learn nothing conclusive about the origin of language by examining the various ways in which animals communicate".

Brown (1973:157-186) discusses the animal language of the bee, the jackdaw, and the chimpanzee. The following is a summary of his discussion:

#### **3.5.5.1 The bee**

Since about 1920 Karl von Frisch has conducted experiments which sought to explain the fact that when one bee has found a source of food and returned to the hive, numerous other bees shortly find their way to the same food source. It seemed to him that the finder bees need to "tell" the secondary bees where they have been and what they have found (Clark 1994:250).

Von Frisch actually designed a glass hive through which he was able to study the manner in which the information was communicated. He observed that the finder bee performed some dance in which it was joined by the secondary bees before flying out directly to the food source. It struck him as if the secondary bees decoded the finder's message and used the resultant information to guide their flight. The dance of the finder seemed to signal both the direction and distance of the find.

Bolinger (1968:2), however, describes this mode of communication as "slight and highly stereotyped".

### **3.5.5.2 The jackdaw**

Lorenzo Bolinger (1968), a naturalist expert in mimicking sounds made by different birds, made a study of a jackdaw he called Jock. His interest in Jock caused him to rear a whole colony of jackdaws so that he could study their social life.

Lorenzo discovered a mode of courtship which he called "language of the eyes" whereby the male stares lovingly directly at the female. Once "married" the female jackdaw "greet" her "husband" with gestures of "symbolic inferiorism". She squats before him, quivering her wings and tail. The male tenderly feeds her and the two "speak" in low whispers. This loving speech consists of notes heard from infant jackdaws begging for food, but are reserved in the adult for tender moments.

Lorenzo distinguished two types of flight calls. What he called the *kia*, i.e. a call to fly abroad and the *kiaw*, i.e. a call for homeward-bound birds.

The jackdaw's "speech" of anger is a rattle sound which precedes an attack. Lorenzo believed that if you provoke the rattle sound and the subsequent attack at least three times, you lose the friendship of the bird. What is more, the offended jackdaw is able to "tell" others that this is an enemy and they will seem to understand the message.

### 3.5.5.3 The chimpanzee

Yerkes, according to Fromkin and Rodman (1986:538) made a study of the orang utan, chimpanzee, gorilla and gibbon. He discovered that the vocal mechanism of the chimpanzee was adequate for the production of a large variety of sounds. "It makes possible definite articulations similar to those of the human speech". In fact, the chimpanzee has been described as a vigorous vocalizer - it seems always to have something to "say".

Köhler felt that the chimp lacked speech, yet he too found that it has many "phonetic elements". Its lack of speech, according to Köhler, could be the absence of peripheral phonation. Rothman and Teuber were able to establish that the chimp was particularly able to produce the vowels [C] and [u].

The chimps' utterances seem to have "semantic value". Köhler, for example, reported that his chimps "grumbled", "called one another" and "greeted him in the morning". Although Köhler was satisfied that chimps possessed a whole gamut of phonetics, yet all these were purely subjective and could only express emotions but could not designate or describe objects, Fromkin and Rodman (1986:353-359).

The present writer's opinion is that animal language is largely instinctive while true human language is an acquired response which is conscious and purposeful. Animals do not seem to be able to combine their "linguistic" response in accordance with any rules of syntax, while the human language is a highly structured system governed by certain set syntactical and phonological rules.

Human language has a clearly defined lexicon which is a system of names covering the conceptual repertoire of community. New names are created according to principles embodied in the existent names, and new names are created whenever a new grouping-principle is utilised by the community. In English, for example, the word "hippie" could be created and incorporated in the existing lexicon, but chances of a word like "gxutli" being created and incorporated in the English lexicon are so remote that they may be considered non-existent. The lexicon are so remote that

they may be considered non-existent. The reason for this is that even in the creation of a lexicon, there are certain linguistic constraints that determine which sounds or sound combinations would belong to a particular language.

Higher primates which have been credited with a system of communication that was approximated to human language lack the ability to generate an infinite number of utterances from some given lexicon. We cannot determine beyond all doubt that the chimp has internalised a lexicon from which it can generate an infinite number of utterances of varying degree of grammatical complexity.

In all fairness to the higher primates, however, we need to mention in here that some of them are known to have learned to “communicate” with humans via visual stimuli. They are known to have been trained to string together a number of separate symbols to convey messages decoded into notions such as: “You me go out hurry” or “sorry please good out”.

### **3.5.6 First language acquisition in man**

#### **3.5.6.1 Introduction**

Our discussion from 2.8 through 2.8.5.3 above illustrates that the mystery of language acquisition and language use has interested man since ancient times and continues to do so even today.

In this subsection a more detailed exposition of first-language acquisition is given.

#### **3.5.6.2 The first noises**

The first noise - a cry - a baby makes seems to be its response to the shock of birth when it draws its first breath of air. Subsequent noises are more differentiated and may be classified into categories of comfort and discomfort noises. These noises are somehow meaningful to the mother, Lyons (1981:154).

Lyons (1981) points out that these first noises - crying and screaming - may well be classified as “expressions”, but they are not language in the true sense of the word in that they persist even after language has been completely acquired. For the same reason gurgling sounds are not precursors of language in that they often persist as “sounds of pleasure” into later stages of child-language development.

### **3.5.6.3 Babbling**

Lyons (1981:254) regards babbling as the first and true attempt at language use (because this phase disappears as soon as true language has been acquired). In fact she reports from observations made on her son that she was able to detect a real effort at articulating a word during babbling.

Wilson (1973:49,53) too maintains that babbling, in addition to its being motivated by sheer pleasure of activity, provides a basis for word-articulation. He describes babbling as “syllabic and repetitive” and proceeds to hold that during this phase, adults are often able to identify certain sounds that belong to adult language.

The child’s first sounds are those that seem to be easiest to produce, hence the predominance of da-da-da or ma-ma-ma. Usually adults capitalise on these sounds, place them in their language context and ascribe a semantic value to them thereby reinforcing the child’s achievement.

For example, ma-ma-ma is modified into mama (mother) and da-da-da is modified into dada or dad (father).

Since children irrespective of colour or creed tend to produce the same array of initial sounds during babbling, the words “placed” by parents tend to be the same. In fact, Lewis (1936) speaks of “six aotypical nursery words”; these are mama, nana, papa, baba, tata, dada. From these aotypical nursery words we get, for example, the English “mama”, the French “maman”, the German “mama”, the Italian “mamma”, the Swahili “mama”, the Chinese “mah” . We also have the Xitsonga “mhani” and the Afrikaans “ma”.

Interesting enough, however, these words need not have the same semantic value for all the languages in which they occur. For example, in one of the languages spoken in Southern Russia, “mama” means “father” and “dada” means “mother”. This is the direct opposite of the Xitsonga language of South Africa or of Afrikaans.

It might be of interest to note at this stage that some interesting studies have been made regarding the response of babies to adult language and other sounds in the environment in which they are born, for example, some maintained that children begin to respond to adult speech at the age of two months; others indicated that, at the end of three months; whereas some maintained that, within the first four months. Fromkin and Rodman (1988:372-373). Lenneberg (1966) on the other hand maintained that children in their first months, i.e., during the babbling stage, respond not so much to the quality of the sound they hear, but rather to its intensity. The more intense the noise, the more likely it is to cause the child to cry.

Hoyer (25, 44) provides the following observations made on his son:

- First week : The child seemed to fix his eyes on the speaker.
- Third week : The cry of the child ceased in response to an adult voice.
- Fourth week : The child showed pleasure in response to a lullaby when this was accompanied by a caress.
- Sixth week : The child smiled to a heard voice.
- Seventh week: The child turned at the sound of a voice, sometimes to the direction from which the voice came.

Of course, the major shortcoming of studies made during this period of child-language development is that almost without exception such studies are undertaken by the parents of the children and as such, are not always free of a certain measure of subjectivity.

This factor is aggravated by the fact that a babbling infant makes good company to its parents and as such exaggerated value may be ascribed to the sounds produced or the actions made.

#### 3.5.6.4 Early language

As far back as 397 A.D. St Augustine had already put forward the contention that ability to speak a language is an innate quality. St Augustine, like the present writer, regarded this quality to be a gift of God to man. St Augustine wrote as follows in his Confessions, Book 1 (28, 690):

For I was no longer a speechless infant but a speaking boy. This I remember and have since observed how I learned to speak. It was not that my elders taught me words ... in any set method, but I, longing by cries and broken accents... did **myself** by the understanding which Thou, my God gavest me, practice the sounds of my memory.

St Augustine, however, rightly conceded that the final selection of a mother-tongue depends on the language to which the infant is exposed. He also underlines the value of paralinguistic factors in the acquisition of the first language (28, 690).

In 1926 Stern (1926:25-45) put forward his intellectualistic viewpoint regarding early language in children. He pointed out that as soon as the child achieves the two powers of “upright position and speech” he attains a distinguishing characteristic that differentiates man from beasts. Stern points out that the upright position brings about a certain concluding stage of the sense-mastery of surrounding space; speech opens to the child the higher world of the mind.

Speech is not only an instrument of enormous development in the child’s power of perception, emotion and will, but also provides “the power of all real thought; generalization, comparison and comprehension”.

It was precisely as a result of this intellectualistic starting-point in early child-language acquisition that Stern regarded the beginning of speech as “that moment in which the child, for the first time, utters a sound with full consciousness of its meaning and for purposeful communication”.

Stern contended that with language acquisition comes “the ability to mean something when uttering sounds, to refer to something objective”. This viewpoint was based on his concept of “intentionality” by which he understood “a directedness towards a certain content or meaning” in language.

Stern’s intellectualistic conception of language acquisition and development led him to maintain that at the age of two, the child already has the ability to realise that each object has its permanent symbol, a sound pattern that identifies it - that each thing has a name. The child is not only aware of this symbol, but also realises that the understanding of the relation between sign and meaning that dawns on the child at this state of development is something different in principle from the simple use of sound image, object images, and their association. The requirement that each object of whatever kind has its name may be considered a true generalisation which the child makes - possibly his first.

Vygotsky (1970:25-45) disagrees with Stern’s theory on the grounds that Stern’s intellectualistic conception of speech development in the child is based on idealistic foundation and it is largely invalid from a strictly scientific point of view. For example, Vygotsky points out that in the studies made over the years there is no evidence to support Stern’s contention that at the age of one-and-a-half or two years, a child is already able to realise that each object had its permanent symbol, a sound pattern that identifies it. It is highly questionable whether at this state a child could possibly be aware of symbols and the need of them. This is a highly complex intellectual operation that clearly stands beyond the ken of a two-year old child.

Vygotsky regarded the development of early child-language as an “extremely complex process which has its early beginning and transitional forms at the more primitive developmental levels, and, again its cultural history with its own series of phases, its own quantitative, qualitative and functional growth; its own dynamics and laws”, hardly a process that could be discovered once and for all as Stern seemed to imply.

In the same strain Vygotsky (1970:29,45) finds Stern's "intentional tendency" in language development which springs spontaneously to be quite unacceptable because by subscribing to this viewpoint Stern is "assigning to the intellect an almost metaphysical position of primacy as the origin, the unanalyzable first cause of meaningful speech".

Vygotsky (1970) makes a point that needs special underlining when he points out that the one-word sentence of a child should not be studied in isolation but rather in conjunction with the accompanying paralinguistic features of motion of limbs in concert with the utterance. Thus when a child says "mama" for "mama put me in the high-chair", there is always a reaching-out towards the chair, trying to hold on to it, etc. For this reason Vygotsky (1970) concludes:

Here the 'affective-conative' directedness towards the object is as yet inseparable from the 'intentional tendency' of speech" (30, 45).

The two are indeed still a homogeneous whole and the only correct translation of "mama" or any other early words of child-language utterance is the pointing gesture. This pointing gesture plays a mediatory role in establishing the meaning of the first words. Vygotsky (1970:45) then concludes: "The inescapable conclusion would be that pointing is, in fact, a precursor of the 'intentional tendency'".

Vygotsky (1970:33-51), on the basis of his genetic approach, maintained that in the child's development "progress in thought and progress in speech are not parallel. Their growth curves cross and recross". The roots and the developmental course of the intellect differ from those of speech. "Initially thought is non-verbal and speech non-intellectual". This separation, however, does not mean that speech development and thought do not meet altogether, they do. "Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the socio-cultural experience of the child".

Piaget's (1959:11-19,45) theory of the development of language presupposes the "..... between two forms of thought", namely, directed though and undirected thought. Direct thought is conscious, i.e., it pursues aims that are in the mind of the

thinker. This form of thought is intelligent in that it is adapted to reality and strives to influence it. It is susceptible to truth and error and it can be communicated through language. Undirected thought (also called Autistic thought), on the other hand, is subconscious, i.e. the goals it pursues and the problems it sets for itself are not present in consciousness. Undirected thought is not adaptable to external reality, but creates for itself a reality of imagination or dreams. It tends to gratify wishes rather than establish truths; it is strictly individualistic and thus incommunicable by means of language.

Direct thought by virtue of its communicability through the medium of language is essentially social and is influenced by laws of experience and logic in its development. Undirected thought, on the other hand, owing to its incommunicability, is individualistic and obeys a set of special laws of its own.

Piaget (1959) goes on to point out that between these two modes of thought there are varieties in regard to their degree of communicability. These intermediate varieties must obey a special logic of Autistic thought and the logic of intelligence, i.e., direct thought. The name ego-centric thought is given to the principle underlying these intermediate forms. Thus, ego-centric thought stands midway between autism and socialising thought.

In its development the language of the child is divided into two large categories of thought viz. ego-centric thought and socialising thought. Ego-centric thought is individualistic while socialising thought is directed towards others with a view to influence.

Lewis' (1963:21, 25) contention is that the early cries of a child are "expressive" of the child's condition; when the child is silent he may be said to be in a state of indifference. Lewis therefore concludes that the child's cry of discomfort is an innately-determined expression of that state.

Lewis (1963:35) actually isolated certain sounds in early child-language development and associated them with certain states of the child. For example, the nasals [m] and [n] are expressive of hunger - they are audible manifestations of

mouth movements which are bound up with that state. Lewis also felt that since the expression of hunger was the most important function of the child's utterance during the earlier months, the nasals [m] and [n] "become one of the chief means by which the child enters into linguistic communication with those about him".

Lenneberg (1963:40, 219), a much quoted linguist on child-language development, starts off by pointing out that just as much as there is no special training for standing or gait in child development, so also there is no systematic teaching of language. He feels that the important difference between pre-language and post-language development originated in the growing individual and not in the external world or in the availability of stimuli. What causes language to develop are maturational processes within the individual.

There is a regularity of speech - "a series of more or less well-circumscribed events that take place between the second and the third year of life. Certain speech milestones are reached in a fixed sequence and at a relatively constant chronological age".

Lenneberg (1963:40,227), however, agreed that a child cannot acquire language unless he is exposed to it. "Apart from this trivial point, the role of the environment is not immediately clear".

Lenneberg (1963:40,228) wants to stress that although certain studies have proved that there are differences in speech habits in children from upper, middle and lower classes, this does not in any way contradict the thesis that speech acquisition is innate because such studies are cross-sectional studies in which the nature and quality of speech is compared with a norm, but the age of the onset of certain speech phenomena is not determined in these studies. In fact, Morley (1957) - quoted by Lenneberg (1963:40, 228) - found that language habits that emerged at a common time soon showed impoverishment in the underprivileged children. This observation indicates that although the environment does influence speech habits, yet the onset of speech is relatively unaffected by the environment.

Lanneberg (1963:240) develops his argument further by pointing out that even children born of deaf-mute, parents generally go through the same stages of child-language development as children of normal parents.

Lenneberg (1963:239-240) contends that between the ages of two and three years, language emerges by an interaction of maturation and self-programmed learning. Between the ages of three and the early teens the possibility of primary language acquisition remains good; the individual appears to be most sensitive to stimuli and tends to preserve his innate flexibility for the "organisation of brain function" to carry out the complete integration of sub-processes necessary for the smooth elaboration of speech and language.

McNiell's (1971:16, 40) starting point is to argue that whereas traditionally child-language was often regarded as an impoverished version of adult language, today the tendency is to "look upon the child as a fluent speaker of an exotic language". This means that a psycholinguist who is studying early child-language development is in the same position as a field linguist studying some other language - neither linguists may impose the grammar of their "well-formed" L1's on the corpus.

McNiell (1971:40) supports the thesis of innate language universals in language acquisition. He maintains that early speech of children comprises largely two-word utterances and shows a non-random combination of words. The utterances follow a definite pattern which reveals a grammar that is constant. Indeed there is a hierarchy of progressive differentiation of grammatical categories that represents linguistic universals that are part of the child's innate endowment. The role of a universal hierarchy to categories would be to direct the child's discovery of the classes of English (or any other language). It is as if he were equipped with a set of "templates" against which he can compare the speech he happens to hear from his parents. Presumably the child classifies the random specimens of adult speech he encounters according to universal categories that the speech exemplifies. Since these distinctions are at the top of a hierarchy that has the grammatical classes of English (or any other language) at its bottom, the child is prepared to discover the appropriate set of distinctions. In other words, (McNiell 1971:35-36) is arguing a

case that the child has knowledge of the set of distinctions that define the classes of the language he has acquired, and his problem is to discover the ones that are relevant.

Between the ages of 1<sup>1/2</sup> and 2 years the child uses what is called “telegraphic language”, so called because of its resemblance to the adult language used in telegraphic transmissions. In most cases articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs are omitted. For example:

- Hear tractor (article omitted)
- Put truck window (article and preposition omitted).

McNiell (1971:18-19) hastens to point out that when we say that a child uses “telegraphic language” in the early stages of his language development, we do not mean that the child intentionally abbreviates well-formed adult utterances, but rather that the child possesses a simple grammar the output of which is telegraphic language. This type of language disappears as the child’s grammar becomes more complex.

McNiell (1971:40, 65) makes an important observation about early child-language development when he observes that at this state, the child is unable to effect any transformation. For example, a child generates the following negative sentences:

- No wipe finger
- No fit
- No singing song, and so forth;

clearly indicating his inability to effect the necessary transformation to derive the adult version of these utterances.

Adult speech is essentially directional in that it provides the child with some basis for choosing among options offered by the linguistic universals of his L1.

What McNiell (1971:4, 8) refers to as telegraphic language above, was further investigated by Brown (1970), Bellugi and Colin Fraser (1969) who arrived at the

conclusion that children tend to effect a reduction in their imitation of adult speech, i.e., even if the adult can provide a well-formed utterance, the child will produce his own version in trying to imitate. The researchers give the following examples:

**Model utterance**

Wait a minute

Daddy's brief-case

Fraser will be happy

It's not the same dog as Pepper

**Child imitation**

wait a minute

\* Daddy brief-case

\* Fraser happy

\* Dog Pepper

Further child-mother examples of construction of short sentences as indication of the former's omission of certain words:

**Child**

\*Baby high-chair

\* Eve lunch

\* Throw Daddy

**Mother**

Baby is in the high-chair

Eve is having lunch

Throw it to Daddy (4, 86)

It is significant to note that whatever expansions the mother effects on the child's reduced utterances, she does not change the sequencing to merely adds more morphemes. This is in line with McNiell's (1971) major basis of innate quality of language in children.

..... (39, 41) supports both Lenneberg (1969) and McNiell (1971) by pointing out that every human child has an inborn repertoire of "noises expressing the spectrum of need states". The child is born with an innate passive ... (as against active grammar) that enables him to understand the grammatical pattern of the adult speaker even before he is able to populate such grammar himself.

..... noting that the child's grammar deviates from that of the adult, ..... goes on to point that early childhood speech also has a phonological system of its own which does not always tally with that of the adult speaker. Thus, for example, the presence of certain distinctive features in the phonological repertoire of the child

does not always imply that the child will be able to use these features restrictively. In the following examples, the child was asked to rate the adult speaker:

<b>Adult</b>	<b>Child's pronunciation</b>
<b>Bad</b>	<b>bat</b>
<b>Cut</b>	<b>dat</b>
<b>Cup</b>	<b>dap</b>
<b>Lamp</b>	<b>bap (39, 64)</b>

Therefore, Slobin (1971:39, 65) quotes a report by Muller (1963) in which the latter indicates that the child does not necessarily have to be able to perceive the element of contrast involved. The following dialogue provides an example of this:

Recently a three year-old child told me her name was Litha. I answered 'Litha'. 'No, Litha! Oh, Lisa'. 'Yes, Litha'.

Clearly here the child could make an aural distinction between the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless interdental /θ/ even though she herself could not as yet make an oral distinction between them.

On the basis of the above dialogue Slobin (1971) puts forward a further thesis that imitation and reinforcement are not necessarily critical in the acquisition of language. In support of this thesis he refers to studies made by Lenneberg (1969) on a speechless child who, notwithstanding his inability to produce normal articulated speech, was however, perfectly able to understand all major complexities of the English phonology and syntax. The child could understand stories told and could answer questions by pointing to pictures or by nodding his head; he could also carry-out complicated instructions given orally. Slobin (1971:39, 65-66) goes on to state that "studies of such children (anarthric children) have demonstrated that their perception of phonological contrasts is normal. Yet these children have never imitated speech and have never been reinforced for saying anything".

Weir (1968:40,153) makes two interesting observations regarding child-language development: First that in the utterances of little children there seem to be sentence-like chunks regardless of the intelligibility of the utterance to the adult speaker. This led her to the second observation, namely, that pitch and intonation patterns may be signals perceived and that these are learned early in speech development, and perhaps occur independently of the segmental phonemes. In connection with the latter observation she writes elsewhere:

If a stimulus word or sentence with a rising intonation is given to the child for imitation, he will repeat it with just that. If a falling contour is used, the child will reproduce that just as easily.

Moskowitz (1973:10, 93-94) ascribes a semantic role to intonation in early child-language. He contends that it is not so much the phoneme per se that bears the semantic value for the child, but rather intonation (and rhythm). In other words, it is the manner in which a word is said that carries the semantic load.

To understand the point made by Maskowitz, one needs only to consider the various meanings that might be conveyed by ascribing various intonations to the word "no". Note the following examples:

- ÑÕ : Simple negative
- ÑÓ : surprise that the reply is a negative
- Ñ...ÑÕ : negative with some reservation
- ÑÕ (with a love laugh) : meant to be interpreted as anything but a negative.

Every day communication abounds with instances such as the ones illustrated above.

### **3.5.7 Functions of language**

#### **3.5.7.1 Introduction**

According to Sarafino and Armstrong (1980:264) the adult conveys different modes of thought by means of language. At times he uses language merely to assert, to state an objective fact, to convey information in which case words used are closely bound up with cognition. For example, "The weather is changing for the worse", or "Bodies fall to the ground". Language can also be used to express commands or desires, criticism or threats, in other words to arouse feelings and provoke action. For example: "Let's go", or "How horrible!".

Although language is used primarily to communicate thoughts to other people, yet instances are known of people who talk to themselves. We may say here that the solitary talker invokes imaginary listeners in the same way as a child can invoke imaginary play-fellows. In other words, the individual is repeating in relation to himself a form of behaviour which he originally adopted only in relation to others. In talking to himself the individual experiences sufficient pleasure and excitement to divert him from the desire to communicate his thoughts to other people.

We elect to discuss the functions of language under the following subheadings: ego-centric speech, socialised speech, language as a means of expression, language and religion, language and thought, language and behaviour, language and emotions, language and cognitive development.

#### **3.5.7.2 Ego-centric speech**

Piaget (1959:11-28) sub-divides this type of speech into three categories viz. repetition, monologue and duel or collective monologue.

### **3.5.7.3 Repetition**

Steinberg (1982:159) informs that in the first years of his life a child loves to repeat the words he hears and to imitate syllables and sounds, even those of which he hardly understands the meaning.

It is not very easy to define the function of this imitation in a single formula, but from the viewpoint of behaviour. Mawasha (1976:40) says that Claparède is of the opinion that imitation is an ideomotor adaptation by means of which the child reproduces and then simulates the movements and ideas of those around him. But from the viewpoint of personality and from the social point of view, it would seem to be a confusion between the I and the not -I, between the activity of one's own body and that of other people's bodies.

It is interesting to note that often the child is not fully conscious that he is imitating, he plays the game as if it were his own creation. That is why most children when asked to repeat something they act as though they themselves have created such a thing: this makes the imitative action of the child ego-centric in the main.

### **3.5.7.4 Monologue**

Fromkin and Rodman (1988:4) maintain that in a monologue the child talks to himself as if he were thinking aloud. He does not address anyone in particular. To the child words are much nearer to action and movement than they are to the adult. The child seems impelled, even when he is alone, to speak as he acts, to accompany his movements with words. But what is even more fascinating about the function of language in childhood is that often the child is able to use words to bring about what action of itself is powerless to do.

The fact that the child is addressing himself makes this type of speech function only a stimulus to an action and by no means of communication.

### **3.5.7.5 Duel or collective monologue**

This form of talk is the most social of the ego-centric varieties of child language, since to the pleasure of talking it adds that of soliloquising before others and of interesting or thinking to interest them in one's own actions and one's thoughts. But the child in this case is not really talking to anyone; he is talking aloud to himself in front of others. He does not succeed in making his audience listen.

This way of behaving manifests itself in certain adults who often think aloud as though they were talking to themselves, but are conscious of their audience. Piaget refers to this as a manifestation of "a puerile disposition" which the adult has not succeeded in outgrowing.

Stones (1967:42,172) points out that later in the development of the child, ego-centric speech disappears and is replaced by inner-speech and eventually by thought. Stones (ibid, that is same year and same pages) continues:

As speech becomes internalised its functions as a director of activity are internalised, so that the process of regulation started by the mother's speech and continued by the child's ego-centric speech, is replaced by control through the internal flow of meanings and concepts. These are the mechanisms of self-regulation characteristic of man.

### **3.5.7.6 Socialised speech**

Piaget (1959) divides this type of speech into the following categories: adapted information, criticism and derision, commands, requests and threats, questions and answers.

### **3.5.7.7 Adapted information**

The most important characteristic of adapted information is that it is successful. The child actually tries to make his hearers listen and even contrives to influence them to tell them something.

In this case the child speaks from the point of view of his audience. The function of language is no longer merely to excite the speaker to ....., but actually to communicate his thoughts to others.

Adapted information forms the basis of a dialogue.

The major distinction between the collective monologue and the adapted information is that in the former, though there is an audience there .... no collaboration between the speaker and the audience, while in the latter case there is definite collaboration between the two parties – there is a dialogue evoked.

### **3.5.7.8 Criticism and Derision**

A category of speech functions is the most important type of marginalised language for children. Criticisms and derisions have the same character as adapted speech in the remarks made are specified in relation to a given audience. This include remarks made about the work of behaviour of others.

Criticisms and derisions do not function so much in conveying thought as much as they do in satisfying non-intellectual instincts such as ....nacity, pride, emulation etc.

It is interesting to notice that when children use this type of speech there is always more subjectivity than objectivity even where they try to give an objective criticism or judgement. They are rarely (if ever) elements of fact. They contain elements of derision and of the more to assert personal superiority,( Mawasha 1976: 43).

### **3.5.7.9 Commands, requests and threats**

In most cases the child does not communicate with his fellow-beings in order to share thoughts and reflexes; he does so in order to play. The result is that the part played by intellectual interchange is used to a bare minimum. The rest of the language will only assist .... and will consist of commands, requests and threat, (Mawasha 1976:43).

### **3.5.8 Questions and answers**

Mawasha (1976: 43) observes that in speaking, most of the questions asked by children among themselves call for answers and are therefore classed as socialised speech.

Sometimes, however, a child may ask a question to which he does not want a reply; often he supplies the answer himself/herself.

#### **3.5.8.1 Language as a means of expression**

Mawasha (1976:44) makes an interesting observation that language can also be used to express emotions and inner feelings – hate, love, desire, distress, fear. Happiness and sadness, in which case it is used to serve an affection. Often such expressions are used to influence the activities of others - sparking of love, arousing desire, causing distress, inspiring fear, introducing happiness, and so forth. It is for this reason that Socio-Linguists speak of the language of love, fear, happiness, distress and so forth.

All these forms are characterised by various registers. The words used to spark off or reinforce love are not the same as those used to inspire fear; the words used in happy moments are not the same as those used in moments of distress. In many speech communities the world over, it is regarded as bad taste to joke and laugh at a funeral because the occasion calls for words of comfort and reassurance.

Language can also be used to express an opinion, state a fact or to acquire information, in which case the language is used to fulfil a cognitive function. In fact Humphrey (1963:14,264) regards thought and language as inseparable. He asserts that “certain objective experiments offer a parallel which makes it legitimate to speak of language as expressing thought”.

The most important distinction between the language of emotion and the language of cognition is that the former appeals to the interlocutor's "feelings", i.e., it is emotive; while the latter appeals to the interlocutor's intellect, i.e. objective evaluation of what is conveyed.

### **3.5.8.2 Language and religion**

Mawasha (1976:43-44) observes that as a means of imparting knowledge and as a medium of communication bears particular significance for the Christian educator-teacher. This significance becomes even more apparent when it is borne in mind that the essence of education is closely linked with, among other things, the cultural-historical development of the community of which both the child and the educator form a part; because if we hope to raise a balanced community, guided by true Christianity morality and commitment to God as Creator, then what we communicate to the educand/learner must have a definite Christian orientation.

In the very first book of the Holy Bible, Genesis, Chapter 1:11, creation is ascribed to God's **uttered word**. Philo actually sees this Word as "the embodiment of the divine powers which acted upon the universe; the intermediary between God and man; the interpreter of God's will to man".

Thus, the Christian educator uses his word (language) to impart knowledge about the Word and so leads the child towards the highest ideal of Christian morality, (Mawasha 1976:45).

The creative element of language first used as the Word by God and today by the educator can best be understood when contrasted with silence. Before the Word was pronounced creation could not commence; similarly before the educator speaks true pedagogical guidance cannot be fully realised ( Mawasha (1976:45).

### **3.5.9 Language and thought**

#### **3.5.9.1 Language and thinking**

Vygotsky (1934:125-153) observes that when the child is initiated into a language spoken by those around him, he is at the same time initiated into their mode of thought. When the child's ability to think and to understand grows, a transformation in his baby-language occurs as a result of his striving to acquire and master his mother-tongue. His attempts to master the mother-tongue are constantly determined by the familiar forms of his own baby-language. In other words, the child has to assimilate what is known to what has become habitual; he adapts what he has been accustomed to say to what he hears.

The growth of the child's vocabulary of his first language is much more than a mere acquisition of words; it is continual process of modification of the patterns of his linguistic behaviour. These patterns are related to the child's experiences.

It is clear therefore that there is a close relationship between the growth and development of language and the growth and development of thought or ability to think. As Vygotsky (1934:45-119) points out, "it would be wrong to regard thought and speech as two unrelated processes".

As the child encounters new situations he contracts or expands the meanings of words. There is a constant process of progressive adaptation in which the meanings of any one speech-form tend to expand and contract under the influence of intercourse with others. Vygotsky (1934:45,121), like Lewis (1957), also points out that "word-meaning develop".

We recognise some rudiments of conceptual thinking in children when they begin to use certain words in their baby-language to designate specific or similar objects. The fact that the child can make a specific sound when he sees a dog (i.e. wow-wow) is an indication that the child has some recognitional capacity. Even when a child names an object in baby-language, a certain measure of thinking is implied

because what he says is actually a vocalisation of his total response to a particular situation.

As the child's mastery over language improves, he gets to know for certain that certain words used by those around him may be names of things. "This is perhaps the most powerful factor in his cognitive development, helping him towards the modes of abstract thinking current in the society in which he lives".

Kwant succinctly summarises the close relationship between the development of language and the development of thought when he says that the development of thought is closely linked with the development of speech; every new development in thought finds expression in the language. Accordingly, whoever seeks to control the thoughts of others must of necessity control their speech or language, Mawasha (1976:45-46).

Even in inner-speech we make use of language. Inner-reflection finds expression in words. Even sign language such as the one used in mathematics is also regarded as language because it is resorted to supplement the usual day-to-day language even though day-to-day language can be used to explain certain mathematical concepts.

### **3.5.9.2 Language and concept formation**

Although experiments have proved that it is possible for animals such as monkeys to solve tasks involving the use of the concept of oddity; and that deaf-mute children are able to form concepts of shape, size and colour without the aid of language, yet it is generally conceded that a child without language of any kind will have much more difficulty in forming concepts than normal children, Mawasha (1976:46).

Mawasha (1976:46-47) refers to Gagné as saying that the very first step in learning a concept is probably for the child to learn the word which symbolises it through "an instrumental conditional reflex", so that the child can repeat the word at will when asked . The follow-on argument here is that the teacher should present the child

with sufficient range of situations to ensure that an adequate coverage of the concept is made. In this connection language plays a very important role.

In every language there is a manipulation of symbols according to grammatical conventions which in turn makes possible the elaboration of complex relationships between things, actions, and attributes otherwise impossible. This property of language enables the child “to form concepts, to draw conclusions from accepted assumptions to master logical connections, to cognize laws far surpassing the boundaries of direct personal experience”.

Expressing himself in support of the existence of a relationship between language and concept formation, Sapir points out that it is only when we have the symbol (i.e, the word) that we feel that we hold the key to the immediate knowledge or understanding of the concept.

### **3.5.9.3 Language and behaviour**

The acquisition of conceptual thought invests man with the ability to comprehend his environment with the depth and complexity beyond the range of any other animal. This understanding of the environment (or the world) is built up through man’s interaction with reality; it does not grow spontaneously. Similarly, conceptual thought cut off from the real world soon becomes sterile. In other words, conceptual thought plays a role in helping man to adjust himself to his environment more effectively.

Language not only acts as the main agent of conceptual thought but also as a medium which links conceptual thought to practical activity. Lewis refers to a case of a child who was playing on the floor. His ball was in a corner where it had lain unheeded by him all day. Then his mother said: “Baby, where’s ballie?” The child turned and crawled towards the ball. On the way there, he halted at the coal-box - a favourite plaything. His mother repeated the question, whereupon he resumed his journey, seized the ball and looked up at her.

This is a remarkable example of how language can regulate behaviour from the very early days of childhood. In this example, the mother directed the behaviour of the child towards part of the environment which was outside his immediate centre of attention. It should be noted, however, that the action was not spontaneous, but rather a response to the language of the adult- a phenomenon to which the child has been exposed for some time. This indicates that at a certain stage of development in the human child, control by physical means gives place to control through the medium of speech.

It is interesting to notice that just as much as the adult is able to regulate and direct the action or behaviour of the child by means of language, so too is the child able to regulate the action or behaviour of the adult by means of his baby-language e.g. by crying screaming, babbling and so forth.

By way of conclusion we may note the following steps in the regulation of the child's behaviour: first the child is regulated physically by the adult; later the adult is able to control the action of the child by means of language; then later still, the child understands the full meaning of words and his behaviour is regulated more by their semantic significance. And so we agree with Stones (1967:42,176) that:

Through the medium of language and conceptual thought, man is able to regulate his behaviour according to pre-formulated strategies. The child develops from the stage where his activity is almost entirely regulated by the immediate environmental forces to a stage where he is able to plan his activity taking into consideration generalised laws about the nature of the world.

#### **3.5.9.4 Language and emotions**

Fromkin and Rodman (1986:323-345) under the sub-heading **The Biological Aspects of Language** argue that when the child begins to acquire language he acquires each new word in an affective context. That is, the word will always carry with it the emotional overtone of the situation in which it was acquired. As the significance of the word as a concept changes with the flux of experience which gives it its generalised nature, so the variety of affective tones obtaining in the circumstances in which the word is used becomes generalised.

It is for this reason that the words of admonition or prohibition which are used by the mother to the child will carry with them a generalised emotional content of the different situations in which they are used. This also applies to the words of comfort and approval used in other situations. The word will also have the power of evoking not only the objective generalised notion of the class of things to which it refers, but will also carry with it the affective associations of those phenomena.

Mawasha (1976:49) avers that Thouless points out that words such as coward, hero, patriot, filthy, convey both information and affect. The politician and the demagogue usually use words “which convey little information but much affect” .

Lewis (1963:25, 43-45) points out that from the outset heard adult speech comes to the child steeped in affective quality. In the first month adult speech soothes him, a month later it actually makes him smile. This affective character of speech remains with the child throughout his development to adulthood. Löwenfeld endorses Lewis’s standpoint and goes on to assert that as early as the fourth month the child already shows differentiation of response according to the affective quality of sound - a pleasant sound arouses a positive response while an unpleasant sound arouses a negative response.

The emotional quality of language not only influences the manner in which certain propositions are made, but also the manner in which such propositions are interpreted, Language does not only evolve emotions, but also expresses them.

### **3.5.9.5 Language and cognitive development**

Mawasha (1976:49-50) like O’Grady (1997:49) argues that the relation between the development of language and cognitive development can best be understood when it is borne in mind that as the child grows older he moves from the limited childhood environment of his home into a wider more complex environment of his community and of society as a whole. In this connection Lewis points out that the child’s cognitive development is not only subject to the same social influences (26, 168).

At this stage of development the child not only shares his/her experience with other children but also begins to see the necessity to follow adult guidance and to seek help from adults when in difficulties. These factors in turn combine with natural maturation of cognitive abilities to produce certain forms of reasoning which are mainly in harmony with his environment. To meet the needs of this new enlarged world, the child requires, in addition to his erstwhile child-language, the language of the adult, the language of the school, the language of his group and even the language of his sex.

Accordingly his vocabulary extends and his use of words becomes more discriminative and more precise in cognitive reference. His relation with adults becomes even more precisely defined while his personal identity also emerges more precisely and more clearly defined.

Lewis (1936) observes that at this stage of development the force of attraction towards adult-language is evident in characteristic eagerness and desire to show greater familiarity with adult vocabulary including locutions which often characterise adult speech.

A significant point to note here is that just as the adult uses language as a mode of thinking, particularly abstract thinking, the child also gradually develops towards that level. Lewis points out that where a child's elders are not given to abstract thinking and do not often use language that symbolises thinking of this kind, the child's progress towards abstract thinking may be slowed down.

Mawasha (1976: 50) avers that Basil Bernstein also points out the existence of a correlation between poor performance and linguistic inadequacy in the lower working-class in the U.S.A. He also observed "the difficulty of sustaining and eliciting adequate communication". Mawasha (1976:50) further argues that Nesbet also observed that "linguistic limitation affected in some way general cognitive impoverishment. Mitchell goes further to state that "the verbal meaning and fluency scores for the low status children could be used to predict their scores on a range of different factors" (Mawasha, 1976:50).

No wonder John Carroll feels that “the teaching of words and their meanings and concepts they designate or convey, is one of the principal tasks of teachers at all levels of education”, opines Mawasha (1976:50). This becomes even more significant when we see the problem as Werner and Kaplan see it, i.e. that the child learns the meaning of the word in two ways: one way is direct and explicit – the adult names a thing or defines a word for the child; the other way is indirect and implicit - through experience with concrete and or verbal context, (Mawasha 1976:50-51).

The foregoing bears out the fact that there is a close relationship between normal cognitive development and the development of language. Where, due to economic and social factors, the parent-child and or teacher-child linguistic interaction is limited to a certain level, the child’s cognitive development is likewise impaired or limited to that level.

### **3.6 RELEVANCE OF LANGUAGE PHENOMENON TO LANGUAGE ATTITUDES**

Barring the uncertainty as to the historical origin of language, the relevance of the above discussion to our overall study cannot be disputed. If language as a mode of communication is species uniform and species specific (as we have indicated above), then the acquisition of a language and its role as a medium of instruction in general and Intermediate Phase in particular , is within the ability of every normal human being. This implies that, all being equal, our efforts to teach Social science subjects, Natural science subjects, Mathematics, Life Orientation and English at Intermediate Phase level stand a very good chance of success provided an appropriate language medium is used. In other words, I maintain that language capacity is inborn and therefore all languages can be learned provided one is adequately exposed to them at an early age.

The big challenge that this study has established so far is that one language seems to be more preferred by many countries of the world than the learners` native languages which they have a good command of than the preferred one. In the South African context, the 1976 riots impacted negatively on the choice of an appropriate

language medium specifically for the black learner population of the Republic of South Africa. No wonder the current research project was undertaken in order to establish through scientific means the extent of the language attitudes in Education in general and in Mopani District schools of the Limpopo Province in particular.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reflected on four crucial aspects. The first one was an overview on Language Policy issues and RSA curriculum implication. The famous concept of multilingualism as a norm in the RSA Government schools was also interrogated as the second key aspect. The third aspect that was looked at was the Language planning during various periods in South Africa vis-à-vis language attitudes. What these three aspects presented is that there are generally positive attitudes towards English by both the government and the speakers of African languages. There appears to be a strong sense that knowledge of English confers particular social benefits for speakers of African languages. Whereas on the other hand, Mangena (1995:49) observes that:

The extent of the downgrading of and contempt for indigenous languages in our country, especially in public life and national institution is alarming.

What one can deduce from this observation is that the attitude of indigenous people towards their languages, whether positive or negative, has its roots in the first language policy of the country.

In fact, communication between White groups and Africans was always a one-way monologue, where Africans had to understand either English or Dutch/Afrikaans in order to carry out instructions (Fardon and Furniss, 1994).

Though the spirit of all policy documents subscribes to the multilingual concept, the clarity on what constitutes the concept remains a debate amongst academics. The policy seems to suggest that bilingualism means multilingualism in practice. Multilingualism should be understood as referring to many languages used as media of instruction rather than only two languages used as media of instruction. The option of the policy documents suggest that “where it is practicable” has contributed negatively against the progress of applying the concept meaningfully

across the board. The language phenomenon was interrogated as the forth crucial aspect so as to establish language origin, its development and the theories underpinning how it is acquired by human beings vis-à-vis none-human species. If language as a mode of communication is species uniform and species specific as we have indicated elsewhere in the study, then the acquisition of a language and its role as a medium of instruction in general and Intermediate Phase in particular is within the ability of every normal human beings. This implies that, all being equal, our efforts to teach all the Intermediate Phase subjects stand a very good chance of success provided an appropriate language medium is used.

The next chapter dealt with the research design description and how data were collected in the Mopani District target schools of the Limpopo Province. The researcher also endeavoured to outline the analysis and interpretation procedure of the row data that were collected during the third quarter of 2014 calendar year at the target research area.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The research design and methodology of the thesis is informed by the qualitative research approach principles. According to Cresswell (2009:47), this research approach seeks to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon. The phenomenon under investigation is Attitudes of Intermediate Phase learners, Educators, and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and Teaching in the Limpopo Province. Therefore, the research principles in this chapter attempt to:

- 4.1.1 outline the data collection strategies, which among other things indicate request for permission to administer the research tools, and ethical consideration (See Addenda 1,2,3,and 4);
- 4.1.2 indicate how the pilot study was conducted in order to highlight the pretesting procedure, challenges encountered as well as remedial measures taken(See Addenda 8.9,10and 11); and
- 4.1.3 describe the target groups, the environment inside and outside the sample schools, location of the target area and the maps indicating the Mopani District Municipality (See Addenda 20 & 21).

#### **4.2 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

For conventional research studies, data collection methods may be classified into five different types. LoBiondo-Wood & Harber (1990:230; downloaded on 2014-09-16) indicate them as observation, questionnaires, interviews, physiological and biological measurement and records of available data. For the purposes of this thesis, interviews, observation and documentary primary and secondary sources are chosen as data collection methods.

#### **4.2.1 Permission to administer research tools**

Prior to the administration of the study's research tools, an application for permission was directed to the office of the HOD of the Limpopo Province Department of Education. After authorization was granted, further permission was sought from the circuits and target schools which form part of the Mopani District. All the permission letters from the relevant authorities are duly filed under Addenda. (See ADDENDA 5, 6 & 7).

#### **4.2.2 Ethical consideration**

This study subscribes to the research ethics in theory and application. Foremost, the researcher ensured that the interest of all the target respondents was protected. To achieve this objective, each school was coded in order to maintain confidentiality of the findings of the thesis. The respondents' consent verbally was equally important before they were engaged in responding to the relevant research instruments. The researcher had 99, 9% verbal consent from the total number of the target respondents. The decision of the only one respondent who felt that she could not carry on with the process was respected by the researcher. The conduct of the researcher is consistent with Notter (1974:25) who avers that:

In recent years considerable concern has been expressed about the protection of the rights of the individuals used as subjects of research. Factors involved in such protection are:

- (1) Informed consent on the part of the subject.
- (2) Confidentiality of the data collected, and
- (3) Protection of the individuals from harm.

#### **4.2.3 The nature of the research**

Three main features underpin the nature of the thesis; namely, qualitative, purposive and survey practice.

#### **4.2.3.1 The qualitative aspect**

Ralenala (2009:26) correctly observes that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed. This implies how they make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world. For a study of this nature according to Merriam (1998:6) is not to find some objective truth, but to understand the subject's behaviour and explain the meaning of social phenomena to the readers with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible.

Further, the research study involves the researcher's physical presence among the target subjects, setting or site. In the administration of the semi-structured interview and observation tools, extreme care was exercised by the researcher in an attempt not to disrupt the natural setting at the Mopani District.

#### **4.2.3.2 The purposive aspect**

In purposive research practice, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic under research. Ralenala (2009:22) informs that the manner in which subjects are selected has important implications for identifying factors that affect subject performance and for generalizing the results. Hence, it is necessary to understand who the subjects are and how they were selected. In a nutshell, this practice seeks to address two fundamental principles:

- To select a sample from which most can be learned, and
- A sample, which is representative of the teaching and learning population.  
(More information detailed in <http://dissertationlaerd.com/purposive-sampling.php>, downloaded on 2014/09/29).

#### **4.2.3.3 The survey aspect**

Since data may be collected in a number of ways, the current research project used a survey method. According to Treece and Treece (1977:149), the survey method can be defined as:

... non-experimental type of research in which the researcher investigates a community or a group of people. This may be done by asking questions, by interviewing, by observing what people are doing, by telephone interviews, and by other techniques. The survey approach is also considered as exploratory technique of a learning process for setting up a larger research study.

The survey method was successfully used in this project at the Mopani District by the researcher. Abrahamson (1974:6) is of the view that; "Surveys are used to obtain information about people's beliefs, attitudes, opinion and interests". Since the questionnaire method does not fall within the scope of the qualitative research approach or method, only the interview, observation or historical methods were engaged for data elicitation at the target schools of the Limpopo Province (see also Chapter 15 (2014) downloaded on 2014/09/29.

#### **4.2.4 The administration of semi-structured interview tools**

Semi-structured interview tools are not used in language education circles only but may be engaged for data elicitation in medical and psychological fields also. [www.ehow.com/info](http://www.ehow.com/info) (2014:1) informs that:

Interviewing techniques that qualitative research uses often derive from clinical and diagnostic interview in medicine or psychology. In addition to straightforward questioning, qualitative interviews use probing, clarification requests, paraphrasing, reflection, laddering and listening techniques to explore the topic in depth.

Most qualitative interviews use a topic list, sometimes called the guide or agenda. This might be a short overview of all issues that the researcher needs to cover on a more specific list of questions, usually open ended. In all cases, the focus is on obtaining particular information, not on asking a specific, standard question.

Though the researcher agrees with the general guidelines provided by the quoted source, however, he is of the view that it should have outlined the research procedure to be followed as well. [www.qualres.org/homesemi-3229.html](http://www.qualres.org/homesemi-3229.html) (2014:1) outlines the procedure as follows:

- The interviewer and respondents engage in a formal interview.
- The interviewer develops and uses an interview guide. This is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order.
- The interviewer follows the guide, but it is able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when he or she feels is appropriate.

The target respondents to whom the semi-structured interview tools were administered are Intermediate Phase learners, teachers and SGB members.

#### **4.2.4.1 Learner semi-structured interview tool (All target schools are Quintile1 institutions)**

The interview tool was administered after the class observation was conducted. The aim of the interview was to obtain information which was specifically needed from a personal conversation. One of the advantages of using this type of a tool was that the interviewer was able to explain unclear questions to the target respondents. In some cases, he was also able to modify question related challenges encountered in the process. Another reason for the choice of the semi-structured interview tool was that it allowed the respondents to expand on their responses. This gave the researcher more details than the questionnaire, (Cohen and Manion, 1989).

The validity of the interview was enhanced by the fact that the researcher is reasonably competent in both the source and the target languages. The fact that the research tool was designed in English and Xitsonga, further strengthened the validity of the research process.

The semi-structured interview tools were administered to 10 rural and 10 semi-urban schools of the Mopani District. The sample was from 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools of the Mopani District. In each school, the researcher randomly picked up one female learner in a grade 5 class and one male learner in a grade 6 class. A total of 10 learners were brought together for group interview during the

afternoon. A central venue was used by the researcher through the kind gesture of one of the school managers. Each learner was afforded an opportunity to express his/her view on each item of the semi-structured tool. In like manner, semi-urban learner semi-structured interview tools were administered to the same number of learners from the same number of grades. The only change made by the researcher was that the gender pattern was changed in the semi-urban schools. The researcher randomly picked 1 grade 6 female learner in each of the semi-urban schools and 1 grade 5 male learner in each school of the same target area. The researcher engaged in this type of an exercise in order to maintain fairness, validity and gender equity. This is consistent with the current universal practice in all spheres of life. <http://www.wvi.org/gender> (2014:1-4) informs:

Integrating gender into programming can be the key to catalysing transformation in a community. Applying gender equity across the life cycle can break cycles of poverty and deprivation, allowing boys and girls to enjoy in all its fullness.

Because gender norms are so deeply entrenched in communities and often a source of injustice and systematic poverty, failing to understand and address these negative norms can inhibit the success of world vision's contribution to the well-being of girls and boys.

#### **4.2.4.2 Teacher semi-structured interview tool (All target research teachers serve Quintile 1 institutions)**

Teachers are important role players in the implementation of structured programmes in education. They are the foot soldiers of curriculum delivery in a classroom situation. One of the key government policies that they are expected to implement is LiEP. They are better placed to reflect, comment and inform on the language of learning and teaching specifically at Intermediate Phase level. <http://www.ehow.com/facts> (2014:1) supports the researcher's observation:

The teacher's role in the curriculum process is critical because, she is responsible for implementing the curriculum in the classroom. Many districts will revise and update their curriculum every few years. Teachers often are invested in the writing and revision of the curriculum, performing the majority of the work.

The semi-structured interview tools were administered to 10 rural teacher respondents sampled from 5 rural schools (All schools are Quintile I institutions). In like manner, the same research tools were administered to 10 semi-urban teacher respondents sampled from 5 target schools. They were presented with two language versions of instruments. They were requested to choose the version they were comfortable with before the interview process could commence. This was done in order to accommodate the respondents who could not understand one of the two languages used by the researcher. Gender equity was applied in the selection of the interviewees in each target school. The school managers of the target schools assisted the researcher a great deal in organizing the teacher respondents during flexi-time. The choice of the interviewees was discussed with the managers first and thereafter the researcher randomly picked up 1 female and 1 male teachers who teach at either grade 4, 5 or 6, except Xitsonga teachers for obvious reasons (Xitsonga teachers do not use English as a medium for teaching the language). The appropriate venues for the interview sessions ranged from empty classrooms to spare offices. Each interviewee was interviewed alone at a time. The interview process was cordial, frank, objective and sincere. The respondents displayed interest in the language attitude concept and as a result some of them provided useful information which the research tool could not uncover or elicit.

#### **4.2.4.3 SGB semi-structured interview tool (All SGB members interviewed serve Quintile 1 institutions)**

The researcher targeted the SGB members for data elicitation because of their role and responsibility in school governance in general and implementation of the LiEP in a school context in particular. <http://www.paralegaladvice.org.za> (2014:1) informs that;

The SA Schools Act Section 20 describes the functions of the school governing body. These include:

- Promoting the best interest of the school and its development.
- Adopting a constitution and mission statement.

- Introducing a code of conduct.
- Providing support to educators and the principal in carrying out their duties.
- Determining times of the school day.
- Administering and controlling the school's property and grounds.
- Involve parents and others to undertake voluntary duties and tasks.
- Recommending to the Head of Department the appointment of educators and non-educator staff at school, subject to the relevant legislation Educators Employment Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 138 of 1994), and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995).
- Managing and allowing the use of school facilities for fundraising, and social uses.

The responsibilities of SGB members are spelt out by

<http://www.paralegaladvice.paralegaladvice.org.za> (2014:2) as follows:

- Decide on an admission policy that doesn't go against the national constitution.
- Decide on the language policy of the school.
- Decide on what religious practice will be followed at school (attending any religious practices must be free and voluntary).
- Adapt a code of conduct for learners after consulting with learners, parents and educators.

Though these roles and responsibilities for SGB members are interrelated and interdependent, however, the one on deciding on the language policy of the school interests the researcher most. A language policy of the school does not imply the number of subjects to be enrolled for in order to meet the requirements of a particular programme only but it also implies the choice of a language of learning and teaching for specific content subjects of a programme. According to the CAPS (2011:4) policy document, an Intermediate Phase rural and semi-urban learner is expected to be taught the following subject through the medium of English; English First Additional Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Science and Life Skills.

SGB semi-structured interview tools were administered to 5 rural and 5 semi-urban interviewees. Due to logistic challenges beyond the control of the researcher, the gender equity for this target group could not be exercised. The challenge was attributed to the fact that a balanced gender number of SGB candidates could not be found. The female number of interviewees far outnumbered their male counterpart. Perhaps this occurrence speaks to the non-availability of male volunteers in these communities. The venues for administering the interview tools ranged from staff offices to converted school libraries. There was no specified time for the interviews since the interviewees had to travel from place of residence to the target schools. The researcher had to patiently wait for them to arrive for the interview sessions.

#### **4.2.5 The administration of the observation schedule (All schools observed are Quintile 1 institutions)**

Experience has taught the researcher that in research, observation should precede the other research approaches for better data outcome. According to Goode and Hatt (1952:119) all scientific studies begin with observation and end up with observation in order to confirm the final validity of the observed. The method of research can be defined as a scientific technique where the researcher directly observes, visually and auditorily, a given phenomenon personally and scientifically (see also Sellitz in Van der Walt, 1977:228). The researcher consciously and purposively observes the behaviour and environment of the learner under study. Observation methods are regarded as the primary technique of collecting data which can be natural or specifically created for purposes of research. In this project, observation, as Labov (1970:49-50), suggests, both 'careful' and 'casual' speech patterns of the target respondents were to determine their attitude towards Xitsonga, specifically, as a medium of learning and teaching at the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

In using this research technique, both covert (that is, non-participant observation) and overt (that is participant observation) were utilized to advantage by the observer (researcher). According to Babbie (1992: 289-290), the former refers to

observation where the respondents were unaware that they were being observed at the target institutions. Here the observer observes a situation without being a part of it. On the other hand, in the overt, the observer is visible to the subjects and the respondents are aware that they are being observed.

In the case of the overt approach, 15 rural and 15 semi-urban schools were observed for a period of 10 school days. The researcher observed only one lesson per school due to time constraints. The lessons observed ranged from Life Skills, Social Science, English First Additional Language, Science and Technology, to Mathematics. The period spent for observing each lesson ranged from 45 minutes to 60 minutes depending on the duration of the time allocated for each subject by the institutions' time-table committees. The researcher did not participate in the proceedings in class, but preferred to be a passive observer and recorded what took place in class by means of following the observation instrument approved by the university research structures. (See Addendum 19) He managed to complete the observation schedule at the end of each presentation. The observation tool had six (6) items to be completed for each lesson. The researcher's engagement of the overt approach is consistent with what Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:106) call "modified participant observation."

In the case of the covert approach, the observer observed the subjects during school breaks. The observation was highly informal but very rich in data on language attitudes. The researcher moved around the institutions' premises and recorded the learners' choice of the language of communication among themselves in particular. On average, the duration of time spent in each school for that research exercise was 60 minutes (one hour). Of course, despite the merits of the observation method, the researcher agrees that it has some limitations. The observer's presence might have sensitised the respondents and might thus have altered their behaviour. Consequently, it was extremely difficult for the observer to make what Haralambos and Holborn (1991: 744) call "accurate observation." The observation method lacks control over interfering external variables that may affect the collected data. It is also time-consuming in the sense that the information which

the researcher wished to observe might not had occurred for a long time (Ntsandeni, 1993: 100).

#### **4.2.6 Secondary Sources**

In both qualitative and quantitative studies, secondary sources lay an integral part. Without the secondary sources a research study would have no leg to stand on. Babane (2003:135) observes that data from primary documentary sources as obtained directly by techniques of first-hand personal interviews, questionnaires and observations would not be enough on their own.

It was therefore, equally important to consider the data in secondary documentary sources for this thesis. These are second-hand and therefore direct. The documents used are written materials that contain information about the phenomenon that the researcher wished to study. Secondary sources were used specifically for broadening knowledge and verifying knowledge acquired from primary sources. Thus, information obtained from sources such as textbooks, official or non-official reports, articles in periodicals or journals, published or unpublished dissertations and theses, internet information on language attitudes also became reliable sources of information. The thesis underpinning theory, literature review, and argument presented are informed by both primary and secondary sources.

### **4.3 PILOT STUDY (PILOTED SCHOOLS ARE QUINTILE 1 INSTITUTIONS)**

In designing the research instruments utilised in this study, care was taken to pre-test and pilot a draft of semi-structured interview tools and observation schedules. (See Addenda 8, 9, 10, & 11) Treece and Treece (1997: 134) describe pretesting as follows:

...pretesting is the process of measuring the effectiveness of the instrument, whereas the pilot study is a preliminary small-scale trial run of a research study.

The two instruments were first discussed with the researcher's supervisors and university research structures who gave their advice accordingly. Although, the key research stakeholders believed that the research tools in their revised form were reliable and valid, a further pilot study was conducted prior to the fully-fledged final one.

All the questions in the two research instruments were first tested with a group which was similar to the sample target groups. In order to minimise cost and time, the pilot study was done at the researcher's local primary school which did not form part of the target institutions cited in this study to determine feasibility, technical and semantic challenges.

Initially, all the research instruments were written in English. During the pilot study, respondents were asked to mark or indicate questions which were not clear to them. A few suggestions that needed minor changes were made. The challenges were mainly around the key concepts which needed to be converted into phrases so that the respondents could answer them appropriately and meaningfully. In some extreme cases, some of the respondents suggested that the instruments could be clearer if an alternative version was made available. This suggestion strengthened the University Faculty Research Committee's strong recommendations that all the research instruments of this study should be in both the source language and target languages.

According to Bailey (1982: 495), the pretesting of research instruments is important for identifying and correcting problematic items. Babane (2003:137) argues for piloting this way: "...pretesting helped to eliminate confusing terminology or words and improve the responses of the participants".

## **4.4 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF RESEARCH TOOLS AND REMEDIAL MEASURES TAKEN**

### **4.4.1 Challenges relating to interviews**

Almost 90% of the interviewees were not fully prepared to answer the interview questions. This became clear when some of the respondents responded differently when the same questions were asked differently. Other respondents expected the interviewer to assist them in answering questions. The researcher remedied these challenges by code switching or utilizing the vernacular version of the research tool. Due to the explicit directive from the Provincial Education Department that the administration of the research instruments should under no circumstances disrupt the core business of the institutions under research compelled the researcher to make use of the flexi times and in some extreme cases times after school hours. In the case of the teacher and SGB member interviewees, there was an impression that the researcher was supposed to pay a certain fee for their trouble since the whole exercise was regarded as an inconvenience on their side. The researcher countered this view by indicating that the Provincial Education Department expects the researcher to share the findings of the research study on completion and that possibilities are that it may implement some of the findings for the good of Language Education in general, and Language of learning and teaching in particular. The fact that the letter of permission from the Provincial Education Department expected the researcher to complete the administration of the research tools during the third term of the 2014 academic year (that is, from the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2014 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2014) added more pressure on the researcher to re-schedule the interview sessions beyond the normal school hours in some cases.

### **4.4.2 Challenges relating to observation**

Though reasonable appointments and efforts were made well in advance for observation at the 30 Intermediate classes, the researcher was more often disappointed by the reluctance of some teachers to allow him to observe proceedings in class. The excuses they gave for not honouring the appointments ranged from cultural week, test week, ill-health, attending workshops, sport day, ANA week to family bereavement. Some were frank enough to indicate that they were not fully prepared to be observed and as a result the observer had to

reschedule the observation roster. Some learners were visibly not at ease with the presence of a stranger in their classes. This kind of reaction is called Hawthorne effect- a normal phenomenon in the social sciences which, however, does not adversely affect the observation process (See Addenda 14 & 16).

#### **4.5 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS TO THE SAMPLING OF DATA AND MEASURES ADOPTED TO CONTROL THEM**

Although the researcher exercised extreme care to maintain the highest possible level of objectivity and authenticity in the administration of the interview and observation tools, possible limitations must be conceded. The following are such possibilities:

- a. In the process of explaining what might not be clear enough, especially to the learner, teacher and SGB respondents, the researcher could have unwittingly influenced responses. But great care was taken to avoid this possible limitation by focussing on specific problems only without suggesting any definite answers or giving away answers. The researcher made it a point that all the instruments for each target group had two language versions of questions (that is, the English and Xitsonga versions). This exercise served to eliminate the limitation (See also Mona, 1997:146).
- b. Probably, some of the respondents might have felt that the time allowed for them to respond to interview questions were too short depending on the individual interviewee. Since in all the target research areas there was no specific complaint about time on the part of the interviewees, the researcher is satisfied that this possible limitation was reduced to a minimum, low enough not to affect the reliability of the research results.
- c. Possibly, some teacher respondents might have thought that providing correct answers was in a way assisting the researcher to be better qualified than themselves. But, once more, this possible limitation in data collection must have been adequately countered by the researcher's assurance to the respondents that the primary aim of the research is to improve the learners'

understanding of the content subjects through the use of appropriate language of learning and teaching.

- d. Perhaps, some of the interviewees might have regarded the answering of interview questions to be an unnecessary burden that had little or nothing to do with their work. Answering those questions faithfully might, therefore, have been seen as unnecessary. But the researcher's short briefing on the importance of the project, as well as some rural teachers who felt that the use of English as a medium at Intermediate Phase is suicidal to their learners might have nullified the limitation a great deal.
- e. Since the project involved sensitive language attitude issues, some might have thought that the researcher was some kind of fault-finder in the case of learner respondents and also some kind of exposé of their possible inefficiency in the case of the teacher respondents. Again, these possible limitations must have been substantially neutralised by the assurance given to them that the objectives of the study is to improve the curriculum delivery in a school situation in the case of the learners, and the fact that, most of the teacher interviewees were not altogether happy about the level of the learners' comprehension of the current medium of learning and teaching across the phase subjects.

#### **4.6 LOCATION OF THE TARGET RESEARCH AREA**

The qualitative research data of the study was collected at the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province. <http://www.limpo.net.co.za> (2014:1) informs that Mopani District Municipality is a category C municipality (that is the District Councils have executive and legislative powers in areas that include local municipalities) located within the north-east quadrant of the Limpopo province. It consists of five local municipalities: Ba-Phalaborwa, Greater Giyani, Greater Letaba, Greater Tzaneen and Maruleng, and the District Management Area.

It is boarded in the east by Mozambique, in the north by Zimbabwe and Vhembe District Municipality, in the south by Mpumalanga province through Ehlanzeni District Municipality, in the west by Capricorn and Vhembe Municipalities, and the south-west by Sekhukhune District Municipality. The seat of Mopani is Giyani, and the district is part of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park. Cities/Towns are Giyani, Gravelotte, Haenertsburg, Hoedspruit, Lesdorp, Modjadjiskloof (Duiwelskloof), Tzaneen, and Phalaborwa. Main Economic Sectors are: Agriculture, Forestry and mining.

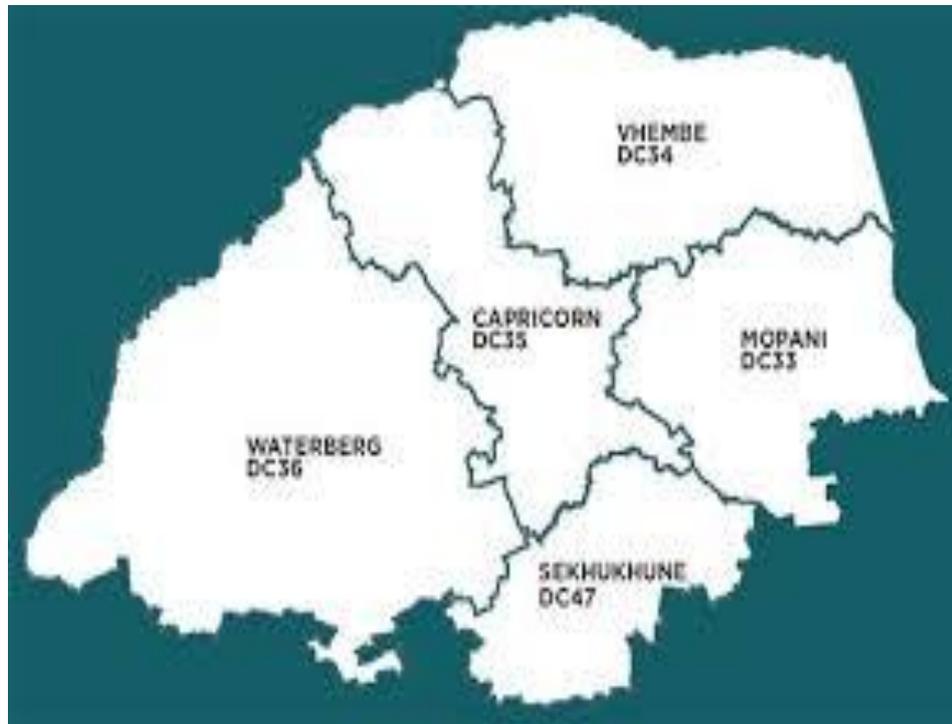
It is home to the Vatsonga, BaPedi, and BaVenda and White people. The formal and informal research data was collected at the following circuits: Nkowankowa, Mafarana, N'wa-Mitwa, Giyani and Malamulele. The reason for collecting the research data from these circuits was that the majority of the Xitsonga language schools are located there. The target area also has enough rural and semi-urban schools for adequate sampling purposes for a study of this nature. The Maps below clearly indicate the geographical location of the Mopani District.

### **SOUTH AFRICAN MAP SHOWING MOPANI DISTRICT**



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mopani-District-Municipality> (2014/09/03).

## LIMPOPO MAP SHOWING MOPANI DISTRICT



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mopani-District-Municipality> (2014/09/03)

### 4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter reflected on the research design and methodology of the thesis in an attempt to lay a foundation of articulating the analysis and interpretation process. The next chapter details the analysis and interpretation of the research data gathered through the semi-structured and observation tools in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND COMMENTS ON RESEARCH DATA**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is threefold; namely; the analysis, interpretation and comment on both interview and observation data already briefly outlined in chapter 3, on Attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and Teaching in the Limpopo Province. The data was sampled from 20 learners and 20 teachers from 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools. A total of 30 rural and semi-urban classes were sampled from 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools for observation purposes. 10 SGB members were sampled from 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools for data collection. The specific Grades sampled from each school for all the target groups are as follows: for the learner respondents ; Grades 5 and 6 multiplied by 5 schools in the rural area; again Grades 5 and 6 multiplied by 5 schools in the semi-urban area; the gender equity consisted of 1 male and 1 female in each school multiplied by 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools; the inside the classroom observation was sampled from Grades 4,5 and 6 multiplied by 5 rural schools and in like manner Grades 4,5 and 6 multiplied by 5 semi-urban schools. The observation outside the classroom was not done in terms of Grades since it was done during the long school breaks. Each school was visited once and the data was gathered through manual recording of each item of the tool. Last but not least, 10 SGB members were sampled for data collection too. The gender composition did not allow the practice of gender equity since the female respondents were in the majority of 2 is to 1 in both the 5 rural and 5 semi-urban schools.

#### **5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

This study on learner, educator and SGB members' responses to language attitude towards Xitsonga medium is a further contribution to studies done in this respect which explore attitudes of various stakeholders towards their mother-tongue, English and other languages spoken in South Africa (the literature review of this

study articulated extensively on this aspect). All learner respondents in this study did Xitsonga as a compulsory subject. 99,9% of the teacher respondents understood Xitsonga and English fairly well. Schools were categorised according to their physical location. In fact schools situated at the rural and semi-urban communities were classified according to the two distinct features. Half of the sampled schools are classified as rural institutions in the sense that the communities in which they are situated and service are lower class worker-citizenry, the majority of whom are unemployed, often single parents and peasantry in character (Mona, 1997:149). According to the *Statistics South Africa* (2004: 14) these areas could be termed “Any area that is not classified urban.Rural areas are subdivided into tribal areas and commercial farms”.Whereas the other half of the sampled schools are classified as semi-urban institutions in the sense that the communities in which they are situated and service are highly populated by middle class citizens. According to the Limpopo Department of Education classification, the township schools are classified as semi-urban schools.It is against this classification that the researcher labelled the two research areas as rural and semi-urban.

#### **A. LEARNER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

The learner respondents were interviewed on a total of 7 questions that sought to elicit data on language opinion, language comprehension, language usage, language favour, language requisite capacity, language preference and language challenges (See Addendum 16).

#### **5.3 ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND COMMENTS ON THE LEARNER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Analysis of the learner interview questions yielded the following findings collated largely on item-by-item form the research instrument.

**ITEM 1: What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?**

**TABLE 1: INDICATION OF THE OPINION ON THE USE OF XITSONGA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEVEL**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses			TOTAL
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	03	02	–	100 %
	FEMALE	04	01	–	100 %
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	05	00	–	100 %
	FEMALE	04	01	–	100 %
TOTAL = 20					

### 5.3.1 Analysis of TABLE 1

According to this TABLE, 60% of the rural male and 80% of the female respondents are of the opinion that Xitsonga should not be used as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level. 40% of the rural male and 20% of the female interviewees are of the view that Xitsonga should be used. In the semi-urban area, the TABLE points a slight different picture to that of the rural areas. Of the total male respondents, 100% were not of the view that Xitsonga should be used as a medium of learning and teaching as compared to the 80% of their female counterparts from the same research area.

The overall picture suggested by this TABLE is that 80% of all respondents across the two target areas are not of the view that Xitsonga should be used as a medium of instruction. Only a mere 20% of the total respondents are of the view that

Xitsonga should be used as a medium of learning and teaching at the Intermediate Band.

### 5.3.2 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 1

According to this TABLE, there is a definite tendency of learners in the two target areas to adopt a negative attitude towards Xitsonga as teaching medium. This attitude seems to suggest that the majority of the respondents value the use of English as an appropriate medium of content delivery in a classroom situation. This type of attitude could be attributed to a number of factors. Parent and teacher influence among others play an important role on primary school learners specifically on influencing their opinion on language issues. Ndamba (2008:182), downloaded on 2014/10/08 observes that:

A possible explanation for favouring English more than the L1 may be that children are told by the parents that they go to school to learn English. Attitude that English is more important than Shona/ Ndebele may be passed on to children by parents who tell children that English provides educational and employment opportunities in the future, thus children may begin to develop negative attitudes towards L1 which they might then regard as less important.

This type of attitude is consistent with the Sepedi figure of speech used by Maibelo (1989:139) in accentuating the influence of the powerful to the weak and gullible: “*Kgosi ya hlotsa balata re a hlotsa*” (The subjects do things the way their chief does things).

However, the minority respondents who adopted a positive attitude towards the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction across the target areas cited the following reasons for their stance:

- We are very proud of our language.
- We understand our language better than English.
- We master the content subjects better when concepts are explained in our mother-tongue.
- We are able to express ourselves better in our home language.

Though these respondents are in the minority in terms of numbers, they however, seem to justify the bulk of literature that suggest that mother-tongue medium of instruction is an ideal pedagogical practice. Bamgbose (2007:7-9) downloaded on 2014-10-09 supports these learners' stance this way:

When these countries later realized that this policy did not produce the best results, they reverted to the mother-tongue medium policy they had earlier abandoned...On educational grounds, we recommend that the use of the mother-tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible.

It is reported by the same source (Bamgbose, 2007:9) that extension of an African language medium to upper primary classes has only been reported in a few countries such as Botswana (language used is Setswana) and Lesotho (language used is Sesotho). The national languages are used as the language of instruction up to primary 4 (RSA Grade 6). Uganda (language used is Ruganda) up to primary 5, and in Tanzania (language used is Swahili), Ethiopia (languages used are Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya) and Nigeria (language used is Yoruba) the languages are used as media of instruction for the entire duration of the primary education. The current RSA language policy is that mother-tongue instruction takes place from Grades R to Grade 3. From grade 4 upwards, the learners ought to be taught the content subjects through the media of either English or Afrikaans (CAPS 2011:6). There is currently no provision of external examination or common papers in the indigenous African languages for the various content subjects. This is a disadvantage which an African child in general and Intermediate Phase learner in particular finds him/herself in.

**ITEM 2: Which language between English and Xitsonga do you understand better?**

**TABLE 2: INDICATION OF LANGUAGE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ENGLISH AND XITSONGA**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses on language understanding between English and Xitsonga			TOTAL
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	02	03	–	100 %
	FEMALE	01	04	–	100 %
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	02	03	–	100 %
	FEMALE	02	03	–	100 %
TOTAL = 20					

### 5.3.3 Analysis of TABLE 2

This TABLE shows that 40% of the rural male respondents and only 20% of their female counterparts said that they understood English better than Xitsonga. 60% of the male interviewees and a whopping 80% of their female counterparts said that they understood Xitsonga better than English.

In the semi-urban area, however, the TABLE reflects a slightly different picture to that of the rural area. Of the total number of both male and female interviewees, 40% of the former and equally and 40% of the latter respondents said that they understood English better than Xitsonga. 60% of the male and 60% of the female respondents said that they understood Xitsonga better than English.

The overall picture painted by TABLE 2 is that 35% of the interviewees across the target areas understand English than Xitsonga. Whereas, a majority of 65% of the respondents across the target research areas understand Xitsonga than English.

#### **5.3.4 Interpretation and comment on TABLE 2**

According to this TABLE, there is a decisive trend of the majority of the Intermediate Phase learners of claiming to understand Xitsonga than English. The implication of this data finding is that the majority of the target areas' learners are taught the content subjects in the medium that they do not fully comprehend. This suggests that their comprehension of the proceedings in class is to a large extent compromised. The finding of this thesis is not far away from the language reality of South Africa. *The South African New Language Policy* (1994:6-7) informs that;

English is certainly an essential means of international communication for many South Africans. However, according to the latest available estimates only about nine percent of all South Africans use English as their home language or first language. It would therefore be undemocratic to make English the sole official language since the great majority of South Africans would be disadvantaged by such a step.

In actual fact -and contrary to the general assumption- not all South Africans can actually speak English. According to the latest estimates, communication in English reach less than half (42%) of the total population. Besides this, only about 31% of the African languages speakers can speak English.

Speaking knowledge of English and Afrikaans in South Africa:

- Speak no English and no Afrikaans 48%
- Speak English and Afrikaans 32%

The minority of the target research areas' learner interviewees who indicated that they understood English better than Xitsonga is a clear indication of the national linguistic reality of our country.

**ITEM 3: Which language between English and Xitsonga do you use most in:**

- (a) Interacting with your teachers?
- (b) Interacting with your fellow learners in class?
- (c) Interacting with your friends?
- (d) Interacting with your parents?
- (e) Interacting with strangers

**TABLE 3: INDICATION OF LANGUAGE USAGE BETWEEN ENGLISH AND XITSONGA FOR INTERACTING WITH VARIOUS PEOPLE**

Area and total number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses on language usage between English and Xitsonga			Total
		1. Interacting with teachers 2. Interacting with learners 3. Interacting with friends 4. Interacting with parents 5. Interacting with strangers			
RURAL 10	MALE	1. Xitsonga 2. Xitsonga 3. Xitsonga 4. Xitsonga 4	5. Xitsonga or English  1	UNCERTAIN  –	100%
	FEMALE	1. Xitsonga 2. Xitsonga 3. Xitsonga 4. Xitsonga 4	5. Xitsonga or English  1	–	100%
SEMI-URBAN	MALE	1. Xitsonga 2. Xitsonga 3. Xitsonga 4. English 5. English 3	English  2	–	100%
	FEMALE	1. Xitsonga 2. Xitsonga 3. Xitsonga 4. English 5. English 3	English  2	–	100%
TOTAL = 20					

### **5.3.5 Analysis of TABLE 3**

TABLE 3 shows that 80% of the rural male respondents, as well as 80% of their female counterpart from the same area interact with teachers, fellow learners, friends and parents in Xitsonga. Whereas only a mere 20% of the male interviewees as well as 20% of the female interviewees from the rural area interact with strangers in either English or Xitsonga depending on the language command of the stranger.

In the semi-urban area however, the picture painted by the TABLE is slightly different in that 60% of the male interviewees as well as 60% of their female counterpart interact with teachers, learners, and friends in Xitsonga. Only 40% of the male and 40% of the female interviewees from the same target area claim to interact with parents and strangers in English.

### **5.3.6 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 3**

According to TABLE 3, a 70% whopping majority of the learner interviewees across the target areas claim to interact with teachers, learners and friends in Xitsonga. Whereas a 30% minority of the learner' respondents across the target areas claim to interact with parents and strangers in English. The two figures suggest that the majority of the Mopani learner respondents are more capable and comfortable to communicate with the teachers, fellow learners, friends, parents and strangers in Xitsonga as compared to the minority who are capable and comfortable to interact with their parents and strangers in English. It would appear that though the LiEP demands that content delivery at Intermediate Phase level ought to be done through the medium of English, the reality on the ground is that according to this study, the majority of the learners at Intermediate Phase level are not fully prepared and ready enough to express their understanding, perspective, decision and feelings in English in various contexts. No wonder countries like Botswana, Lesotho, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Nigeria delay the English medium up to Intermediate Phase level (Bamgbose, 2007:7-9).

The fact that 30% of the learner subjects (interviewees) claim to interact with parents and strangers in English could be attributed to the fact that they could be coming from the middle class families which are characterised by being professional or business inclined (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1981:906).

**ITEM 4: In your view, does Xitsonga possess the requisite capacity to function as medium of instruction in the different Learning areas?**

**TABLE 4: INDICATION OF XITSONGA POSSESSION OF REQUISITE CAPACITY TO FUNCTION AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses			TOTAL
		NO	YES	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	4	1	–	100 %
	FEMALE	3	2	–	100 %
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	4	1	–	100 %
	FEMALE	4	1	–	100 %
TOTAL = 20					

### 5.3.7 Analysis of TABLE 4

This TABLE on whether or not Xitsonga possesses the requisite capacity to function as medium of instruction across the Intermediate Phase content subjects yielded the following outcomes: 80% of the rural male interviewees said Xitsonga does not possess the requisite capacity to serve as a medium of instruction. 60% of their female counterparts said the language does not possess the requisite capacity to serve as a medium. In the same target area, 20% of the male and 40% of the

female respondents respectively opined that Xitsonga does not possess the requisite capacity to function as a teaching medium.

In the semi-urban area however, the Intermediate Phase learners' views are slightly higher on the NO side and slightly lower on the YES side as compared to the rural area. 80% of the male interviewees and 80% of their female counterpart opined that Xitsonga does not possess the requisite capacity to serve as a medium of instruction, whereas 20% of the male respondents and 20% of the female interviewees opined that Xitsonga does possess the requisite capacity to function as a medium.

### 5.3.8 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 4

My reading of TABLE 4 on the language's requisite capacity to serve as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level across the content subjects is that the average opinion of a whopping 85% learner interviewees ARE NOT of the view that the said language possesses the requisite capacity to perform the pedagogical job. These are some of the examples for their "NO" stance:

1. Xitsonga a xi swi koti ku mho! (Xitsonga has got no direct words or concepts as is the case in English). They cited examples such as:  $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  $\frac{1}{3}$ ;  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; BODMAS RULE (MATHS). In Xitsonga you are bound to say: "N'we xa mune ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ); N'we xa nharhu ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ); N'we xa mbirhi ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Nawu wa maendlele ya burakete (B); ya xo karhi (O); yo avanyisa (D); yo andzisa (M); yo hlanganisa (A); na yo susa (S). Some of them fell into feasts of laughter as they gave the Xitsonga version. "This sounds stupid," some of them said.

Their expressed opinion indicates the degree of attitude against Xitsonga as a pedagogical medium in a classroom situation in general and Mathematics medium in particular. To these learners, English is "the" medium through which difficult subjects like Maths should be taught. On the other hand, a mere 15% minority of the interviewees across the target areas took a "YES" stance for Xitsonga

possession of the requisite capacity to function as a teaching medium. They cited examples like;

1. *“Loko mudyondzisi a ku 90% ya 500 000 a ndzi swi twisisi loko a nga swi hlamuseli hi Xitsonga.”* (When a Maths teacher says, give a 90% of 500 000 in English I find it difficult to understand the formula without an explanation in Xitsonga).
2. *“Ndzi twisisa ngopfu loko mudyondzisi a hlamusela hi ririmi ra mina maendlele ya tinhlayo ya n’we eka dzana ku tlula loko a vutisa hi Xinghezi a ku: “What is 1% of R1, 000 000 class?”* (I understand most when my Maths teacher explains a question in Xitsonga this way: *“Xana n’we eka dzana ya tirhandi ta mamiliyoni i mali muni klilasi?”*)

It would appear that the 15% group would benefit a lot if the teaching of Maths were to be carried out through the medium of their Home Language as opposed to their 85% counterpart from the Mopani District. More recommended short term and long term options will be articulated under RECOMMENDATIONS in CHAPTER 5.

**ITEM 5: Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction?**  
**Please, give reasons for your answer(s).**

**TABLE 5: INDICATION OF THE LEARNER FAVOUR OF THE USE OF XITSONGA**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses			TOTAL
		NO	YES	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	4	1	–	100 %
	FEMALE	3	2	–	100 %
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	4	1	–	100 %
	FEMALE	3	2	–	100 %
TOTAL = 20					

### 5.3.9 Analysis of TABLE 5

The fifth TABLE indicates the results of the target learners' decisive decision on whether or not they favoured Xitsonga as a medium on one hand. Favour as a phenomenon is one of the attributes of one's attitude. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1981:354) describes favour as; "look kindly upon, approve; treat kindly, countenance; oblige with; treat with partiality; support; tend to confirm; friendly regard, approval; liking, etc." On the other hand, it indicates the results of the target learners' reasons for their stance (response). It consequently yielded the following interesting results: 80% of the rural male respondents said they are not in favour of Xitsonga as a medium at Intermediate Phase, whereas 60% of their female counterparts responded negatively. The latter respondents are less by 20% as compared to the former. The "YES" respondents are far less than the "NO" ones- 20% of the male interviewees responded positively, and 40% of the female respondents said that they were in favour of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at the Phase level. In simple terms, what the general results of the TABLE suggest is that the majority of the Mopani District Intermediate Phase learners are not in favour of Xitsonga medium. Some of the reasons for not favouring Xitsonga medium are the following:

- *Hi navela vana vo ringana na hina loko va vulavula hi Xinghezi eka TV.* (We admire children of our age when they present TV programmes in fluent English).
- *Hambi vafundhisi etikerekeni ta hina va hi nyanyula ngopfu loko va ku:* "Gad (God) Jesus, no weapon that is formed against you will prosper" (Even our pastors in our churches excite us most when they switch over to English and say Gad (God) Jesus, no weapon that is formed against you will prosper).
- *Hambi etilweni swi tikomba ku buluka Xinghezi we muchaviseki* (It would appear that even in heaven English is being used, sir).

These comments suggest that the majority's negative attitude towards Xitsonga medium is deep-seated. The media in one way or the other plays an important role in socializing its market (that is, children, youth, patients, adults, educated, elders,

learners, etc). The same goes for the community leaders like pastors and civil servants. What they say and do go a long way in impacting either positively or negatively on the citizens. There is power in the language. It is true that there is a tendency among the current crop of leaders to use the English medium more than the indigenous African languages in various set-ups or domains. No wonder Makua (2004:12) avers that; “The mindset of many South Africans has been so rigorously colonized and indoctrinated,” to such a degree that he does not see a successful implementation of the mother-tongue education principle expressed in the RSA Language Policy.

In the case of the learners’ misguided view that English is being used in heaven, the researcher takes the position that this is a linguistic fallacy. There is no scriptural back up from the 66 books of the Bible for such. Their fallacy is misleading; it is baseless, mischievous, void of all truth and without substance. To support the researcher’s argument, Saint Paul says in *I Corinthians* 13 verse 1 : “If I speak in tongues of men and of angels, but have love, I am only a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal” What this theologian implies by tongue of men and of angels is that men use different earthly languages and angels use different heavenly languages. The Lord Jesus confirmed Paul’s angelic language in *Luke* 20 verse 36 when he says: “and they can no longer die; for they are like angels...” What the Lord implies by the statement is that in heavenly places the resurrected will use an angelic language, most certainly, not English.

### **5.3.10 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 5**

The fact that on average 70% of the male and female interviewees across the target areas in the Mopani District registered that they were not in favour of the use of Xitsonga as medium suggests the extent to which its use may have on curriculum delivery. These learners further deliberated that they were not against Xitsonga as subject but against being taught content through it. To them understanding the content is immaterial as long as it is done in the medium of English. They seem to be more impressed with the language accent than its scientific components (that is, morphological, phonological, semantic, syntax and literary structures). They are the “kinda like generation.” They hardly answer

questions without using the “kinda like” slang. It would appear that these learners are also victims of home and school influence. Maponya (2011:42) correctly suggests that; “educators and parents should not force learners to speak foreign languages at school or at home in her study”.

The 30% learner interviewees across the target District who indicated that they were in favour of the Xitsonga medium suggest that they would benefit a lot content wise through the said medium. This is in line with the observation made by Olerah (2007:3) in the journal on African languages. Among other things the author says:

It is unfortunate that some Ghanaians live by the misguided concepts that “the ability to speak good English is tantamount to good education” and the mere ability to speak English well, even in a parrot-like fashion command tremendous respect.

The researcher will spell out some of the possible solutions for addressing both the FOR and AGAINST views revealed by TABLE 5 adequately. Their views are a silent cry of an African child who needs pedagogical help. Their cry cannot be swept under the carpet. The cry is well captured by Joy Laetitia in <http://www.africanevening.org/cry-of-child> downloaded on 2014-10-15, this way:

Today Africa has many children suffering for various reasons. Many are crying to their mothers for help; but mothers are also victims. That means children are crying because women (mothers) are crying. Voices of children crying are voices of women abandoned.

**ITEM 6: Between Xitsonga and English, which of the two do you find difficult to use in:**

- (a) answering questions posed by the teachers?
- (b) answering tests and exam questions?
- (c) class group discussion?
- (d) making announcements in class?
- (e) passing on messages to others in class?

**TABLE 6: INDICATION ON THE LEARNERS' DIFFICULTY TO USE LANGUAGE IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS, TEST AND EXAM PAPERS, GROUP DISCUSSION, MAKING ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PASSING ON MESSAGES**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents		Responses on language difficulty in:		NO OPINION	TOTAL
			Items: a-e	LANGUAGE X=XITSONGA E=ENGLISH		
RURAL 10	MALE	5	a. Teacher questions	E	-	100%
			b. Tests and exam	E	-	
			c. Group discussion	E	-	
			d. Announcements	E	-	
			e. Passing messages	E	-	
	FEMALE	5	a. Teacher questions	E	-	
			b. Tests and exam	E	-	
			c. Group discussion	E	-	
			d. Announcements	E	-	
			e. Passing messages	E	-	
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	5	a. Teacher questions	E	-	100%
			b. Tests and exams	E	-	
			c. Group discussion	E	-	
			d. Announcements	E	-	
			e. Passing messages	E	-	
	FEMALE	5	a. Teacher questions	E	-	
			b. Tests and exam	E	-	
			c. Group discussion	E	-	
			d. Announcements	E	-	
			e. Passing messages	E	-	
TOTAL = 20					0	100%

### **5.3.11 Analysis of TABLE 6**

This table seeks to probe deeper into the learners' language difficulty with regard to aspects such as answering questions posed by their teachers in various learning areas that use the English medium. It further seeks to quiz them on the linguistic challenges they encounter in answering Test and Examination Papers... the third, fourth and fifth items quiz the learner respondents on the linguistic challenges they encounter in group discussions, making official and non-official announcements in class, and passing on messages to their classmates respectively. This TABLE reflects the summit of the research project in the sense that it endeavours to justify or not justify the respondents' opinion, level of comprehension, usage, favour and preference on the question of the language of content delivery in the Mopani District. The former TABLES of this study (namely, TABLES 1-5) revealed their attitudes either for or against each ITEM, whereas, the current TABLE (namely TABLE 6) seeks to disclose the difficulties the interviewees have in the processes of engaging the language they have a positive attitude or negative attitude to on a number of classroom aspects.

TABLE 6 yielded the following disturbing results: 100% of the male and 100% of the female interviewees in the target rural schools of the Mopani District indicated that they had difficulties to use English for answering questions posed by the teachers, answering Test and Examination question Papers, making meaningful contributions in class, group discussions, making informal and formal announcements in class, and passing on messages to other learners in class.

The situation in the semi-urban area is not different from the rural area either. 100% of the male respondents as well as 100% of their female counterpart from the same area clearly indicated that they had difficulties in using the English medium in all the five aspects cited under the rural area.

What puzzles the researcher is that the results do not justify or in simple terms are not consistent with the negative attitude displayed by the majority of the learners on ITEMS 1-5 across the target District. In fact, a whopping 80% majority of the total respondents across the research areas displayed very strong attitude against the target language as the medium of learning and teaching. Only a mere 20% of the respondents across the target research areas indicated they would be comfortable with a Home language medium (that is, Xitsonga).

The irony of it all is that the respondents across the sampled schools indicated that they had a variety of language challenges to the core business of learning at Intermediate Phase level. This leads one to ask oneself the obvious question: Why then choose a language of learning and teaching which you have difficulties with? Perhaps this question will be answered when we deal with the interpretation and comments on TABLE 6 hereunder.

### **5.3.12 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 6**

This TABLE reveals that 100% of both male and female learners sampled at the rural and semi-urban schools of the Mopani District in the Limpopo Province indicated that they found English difficult to use in verbal communication, in formative and summative obligations.

The researcher in his analysis of the other TABLES (that is, TABLES 1-5) hinted on the learners' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching. In fact, more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the learners displayed very strong attitudes against mother-tongue instruction. Despite this type of attitude, still they indicated that they found using the language of their choice difficult to use to advantage. This study now tries to unpack the underlying reasons for such an attitude. As a point of departure, the researcher would like to emphasize that the negative attitude adopted against mother-tongue medium is deep-seated. A question then arises; what makes these learners to keep on clinging on a language they have challenges with? The answer to the question could be that 'attitudes make us the person we are.' A brief comment on the attitude phenomenon will help us understand the "some what strange" attitude by the majority of the research subjects. This phenomenon will be looked at on four social building blocks not enlisted in order of importance. Reason being that they are interrelated and interdependent in their function. They are; attitude, values, beliefs and norms.

- **Attitude aspect**

<http://sielearning.tafensw.edu.au> (downloaded on 2014/10/16) defines it as follows:

The word 'attitude' can refer to a lasting group of feelings, beliefs and behaviour tendencies directed towards specific people, groups, ideas or objects. An attitude is a belief about something. It usually describes what we think is the

proper way of doing something. The attitudes that we feel very strongly about are called values...Attitudes will always have a positive and negative element and when you hold an attitude you will have a tendency to behave in a certain way toward that person or object.

It is very clear therefore, that the stance taken by these learners towards the source language is informed by this behaviour aspect. The fact of the matter is that it is not easy for one to change from such a stance or position. In page 8 of the same document (that is, <http://sielearning.tafensw.edu.au>) it is correctly stated that “attitudes are therefore a powerful element in our life, are long enduring and hard to change-but not impossible.”

- **Values aspect**

Values too have a tremendous impact on our decisions in life. Page 1 of <http://sielearning.tafensw.edu.au> (downloaded on 2014/10/16) avers:

Values are principles, standards or qualities that an individual or group of people hold in high regard. These values guide the way we live our lives and the decisions we make. A value may be defined as something that we hold dear, those things/qualities which we consider to be of worth.

There is no doubt that the 80% of the interviewees who chose English as a medium despite the fact that they find it difficult to use in class value it as very important in the process of learning. Goode (1984:6) further qualifies the value element as something that we regard as good or bad, desirable or undesirable. This is how the sociologist qualifies it:

Values are notions of what a particular culture regards as good or bad, desirable or undesirable. Usually they are quite broad and abstract and do not dictate specific kinds of behaviour in concrete situations. Different cultures stress different (and even opposing) values, and the long run conceptions of right and wrong influence behaviour.

The researcher agrees with a school of thought that subscribes to values' sources. <http://sielearning.tafensw.edu.au> (downloaded on 2014/10/16) enumerates a number of sources that values come from as follows:

- family
- peers (social influence)
- the work place (work ethics, job roles)
- educational institutions (like schools)
- significant life events (death, divorce, losing job, major accident and trauma, major health issues, significant financial losses and so on)
- religion
- music
- technology
- culture
- major historical events (world wars, economic depression, etc).

The target research respondents obviously derive their values from most of the bullets stated by the source. Most probably, the key ones that they derive their values from are; family, peers, educational institutions, religion, music, technology and culture (listed not in order of importance).

- **Beliefs aspect**

Goode (1984:77) summarises the meaning of beliefs as “Cultural conventions about what is true or false.” He goes on to cite a political example of belief this way; “Democracy is the best way to run a government.” In the case of the target research subjects, a belief could be; the medium of English at Intermediate Phase is a good pedagogical practice for future job opportunities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century generation.

- **Norms aspect**

Goode (1984:78) defines norms as;

Instructions telling the members of a society what is correct and incorrect behaviour; rules about what people should and should not do.

*The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1981:690) defines norms in general but in an inclusive way as follows: “standard, pattern, type, standard quality to be produced or amount of work to be done; customary behaviour, etc.”

The researcher finds the portion that states “rules about what people should and should not do”, by Goode (1984:78) most appropriate to both the two opposite choices on the learning and teaching medium by the two research groups of the study.

A concluding remark one can make on the results of TABLE 6 is that the 100% majority learner response to the language challenges and their clinging to a language medium they concede to have limited knowledge of is informed by deep-seated attitudes, values, beliefs and norms they subscribe to. The next and last TABLE on the target research group seeks to interrogate the learners’ preference of a medium of instruction in the Mopani District.

**ITEM 7: Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for the Intermediate Phase Band?**

**TABLE 7: INDICATION OF LEARNER LANGUAGE MEDIUM PREFERENCE FOR THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE BAND**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses on language preference			TOTAL
		ENGLISH OR OTHERS	XITSONGA OR OTHERS	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	4 E	1 X	–	100%
	FEMALE	3 E	2 X	–	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	5 E	–	–	100%
	FEMALE	5 E	–	–	100%
TOTAL = 20		17	03	–	

**N.B.:** E stands for English

X stands for Xitsonga

O stands for other languages

### **Brief introductory remarks on TABLE 7**

Unlike the last six TABLES that have been analysed, interpreted and commented on so far (that is, TABLES 1-6), the seventh one does not restrict the respondents to make their choices between two official languages only. The current one allows them to choose the language medium they prefer among a possible eleven official languages of the Republic of South Africa. This was done strategically so as to establish the extent to which the bias towards one official language by the majority of the research subjects is justified. It is common knowledge that choosing between two options is easier than choosing among eleven possible options. The following exercise below seeks to unpack this TABLE against three research contexts, namely; analysis, interpretation and comments.

#### **5.3.13 Analysis of TABLE 7**

The seventh TABLE reveals that 80% of the rural male interviewees and 60% of their female counterparts prefer the English medium, while 20% of the male subjects prefer to be taught in Xitsonga. The picture in the semi-urban areas is slightly different in the sense that 100% of the male respondents as well as 100% of their female counterpart prefer the medium of English among the eleven official languages of the Republic of South Africa.

The fact that a tiny minority of the rural respondents preferred the medium of their Home Language is a clear indication that in general, the rural areas suffer very little language influence as compared to the semi-urban and urban areas. It is interesting to note that the female respondents are the “majority” of the “minority” who indicated strong Home Language medium preference as compared to their male counterpart across the Mopani District. Language preservation by women has been a trend from time in memorial. The Vatsonga women like other women of other races played a key role in preserving the language, specifically during King Shaka’s exploits (1787-1828). The Russian women are the best example of language preservation too. <http://www.aerotranslate.com/russian-language> (downloaded on 2014/10/20) informs:

The Russian language is not solely spoken by people of Russia. There are numerous diasporas in many countries. They take Russian influence and culture to new places. In general, it is Russian women who bring the Russian language to different countries. This way they help preserve it abroad by teaching their children to speak in Russian.

#### **5.3.14 Interpretation and comment on TABLE 7**

The English medium majority support by both the male and the female interviewees of the Mopani District continues up to this stage. The fact that 85% of the total respondents sampled in the District prefer the English medium as against 15% who prefer Xitsonga medium is a clear indication that the positive attitude towards the source language is very strong and persistent. The TABLE further reveals that the respondents would not prefer any third option apart from English or Xitsonga medium. If this trend is generalized, the English medium will dominate all the possible media despite the multilingual option the New South African Language Policy suggests. This does not argue well for the future multilingualism practice for a young democratic country like ours. The black child will continue to receive instruction in a language he/she has very limited knowledge of. Obviously this challenge will impact on his/her post Intermediate Phase education in general because of this deep-seated language attitude.

#### **5.3.15 Recapitulation on the I.P learner interview instrument**

The general opinion on the use of a language of teaching and learning is not painted favourably by TABLES 1-7 against Xitsonga Home Language. An overwhelming majority of the learner respondents across the Mopani District displayed favourable attitudes towards English as medium of instruction.

- a. On their opinion on the use of Xitsonga as a medium, TABLE 1 revealed that 80% of the respondents across the District opined negatively against the use of the target language as a medium. Whereas, only a mere 20% of their counterparts opined favourably.

- b. TABLE 2's results were in a way exposing the respondents' limitation of their comprehension of the language they value dearly. An average 35% of the interviewees indicated that they understood English better than Xitsonga in the sampled District. While a whopping 65% of their fellow respondents from the same target District indicated that they understood Xitsonga more than English.
- c. The above results (that is, TABLE 2's) are reinforced by the results of TABLE 3. The respondents were quized on the language they use most between English and Xitsonga for a variety of purposes. A 70% majority of them across the District claimed to interact with teachers, fellow learners and friends in Xitsonga. Whereas, a 30% minority of their counterparts in the same area claimed to interact with parents and strangers in English, this is a clear indication that English poses a major challenge as far as verbal expression is concerned.
- d. The fourth TABLE elicited the learners' view on whether the language they had a negative attitude against possessed requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in the Mopani District or not. A total of 85% of the subjects across the Mopani District did not think that Xitsonga does. It is only a tiny 15% of their fellow learners across the target research District who were of the view that it does. The negative attitude is heavily loaded against Xitsonga medium once more.
- e. TABLE 5 quized the respondents on their language favour between the source and the target languages. On average, 70% of the male and female interviewees across the target research District were not in favour of the use of Xitsonga as a medium. Only 30% of their counterparts indicated that they were in favour in the same research area. Again, the learner negative attitude towards Xitsonga medium persists.
- f. TABLE 6 like TABLE 2 sought to establish the Mopani District learners' position on their language shortcomings. TABLE 6 however, sought to establish both summative and oral language challenges. 100% of the male respondents as well as 100% of the female respondents across Mopani

District indicated that they found English difficult to be used to advantage in formative, summative assessment as well as expressing themselves verbally fluently.

- g. TABLE 7, as well as the last under this research instrument, sought to establish the respondents' preference of a language of learning and teaching among a possible total of eleven RSA official languages. A total of 85% of the learner interviewees across Mopani District indicated that they favoured an English medium as compared to a mere 15% who said that they favoured Xitsonga as a medium in the same area. The deduction made from the seven TABLES is that the English medium seems to enjoy favour and support by the majority of the Mopani District Intermediate Phase learners. The next section outlines the results of the teacher respondents on their attitudes towards Xitsonga as a medium of instruction.

## **B. TEACHER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Background knowledge about the Intermediate Phase teacher**

The intermediate Phase teacher in this study is one of the key role players in Education. The study has identified the teacher as a research subject because of the special role he/she plays in the education of learners in general and post Foundation Phase in particular. Such a teacher therefore, is employed according to a range of the RSA National Education requirements. The research has identified four (4) key requirements that such a teacher needs to satisfy or be aware of before discharging his/her professional duties to the learners in particular. The bullets below seek to briefly outline them before the process of data analysis and interpretation is carried out. These requirements are not outlined in order of importance in that they are all regarded as equally vital in enforcing professionalism.

- Employment of Educators' Act (Act , No 76 1998)

The above act has been updated to Government Gazette 34620 dated 19, September 2011. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011) this ACT serves to;

Provide for employment of educators by the state, for the regulation of the condition of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of educators and for matters connected therewith.

An Intermediate Phase teacher like any other teacher or educator employed by the Basic Education Department ought to comply with this ACT.

- Qualification requirement

The Department of Basic Education (2011:1) stipulates that;

You may follow one of the two routes in becoming a teacher, namely: a four-year Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed); a three- or four-year Bachelor's degree, followed by one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

The researcher wishes to state that these are minimum requirements for one to practice as a professional worker in a school situation but not ideal entry requirements. Countries differ in Primary schools basic professional requirements. These countries' requirements range from first degree or equivalent to Masters degree or equivalent, Lewis (2014:1). The research instrument did not include an item on subject qualification because of the state of affair of primary education in the country. One can bet that very few Intermediate Phase educators are adequately skilled to handle the subjects they are teaching in the Mopani District schools. The researcher is of the view that a relevant specialized Masters degree or equivalent would enrich our Intermediate learners in many ways.

- **Roles and Responsibilities in a nutshell**

It is not easy to do justice to roles and responsibilities of IP teachers without commenting briefly on a few key sources' stance. Stott in <http://www.mrstott.com> (downloaded on 2014/10/21) summarises the teacher's role this way:

I believe a big part of my role in the 21st century hinges on an ability to provide students with a reason to learn and to prepare students for citizenship in America. (P2)

In his concluding remarks, the scholar says:

...I have a vision of my role as a teacher in the 21st century. I understand there will be many challenges in attaining my goal-multiculturalism, student apathy, commercialism in schools, inclusion and more. My plan to counter these challenges consists of projecting professionalism and honesty (being myself), replacing shallow and unproductive narratives, like "commercialism", with deep and lasting narratives, like the common thread of humanity, and involving students in the subject matter. I plan to teach students critical thinking skills so that they may see an issue from both sides - allowing them to form their own opinions and ideas. Additionally, I will model lifelong learning and encourage it in my students whenever possible (Page 6).

Though the scholar's perspective is centred around American students, it is however, relevant to the role of the IP teacher as well.

On the other hand, <http://www.studymode.com> (downloaded on 2014/10/21) interrogates these roles and responsibilities in the context of the seven roles of an educator as captured in *Norms and Standards for an RSA educator*. Comments are made of a teacher as Designer of Learning Programmes, Facilitator, leader, manager and administrator, assessor, Lifelong learner, Specialist in content and methodology and Pastor and citizenship (Pages 1-3).

The BAT manual (2002:70) clearly outlines the I.P. teacher's core roles/duties and responsibilities as follows:

- a. To engage in class teaching which will foster a purposeful progression in learning and which is consistent with the learning areas and programmes of subjects and grades determined.
- b. To be a class educator.
- c. To prepare lessons taking into account orientaton, regional courses, new approaches, techniques, evaluation, aids, etc. in the field.
- d. To take on a leadership role in respect of the subject, learning area or phase, if required.
- e. To plan, cordinate, control, administer, evaluate, and report on learners' academic progress.

- f. To recognise that learning is an active process and be prepared to use a variety of strategies to meet the outcomes of the curriculum.
- g. To establish a classroom environment which stimulates positive learning and actively engages learners in the learning process.
- h. To consider and utilise the learners' own experiences as a fundamental and valuable resource.

The research tool will therefore, elicit data from the teacher respondents who comply with the roles and responsibilities that have already been discussed in the target District.

- **Language competency**

Both the source and the target languages pose peculiar challenges to their users. South Africa is a multilingual country with not less than 11 (eleven) official languages (New South African Language Policy, 1994). An African child has an extra language burden in the sense that apart from the challenges posed by his/her Home Language, he/she is expected to learn four subjects through the medium of a language he/she has very little knowledge of at Intermediate Phase level. The 1st research tool already discussed in this study (that is, LEARNER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TOOL) revealed that 100% of the learners in the target District conceded that they had a variety of challenges in using English to advantage in a classroom situation (Pages 125-131). The language of learning and teaching is not the learners' challenge only, but also a limitation to some of the teachers who are expected to use it as a medium for the rest of the subjects except Xitsonga Home language or other African languages. The obvious language challenges are; almost all the sampled Intermediate Phase teachers are no English Home language speakers, the majority of them are no English First Additional language specialists either.

Nel and Muller (2010:635-649) downloaded on 2014/10/23, show how the teacher's limited English proficiency impacts on curriculum delivery in general and Intermediate Phase level in particular. In page 2 of the same source, the writers correctly aver:

The importance of the role of the language in teaching education programmes and in children’s learning is crucial...The transition which English Second Language (ESL) students need to make when using English as a language of learning in higher education is a matter of great concern in the South African higher education sector.

This study seeks to argue that this language challenge is not encountered in higher education scenario only, but goes back down the ladder of education in Republic of South Africa (In this case, the Intermediate Phase Band).

**ITEM 1: What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga Home language medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?**

**TABLE 8: INDICATION OF OPINION ON THE USE OF XITSONGA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEVEL**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses			TOTAL
		XITSONGA	ENGLISH	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	2	3	–	100%
	FEMALE	2	3	–	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	0	5	–	100%
	FEMALE	2	3	–	100%
TOTAL = 20		6	14		

**5.3.16 Analysis of TABLE 8**

The rural and semi-urban results as mirrored by TABLE 8 of the teacher respondents are as follows: 40% of the rural male as well as 40% of their counterparts from the same research area were of the opinion that the Xitsonga medium would assist the learners a great deal. 60% of the male respondents and also 60% of the female interviewees were not of the view that Xitsonga should be used as a medium at the target Phase. The TABLE paints an interesting picture in

the semi-urban area in terms of interviewees' scores as compared to the rural area. 100% of the male respondents opined that they were opposed to the Xitsonga medium, whereas 60% of their female counterpart opposed the idea of Home language medium. No one of the semi-urban male respondent favoured the Xitsonga medium. Only 40% of their female fellow interviewees opined for the Home language medium. The majority of the respondents who opined AGAINST clearly indicated that they were in favour of an English medium. On the other hand, the minority of their counterparts who opined FOR stated in no uncertain terms that they favoured the Home Language medium at Intermediate Phase level. They advanced the following reasons for their Language media opinions;

- a. The FOR Xitsonga medium respondents:
  - Learners grasp content with ease when they are taught in their Home Language.
  - They express their ideas better in Xitsonga,
  - They seem to comprehend the process better in Xitsonga rather than committing answers to memory.
  
- b. The AGAINST Xitsonga medium respondents;
  - We need to stick to the Language Policy of the country. Currently English is an official medium of Intermediate Phase level,
  - If we use Xitsonga medium we are delaying the learners' English knowledge progress,
  - Many first world countries are using English as an international language, therefore we need to empower our learners as early as possible,
  - English proficiency is a key to job opportunities and academic advancement globally.

In a nutshell, the TABLE points a vivid picture of the majority respondents who favour the English medium at the target Phase level.

### 5.3.17 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 8

This TABLE on the teachers' opinion on the medium of instruction presents two pedagogical facts. The first fact is that the teachers' opinion either FOR or AGAINST is informed by their personal classroom experience as well as their personal language of instruction belief. This interpretation is based on what the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1981:715) defines as an opinion:

Judgement or belief based on grounds short of proof, provisional conviction, view held as probable...disputable point, view or sentiments, especially on moral questions, what one thinks on a particular question, belief, a conviction...

It is against this background that on average 70% of the teacher interviewees opined in favour of English as an appropriate medium, and only 30% of their colleagues across the target District opined in favour of Xitsonga medium.

The reasons advanced by the interviewees who opined in favour of Home Language medium seem to be concerned about the underperformance of these learners in the subjects using English medium as well as the intransigent and rebellious attitude against the bulk of literature already discussed in this study on the importance of mother-tongue education across the Basic Education level. On the other hand, the respondents who opined in favour of English First Additional Language medium seem to be concerned about the "good command of English", job opportunities, belonging to the global village through proficiency in the queen's language and "the Language Policy." Proficiency in one's Home Language leads to proficiency in the English 1st Additional Language. It is partially true that we belong to the global village, but at the same time we need to know who we are first. Appreciation of one's language leads to appreciation of others' languages including English. The researcher is aware of the vital role played by English in education but that does not mean that teachers should sacrifice the concept of multilingualism in education. In fact, a good knowledge of both one's Home Language and English First Additional Language enriches the Intermediate Phase learner rather than disadvantaging one. If the teacher balances the multilingual concept in curriculum delivery it empowers the learners in one's class rather than disempowering them. A possible language medium model will be further elaborated on under the sub-heading; "Findings and recommendations" in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

**ITEM 2: What are the factors that impact on the implimentation of the Language in Education Policy and why?**

**TABLE 9: INDICATION ON THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY AND REASONS ADVANCED**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses on factors that impact on language policy			TOTAL
		NEGATIVE FACTORS	POSITIVE FACTORS	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE 5	1. Too many languages 2. Too many Official languages 3. .. 4. .. 5. ..	0	—	100%
	FEMALE 5	1. Foundation Phase language Medium 2. No Xitsonga Books 3. No parent Contribution 4. No belief in Home language 5. ..	0	—	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE 5	1. Environmental Issues 2. Negative Attitude 3. Teachers not Consulted 4. .. 5. ..	0	—	100%
	FEMALE 5	1. Too many languages 2. No good books 3. Learner problems 4. Barriers to Learning 5. Very difficult Terminologies	0	—	100%
TOTAL = 20	20	100%	0%		

## **Introductory remarks on ITEM 2 OR TABLE 9**

The ITEM/TABLE seeks to quiz the Intermediate Phase educators on three crucial aspects. The first aspect seeks to elicit data on either negative or positive factors that the educators view as impacting on the successful implementation of the LiEP; secondly, it seeks to elicit data on their understanding of the Language in Education Policy and its implication in as far as the Language of instruction is concerned; last but not least, the ITEM/TABLE seeks to quiz them on reasons FOR or AGAINST the successful implementation of the Language Policy (that is, LiEP).

What the LiEP says about the language of learning and teaching at the Intermediate Phase Band. Makua (2004:171-174) interrogated the complexity of the implementation of the LiEP in South Africa. The current research study argues that the system/ government has good policies in place but the implementation strategies pose a huge challenge across the departments. There is a tendency and a structured pattern by the officials to implement the state Language Policy selctively and irregularly.

In the context of teaching and learning medium at the target phase, it is stated in the *South African's New Language Policy* (2004:9-10) that the education language Policy in the country must conform to the spirit of the language provisions in the constitution. In other words, matters such as the medium in which a pupil's instruction takes place and the number of languages that are to be compulsory school subjects may not conflict with the lnguage clause in the constitution (section 3) nor with section 32, which provides that every person shall be entitled to instruction in the language of his/her choice when it is reasonably practicable.

It is further stated in the revised version of the *Language in Education Policy* (1997:2) that "from Grade 3 (Std 1) onwards, all learners shall offer their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional language as subjects." What all these imply therefore, is that from Grade 4 upwards, the learners will receive education through the medium of either English or Afrikaans except their African Home Languages. They may if they wish take at most two additional languages as subjects but not less than one additional langauge (learners must have the following language combinations; for example: Xitsonga HL, English FAL, Afrikaans

SAL or Xitsonga HL or English FAL) , CAPS, (2011). Currently, the Language Policy is silent about the learners' Home Language as medium at the target Phase level. The irony of it all is that the Constitution (1996:14) suggests that "everyone has a right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonable practicable." The "in the official language or languages of their choice..." to me implies an option of instruction in either one language or more.

### **5.3.18 Analysis of TABLE 9**

TABLE 9 does not paint a good picture about the factors that impact on the implementation of the LiEP at all. 100% of the rural male teachers and 100% of their female colleagues responded negatively. The same pattern continued in the semi-urban area. 100% male interviewees as well as 100% of their female counterpart responded negatively. There was 0% across the target District of the subjects who responded positively. The reasons both the male and female respondents advanced across the Mopani District could be summarized as follows:

- There are too many official languages,
- The Foundation Phase CAPS medium is regressive (works against the learners),
- The parent language input is none-existent,
- The communities have no belief in African Language medium,
- There are no good books provided to fast track the implementation,
- There are too many barriers to learning across the target areas,
- The terminologies used are too difficult to comprehend (some of the translated words are not clear) etc.

The general LiEP knowledge of the interviewees across the target District irrespective of gender could be termed sketchy. Their knowledge of the grade language of learning and teaching is fair. What worries the researcher however, is their understanding of multilingualism, the Bill of Rights, progressive implementation of multilingual practice in a classroom situation, and the role of content subjects

teachers in implementing the the LiEP to advantage. There is generally no interest on their part across the target District to dissect the LiEP holistically and objectively.

### **5.3.19 Interpretation and comment on TABLE 9**

The key aspects'/points' results of TABLE 9 suggest that the interviewees view the successful implementation of the LiEP in a very negative light. This could be attributed to the fact that no meaningful effort was made by the government to workshop its teachers about the content, aims and objectives of the LiEP in education in general. The planners have gone it alone and in turn the foot soldiers are expected to implement it meaningfully on the ground. Worst still, the respondents seem to interpret the policy differently and subjectively. The government should be made aware that the teachers are better placed to implement policies that deal with curriculum delivery on the ground than the planners. The educators'/teachers' feedback would assist a great deal to address issues like; why eleven official languages, less parent inputs, Foundation Phase Home Language medium, what multilingualism implies, appropriate language medium, better version of the policy, and recommended good books for enhancing implementation on the ground. Unfortunately, the apathy of the teachers as a result of the factors that they raised as reasons for non-successful implementation of the LiEP impacts negatively on the education of an African child.

**ITEM 3: In your view, does Xitsonga possess the requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in different Learning areas? Briefly comment.**

**TABLE 10: INDICATION OF WHETHER XITSONGA POSSESSES THE REQUISITE CAPACITY TO FUNCTION AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN DIFFERENT LEARNING AREAS AND BRIEF COMMENTS ON MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEVEL**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses			TOTAL
		XITSONGA NO	ENGLISH YES	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	3	2	–	100%
	FEMALE	3	2	–	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	5	0	–	100%
	FEMALE	3	2	–	100%
TOTAL = 20		14	6		

### 5.3.20 Analysis of TABLE 10

The scale on TABLE 3 is tilted in favour of the no answer. 60% of the rural male respondents as well as 60% of their female fellow interviewees stated that Xitsonga had no requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction. On the other hand, 40% of the male respondents and equally 40% of their female counterpart registered a resounding “YES” in favour of Xitsonga having a requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in the different Intermediate Phase learning areas. According to these results, the male and the female respondents seem to be divided into two on their views on a 60%/40% basis. It is very interesting to note that the TABLE paints a different picture in the semi-urban area as compared to the rural area. A whopping 100% of the semi-urban male interviewees totally disagreed

that Xitsonga had a requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in different learning areas at I.P (Intermediate Phase) level. 60% of their female colleagues shared their view, whereas only 40% of the female respondents said that Xitsonga had the requisite capacity to operate as a medium. Still, the majority average percentage of the total respondents did not think that the target language had a requisite capacity to operate as a medium. The FOR and AGAINST comments could be briefly categorised as follows:

The “FOR” teacher comments:

- Xitsonga has vocabulary to express meaning,
- Teachers should do research and dig deep,
- Direct borrowing could do the trick,
- Improvisation could assist a great deal,
- Translation and interpretation could provide knowledge and skill for the content subject educators, and
- Content teachers should learn from the Afrikaans language which developed from a humble beginning into a fully-fledged academic medium of instruction from Foundation Phase to higher education studies.

The “AGAINST” teacher comments:

- Xitsonga is very poor in vocabulary for the various Intermediate Phase learning areas,
- We do not have Xitsonga translated texts for the various learning areas like MATHS currently,
- The current language Policy advocates English as a medium of instruction from Intermediate Phase upwards,
- There is no will from the Government to carry the cost of providing Xitsonga materials for the various content subjects, and
- We feel that English medium prepares the Intermediate Phase learners for future language competency.

### **5.3.21 Interpretation and comment on TABLE 10**

TABLE 10 interpretation and commentary remarks are based on the results of the analysis process under 4.3.18. The final analysis of the respondents' position on whether Xitsonga possesses the requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in various Intermediate Phase learning areas except Xitsonga yielded a whopping 70% "NO" and mere 30% YES across the target District. The deduction one can make out of the two research scores is that the majority of the research subjects are of the view that Xitsonga is not capacitated enough to function as a medium. Whereas, a mere 30% of their counterparts are of the view that it can function as a medium. It would be an unwise assertion to conclude the findings on the basis of scores comparison only without balancing them with the reasons advanced by the two respondents' views. The researcher takes the position that the two opposing views need to be dissected objectively because they reflect some of the factors that impact on the education of learners in the 21st century.

The researcher would like to concede that he is no "Language Law" specialist to do justice to some of the reasons advanced by the interviewees. A Gerrie Nel or Barry Roux would perhaps interpret the language Law raised by the subjects in this study better. However, the researcher is confident that his 36 years of teaching experience will enable him to do justice to the concerns raised. Neither the "YES" nor the "NO" advanced reasons are totally irrelevant or incorrect.

### **BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE REASONS ADVANCED**

#### **The "YES" reasons**

- The fact that the 30% minority interviewees are of the view that Xitsonga has the vocabulary to express meaning shows that they are willing to explain difficult concepts or formulas in the African child's mother-tongue. For such educators, the learners' understanding of how educational things are done is a priority than simply parroting and regurgitating solutions or answers.

- The fact that these educators view the importance of research in teaching as well as delving deeper into matters of multilingualism is a clear indication of their compliance with the educator's role of "scholar, researcher and lifelong learner" *Norms and Standards for Educators*, ( 1996:13).
- This minority group seem to comprehend the art of applying direct borrowing of words from a source language in order to solve the challenges of limited language vocabulary of a specific target language. Nunnemann (2014:1) says about language borrowing:

Where two different languages have contact over a period of time they surely influence each other. Words may be taken over from one language and are adopted to the other...One reason for borrowing a suitable word from another language is the need to find a term for an unfamiliar thing, animal, or cultural device. Then borrowing seems to be the easiest solution to the problem.

There are a number of words in Xitsonga which are borrowed from other languages. For example; tafel (Afrikaans) tafula (Xitsonga), school (English) xikolo(Xitsonga). Culturally, our forefathers did not use such borrowed words during their era. Nowadays, we have attached meaning to them and we are able to use them to advantage in various contexts.

- "Improvisation could assist a great deal in content teaching", they opined. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1983:427), improvisation means;

Provide, make or do something quickly, in time of need, using whatever happens to be available...

These educators are sensitive to the fact that they need to provide in time of educational need. They go an extra mile to see to it that challenges are made clear in simple terms in order to achieve a specific learning outcome or learning skill.

- Translation and interpretation short courses could provide knowledge and skill for the content subject teachers according to their view. This type of educators seem to have the interest of their learners at heart. Indeed, short courses in translation could provide a short term solution to the shortage of readily available content subjects textbooks in the target language. Their effort will most certainly support the learner's challenge of understanding difficult concepts in the curriculum. Kodi (2009:58) suggests:

The country has to train a lot of translators in the Department of Education, including educators, to translate LTSM into all South African official languages other than English and Afrikaans.

- They concluded by indicating that content teachers should learn from the Afrikaans language which developed from a humble beginning to a fully-fledged academic language and medium of instruction from Foundation Phase to higher education studies. History supports the teachers' view on the possibility of transforming an ordinary language into a capacitated and functional language. Nxumalo (2000:123) comments as follows on its development:

I wish to indicate at this stage that Afrikaans was in later years of its existence, largely developed by qualified linguists, some of whom were supported financially by the government.

### **The “NO” reasons**

- According to the 70% majority respondents' view, Xitsonga is very poor in vocabulary for the various Intermediate Phase content subjects. Unlike the “YES” respondents who are willing to meet the learners half way by trying to explain difficult concepts in the learners' Home Language, this group wants readily available and fully-fledged materials (LTSM) with relevant vocabulary for each learning area. Otherwise, they prefer to stick to an English medium irrespective of whether the learners understood or not.

- Once more, these teacher respondents are of the view that since Xitsonga translated textbooks are currently not available, there is very little they can do about the state of affairs in the classroom. The poor Intermediate Phase learners will have to swim or drown. It is a situation which is beyond their means. Some even went to an extent of saying that they are not paid for translating texts but for teaching them subjects through the English medium, period.
- On the third bullet, the 70% majority teachers' view of what the LiEP says about the English medium represents a misinterpretation of the policy document. The researcher is of the view that the LiEP should be interpreted against the constitution of the country. A selective interpretation of the LiEP is not a wise educational move and practice. A holistic approach is the best method of interpreting the LiEP. Through wide reading of a bulk of Language Policy documents, as well as carefully dissecting the RSA constitution, the researcher has come to realise that three (3) key factors need to be taken into account before coming to a conclusion. These factors are as follows:
  - (a) What the constitution of the country says about the language of learning and teaching;
  - (b) What the concept of multilingualism implies; and
  - (c) What benefits an African child's comprehension of content between the use of mono-lingual medium and multilingual media (in this case the use of many languages as media of instruction). Hereunder the researcher endeavours to unpack the three key concepts.
- The constitution of the Republic of South Africa with regard to the medium of learning and teaching. Page 14 Subsection (2) of the constitution (1996:4) reads:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.

The constitution's stipulation on the language of learning and teaching makes it a right of everyone; secondly, it makes provision for one language medium or many languages media; thirdly, it is specific about the type of institutions such a linguistic practice should apply to (in this case it applies to public institutions), last but not least, it is explicit about the practicability of such a practice.

- According to the tone of the constitution, the Intermediate Phase content subjects educators who hide behind the LiEP got its interpretation incorrectly and selectively biased. The constitution does cover the language medium needs of the learners in government school classes.
- Perhaps, there is an amount of truth of the groups' assertion that there is no will from the government to carry out the cost of providing Xitsonga material for the various content subjects. It is true that the development of African languages as well as LTSM is not in the priority list of the government. This is evident by the recent (2014) electronic report on the eminent collapse of the institutions such as PanSALB, and the total closure of the Provincial language units (LRCD, under the national Arts and Culture Division).
- The last view on the English medium as a classroom practice for empowering Intermediate Phase learners is a bit economic with the truth. Though English as a subject is an important linguistic means for exposure in many countries of the world, but it is not understood by the majority of the learners in the target District to really benefit out of its use as a medium, SANLP (1994:7). It is my take as well as many linguists, researchers, historical and empirical data and as well as resourced language structures that multilingualism would benefit the target research subjects rather than disempowering them. A mono-lingual medium (that is, English in this case) would in fact disadvantage many African learners in the Limpopo Province according to the findings of this study (See also Carole Benson, 2004:1-19). The next TABLE seeks to establish whether the research subjects favour the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction or not, and also to advance supportive reasons accordingly.

**ITEM 4: Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction? If yes or no, kindly advance reasons**

**TABLE 11: INDICATION ON WHETHER OR NOT TEACHERS FAVOUR XITSONGA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND REASONS ADVANCED**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses			TOTAL
		NO OR NEGATIVE	YES OR POSITIVE	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE 5	4	1	–	100%
	FEMALE 5	5	0	–	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE 5	3	2	–	100%
	FEMALE 5	4	1	–	100%
TOTAL = 20	20	16	4	–	

### **INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF REMARKS**

Teachers as government agents on the ground are better placed to respond meaningfully on pertinent issues such as language medium favour, and its impact on the delivery of content in an Intermediate Phase classroom. These agents deal with content delivery almost for 8 full hours of each school day; they objectively assess its impact through diagnostic, formative and summative means than any government official. It is against these educational factors that their response on this research ITEM is viewed as crucial and vital in this study.

### **5.3.22 Analysis of TABLE 11**

Once again, this TABLE like other TABLES, presents a very skewed results in favour of the “NO” responses. 80% Of the rural male respondents said that they were not in favour of a Xitsonga medium, and a whopping 100% of their female counterpart from the same area said the same. Only 20% of the rural male teachers said that they were in favour of a Xitsonga medium. Whereas no female respondent favoured a Xitsonga medium. What puzzles the researcher is the attitude displayed by the female respondents who under normal circumstances are regarded as custodians of language preservation and development world wide. Their stance is a worrying linguistic danger indeed.

In the semi-urban area, however, the skewedness or not symmetrical picture presented by the TABLE is slightly different in terms of scores and gender. 60% Of the male interviewees indicated that they were not in favour of a Xitsonga medium. A 80% female majority of their fellow teachers also registered a “NO” stance. Only 40% and 20% of the male and female interviewees respectively registered a “YES” stance. Though the female “NO” respondents decreased by 20% as compared to their rural female counterparts, still the females are still in the majority. The justification of their disfavour and favour of all the respondents is commented on under Interpretation and comments on the TABLE hereunder.

### **5.3.23 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 11**

The composite results of TABLE 11 still reflect a strong negative attitude of the teachers towards a Xitsonga medium in the Mopani District. This is supported by the fact that a majority 80% of all the target teachers indicated that they were not in favour while a mere 20% of their counterpart indicated that they were for such a medium. In order to unpack the underlying problem, we need also to ask this direct question; “What do we attributes their attitudes to?” the answer to the question is in the reasons they advanced either “against” or “for” home language medium.

- **The FOR responses**

- Learners comprehend concepts and formulas better in their mother-tongue,
- Mother-tongue assists them to transfer knowledge into other language like English,
- Tuition in mother-tongue breaks inferiority complex,
- The pass rate would increase a lot if mother-tongue is used as a medium.

- **The “AGAINST” responses**

- Learners are expected to write their tests and exam answers in English,
- English is an international language whereas Xitsonga is a South African language,
- There are no LTSM in the target language for all the I.P subjects,
- The policy document advocates the source language medium at I.P level.

- **Comments on the “FOR” and “AGAINST” responses**

The average 20% of the respondents who registered in favour of a Xitsonga medium are foot soldiers who are willing to carry their learners through finding suitable and appropriate Xitsonga words for difficult concepts and formulas in the subjects they are assigned to teach. They are quite aware that learners are able to transfer what they know in their mother-tongue to English. All languages have similar language structures world-wide. The researcher can bear testimony to this argument. For example, the following language structures are found in most of the languages, specifically the South African official languages: Morphology, Phonology, Semantic, Syntax, literary devices etc (See also Fromkin and Rodman, 1985). One cannot agree with the minority group more on the assertion that the more one uses one's language is the more one feels proud of it. A typical example of language prejudice is the one well disseminated in the late 90's when a prominent Mutsonga politician stopped an interview on the basis of what he termed “an interview in a stupid language.” The poor journalist had to use English to a Mutsonga in order to get the interview going. Though there is no documented data on the comparison of the pass rate between subjects taught in English and Xitsonga, but the results of Afrikaans

Home Language learner speakers support their assertion (that is, the minority's assertion).

▪ **The AGAINST responses**

The interpretation of the 80% majority respondents who registered a resounding "NO" stance against the use of a Xitsonga medium across the Mopani District could be underpinned by two philosophical imperatives. The first one is the fact imperative and the second one is the truth imperative. It is the investigator's take that the "AGAINST" stance is informed by the fact imperative. It is a fact that according to the present set-up Intermediate learners are expected to answer tests and exam questions in English as a matter of policy. It is also a fact that English is an international language as compared to Xitsonga. It is an undeniable fact that currently there are no LTSM in the target language for MATHS, SOCIAL SCIENCE, NATURAL SCIENCE and LO at Intermediate Phase level. Last but not least, it is a fact that a superficial interpretation of the LiEP suggests that all subjects at I.P level except the African languages should be taught in English. Despite all those factual imperatives, the truth imperative cannot be ignored. The truth imperative is based on the following:

- The use of both the source and target languages empowers the learners' sound knowledge of the content subjects than disempowering them. They will be more prepared to answer both tests and exam questions more appropriately.
- The use of English and Xitsonga prepares the learners better than using a medium they do not understand well because it is assumed that they will be able to face the demand of the global village. This is the truth.
- Improvisation of the LTSM in the target language benefits an African child than disenfranchising him/her.
- Misreading the LiEP undermines the right of the learners didactically. It is the truth that our interpretation of the LiEP should be consistent with the Bill of rights and the constitution's concept of multilingualism. "Lowu i ntiyiso maxaka." Teachers ought to prioritise the progress of an African child first in his/her quest for knowledge and skills. The next TABLE quizzes the

respondents on what they think could be done to improve Xitsonga speakers' attitudes towards the target language's role as a medium of instruction.

**ITEM 5: What can be done to improve the Xitsonga speakers' attitudes towards H.L as a medium of instruction?**

**TABLE 12: VIEWS OF THE TEACHER RESPONDENTS ON WHAT COULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MOTHER- TONGUE'S ROLE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses per interviewee		TOTAL
		Views by each interviewee	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Should love the language</li> <li>2. To be proud of their language</li> <li>3. Job opportunities</li> <li>4. Encouraged to speak</li> <li>5. Attend cultural events</li> </ol>	0	100%
	FEMALE 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Job opportunities</li> <li>2. TV programmes</li> <li>3. Xitsonga soapies</li> <li>4. Speak the language</li> <li>5. Government to use</li> </ol>	0	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Its importance</li> <li>2. Use of standard Xitsonga</li> <li>3. Debates</li> <li>4. Speaking it properly</li> <li>5. Motivation on its role</li> </ol>	0	100%
	FEMALE 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage to learn it</li> <li>2. Correct orthography</li> <li>3. Cultural events</li> <li>4. Debates</li> <li>5. Language competitions</li> </ol>	0	100%
TOTAL = 20				

### **5.3.24 Analysis of TABLE 12**

The TABLE's results were influenced by the subjects' reflection on the issues that could be done to improve the attitudes of the speakers of the target language towards its role as a medium. There was no need for a "YES" or "NO", "Positive" or "Negative" as it was with the case with most of the TABLES already analysed. The only possible option under this ITEM was a "NO OPINION" answer. It is interesting to note that 100% of the male respondents as well as 100% of their fellow female respondents across all the target areas had constructive opinion on the questions posed. Their responses varied from;

- Learners should be guided to love the language,
- Job opportunities should be created for Xitsonga specialists,
- Learners should be encouraged to speak the target language often not the opposite,
- They should be encouraged to attend cultural events,
- Xitsonga TV programmes should be introduced to enhance the language current status,
- Prominent officials should use it more often in public forums,
- Influential figures should set good example through using standard Xitsonga,
- Language debates and competitions should be introduced and prized, to
- Standard Xitsonga orthography should be maintained and revised regularly.

### **5.3.25 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 12**

TABLE 12 exhibits a sense of patriotism among the target respondents. The implication of their responses suggest that though they favour the English medium, but they would like to see the target language developed for better use. One can also deduce that though they value a foreign language as a medium of instruction they nonetheless value their indigenous culture which is embedded in one's Home Language. The researcher finds their suggested ten positive key areas that could help improve Vatsonga's attitudes towards the target language medium role as fair and workable. Researchers like Babane (2003), Makua (2004), Nxumalo (2000) have recommended most of the respondents' suggestions in their empirical studies

as well. What worries the current investigator, however, is intransigent, reluctant, lax, and indifferent attitude adopted by the powers that be towards addressing the raised language issues. The next TABLE interrogates the research subjects on the specific language they prefer as a medium for the Intermediate Phase Band.

**ITEM 6: Which language do you prefer as a medium of instruction for the Intermediate Phase Band?**

**TABLE 13: INDICATION OF TEACHER LANGUAGE MEDIUM PREFERENCE AND REASON(S) ADVANCED**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Responses on language preference and reasons			TOTAL
		ENGLISH	XITSONGA	REASONS	
RURAL 10	MALE	ENGLISH ENGLISH ENGLISH 5 ENGLISH ENGLISH	- - - - -	International language  Accommodation	100%
	FEMALE	ENGLISH ENGLISH ENGLISH 5 ENGLISH ENGLISH	- - - -	Many people speak it  Offers better job opportunities	100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	ENGLISH ENGLISH ENGLISH 4 ENGLISH	XITSONGA - - 1 - -	International language  Offers job opportunities	100%
	FEMALE	ENGLISH ENGLISH ENGLISH 4 ENGLISH	XITSONGA - - 1 - -	Accommodation  Many people speak	100%
TOTAL = 20		18	2		

### **5.3.26 Analysis of TABLE 13**

TABLE 13, like the learners' TABLE 6 quizzes the interviewees on the language medium preference as well as provision of possible reasons. Consequently, the analysis of the TABLE yielded the following results; 100% of the male respondents as well as equally 100% of their female colleagues from the same rural area, indicated that they preferred an English medium. The picture painted in the semi-urban area is slightly different in the sense that 80% of the male interviewees as well as 80% of their female counterparts indicated that they preferred an English medium. Only 20% of the male subjects as well as 20% of their female colleagues indicated that they preferred a Xitsonga medium. Following is the investigator's interpretation and some remarks based on the reasons they advanced.

### **5.3.27 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 13**

The implication of TABLE 13's results is that there is a misconception of the 90% of the respondents across the Mopani District of thinking that knowledge of one's Home Language does not help in any way in enhancing one's understanding of other languages. Our being accommodative does not mean that we need to sacrifice the majority of the learners' understanding of the content delivered in a classroom situation. The fact that many people in the global village speak English does not mean that we should use it as an excuse to deny an African child basic understanding of the various content subjects through hiding behind a medium they have very little knowledge of. The investigator supports the multilingual medium because it is perceived to be a progressive didactical practice which empowers the learners in general and an African child in particular, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996:15). A content educator should strive to play an inclusive pedagogical role in a classroom situation. The last TABLE endeavours to quiz the target respondents on the specific language which they regard as enabling the learners to express themselves better between Xitsonga and English in the learning areas that they teach.

**ITEM 7: Between Xitsonga and English, which language makes the learners to express themselves better in the learning area(s) that you teach?**

**TABLE 14: INDICATION OF TEACHERS' VIEW ON THE LANGUAGE THAT ENABLES THE LEARNERS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES BETTER BETWEEN XITSONGA AND ENGLISH**

Area and Total Number of respondents	Gender of respondents	Teachers' views on language which learners express themselves better			TOTAL
		XITSONGA	ENGLISH	NO OPINION	
RURAL 10	MALE	1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga	1 English 1 English		100%
	FEMALE	1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga	0		100%
SEMI-URBAN 10	MALE	1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga	1 English		100%
	FEMALE	1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1 Xitsonga 1Xitsonga 1Xitsonga	0		100%
TOTAL = 20		17	3		

### 5.3.28 Analysis of TABLE 14

The raw data gleaned from TABLE 14 reflect that the results are consistent with the learners' which was elicited through their research instrument. 60% of the rural male respondents indicated that the learners express themselves better in Xitsonga, while a whopping 100% of their female fellow interviewees indicated the same. Only a mere 40% of the rural male respondents indicated that the learners express themselves better in English. The results of the semi-urban area are slightly different from that of the rural area in terms of scores. 80% of the semi-urban male respondents as well as 100% of their female counterpart indicated that

learners express themselves better in Xitsonga respectively. The male respondents have increased by 20% on the Xitsonga score, whereas the female respondents across the Mopani District clearly indicated that the learners in class express themselves better in Xitsonga by a 100% score. The next ITEM seeks to uncover why the majority of both the learners and teachers concede that the learners have difficulties in expressing themselves better in the source language.

### **5.3.29 Interpretation and comments on TABLE 14**

The fact that TABLE 14 reveals that 85% of all the respondents across the target District concede that their learners in class express themselves better in Xitsonga as opposed to a mere 15% who indicated that they express themselves better in English is a clear indication of a serious linguistic challenge. Justice is by no means done to these learners who are expected to learn almost 99,9% of their subjects in a language they are unable to express themselves in better. Besides, they are being assessed formatively and summatively in the same source language both the teachers and the learners concede poses a huge challenge. The final deduction one can make from the findings is that a high majority of these learners are most definitely going to have it more difficult to understand the content subjects beyond Intermediate Phase level. Based on the findings of this research instrument, the researcher will recommend possible viable progressive classroom practice under CHAPTER 5 of this study. The next ITEM will deal with elicitation of interview data on seven SGB language attitude questions.

## **C. SGB INTERVIEW TOOL**

**ITEM 1: What is your view on the use of Xitsonga Home Language as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF REMARKS**

The analysis of the SGB members' data will not be in a form of TABLES and gender as it was the case with the learners' and teachers' data. The reason for the latter approach is dictated by the size of the research subjects as well as the

unbalanced SGB gender composition. The SGB research subjects were sampled from 10 schools represented by 10 (ten) research subjects who serve each of the institutions. It is against this background that the investigator will use ITEMS only for the purposes of analysis, interpretation and comments. The schools will be represented by alphabets A-J instead of rural or semi-urban tags.

### **5.3.30 Analysis of ITEM 1**

ITEM 1 represents a 4-4-1-1 analysis formula as compared to the average two digit formula of most of the previous ITEMS already dissected in this study. The above SGB formula reads; 40% of the SGB interviewees sampled from the A-J schools opined in favour of Xitsonga HL as an appropriate medium of I.P level, while equally 40% of their counterparts across the target schools opined in favour of an English medium. 100% of the interviewees from the same target schools were of the view that the whole education system needs restructuring before a best language medium can be adopted. The last part of the formula is represented by 10% interviewees who opined that the best medium could be a combination of English and Xitsonga for the I.P learners (that is, a mixed mode). The final analysis of the ITEM suggests that the SGB members are equally divided on the appropriate language medium for the Intermediate Phase content subjects. The reasons advanced by the target respondents will serve as the basis on which interpretation and comments are carried out.

- **Reasons advanced by the respondents**

- The 40% respondents who opined that Xitsonga should be used as a medium of instruction said that because learners understand the content subjects well if they are taught in the target language. They also indicated that learners generally have difficulties with the English language therefore they would prefer a Xitsonga medium as a better option.
- The other 40% respondents indicated that they preferred the English medium in the sense that it enables the learners to answer tests and exam questions in good English; it prepares them for the demands of the Senior

Phase subjects and will benefit a lot in life than being taught in their mother-tongue.

- The 10% of the interviewees who said that a mixed mode would serve the I.P. learners better supported their opinion by indicating that the use of the source and target languages on a 50/50 basis would assist in achieving the prescribed skills and outcomes of the subjects more meaningfully.
- The last 10% of the respondents who opined in favour of a complete restructuring of the education system stated that it is because the current language medium benefits a small percentage of the 50 million citizens of this country.

### **5.3.31 Interpretation and comments on ITEM 1**

The 40% respondents who opined that Xitsonga medium only should be used for teaching content subjects at Intermediate Phase level seem to be informed by the mother-tongue theory. It is a theory that is advocated by worldwide bodies like *UNESCO* (1953:2003) who endorses the principle of mother-tongue education as a human right. According to this body's findings and expectations, mother-tongue education should be a norm not an exception (own interpretation).

The investigator's interpretation of the 40% respondents who opined that English should be a language medium for the Phase because it enables the learners to answer tests and exam questions in good English and that it prepares them for the demands of the Senior Phase subjects is that this is a naïve practice, unafrican bias, selfishness, void of the needs analysis, and narrow-mindedness. One takes the position that there is wisdom in what the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) prescribes as a solution to its rainbow nation. The multilingual practice in our schools should not be exchanged for any regressive pedagogical practice. The Constitution of our country provides the classroom linguistic solution in a just and fair manner. The 10% of the interviewees who opined that a mixed mode of content delivery would assist in achieving the prescribed learning outcomes and skills seem to be a tiny minority which is well informed and guided by the Bible of

the country (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa) in terms of the application of the concept of multilingualism. They seem to be aware that an African child would benefit a lot through the use of a “mixed mode” far much better than a monolingual medium that is a nightmare for both the teacher and the poor learner (Please refer to both the learner and teacher instruments results in this study).

The last 10% minority of the interviewees who opined in favour of a complete restructuring of the education system before an alternative viable language medium can be introduced is one way of delaying the progress of an African child. This will be tantamount to playing in the hands of our education system’s detractors and denigrators on the one hand, and totally disenfranchising the Intermediate Phase learners in particular on the other hand. We cannot afford to wait for the general overhaul of the system at the expense of the education of the youth. The next ITEM seeks to elicit the valuable data on the possible factors that impact on the implementation of the Language in Education Policy as well as possible reasons.

**ITEM 2: What are the factors that impact on the implementation of the Language in Education Policy and why?**

**5.3.32 Analysis of ITEM 2**

**INTODUCTORY REMARKS**

The results of ITEM 2 present five focus areas. Schools A,C and F SGB research subjects gave negative language attitudes issues as factors that impact on the implementation of the Language in Education Policy. Schools E,G, I and J SGB research interviewees gave lack of education, ignorance and none-formal education as issues that impact on the implementation of the LiEP; school B SGB research respondent indicated none existence of LTSM as a factor that impacts on the implementation of the LiEP; school H SGB research subject pointed to the failure of curriculum to nurture mother-tongue education as a limitation that impacts against the implementation of the LiEP; and last but not least, school D SGB research respondent indicated the closeness of different language speakers’ influence on the target language as a factor that impacts on the implementation of the Language in Education Policy.

The comprehensive picture of ITEM 2 reflects a 30% negative issues that impact on the implementation of the LiEP; A 40% lack of knowledge challenges that work against the implementation of the said Policy document; a 10% lack of basic learning and teaching materials as factors that impact on the implementation; an equal 10% curriculum failure to nurture mother-tongue education as a factor that impacts negatively on the implementation; and a 10% mention of closeness of language speakers' influence on the target language as a factor that impacts on the implementation of the Language in Education Policy in the Mopani District.

### **5.3.33 Interpretation and comments on ITEM 2**

South Africa is regarded as one of the best countries in Policy formulation. Almost all its sectors have policies in place awaiting implementation. What this ITEM confirms is that indeed the LiEP as one of those countless policies is not implemented the way it should. Though this study is qualitative in nature, but it has discovered five types of challenges that work against the implementation of the LiEP in particular. All the stakeholders in education are called upon to address the following: (1) Language attitude tendencies, (2) Provision of sound knowledge and skills for school governance, (3) an aggressive drive towards the provision of LTSM for the target language (Xitsonga), MATHS, SOCIAL SCIENCES, HEALTH SCIENCES, NATURAL SCIENCES, LIFE ORIENTATION AND EMS; (4) A curriculum that is clearly focused on nurturing mother-tongue education, and (5) Provision of checks and balances for undue influence of the sister (neighbouring) languages on the target language. What this study has reflected on as findings are by no means easy to address. The researcher is of the view that one of the solutions that could help is a fully-fledged National Department with a healthy budget, relevant specialists specifically on policy implementation under the office of the Presidency, and a strict performance appraisal tool that will be administered on quarterly basis. The investigation will delve deeper into possible implementation measures under CHAPTER 6 of this study. The next ITEM, like the learners' and teachers' tools looks at the SGB members' comments on whether Xitsonga HL possesses the requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in the different learning Areas

**5.3.34 In your view, does Xitsonga HL possess the requisite capacity to function as a medium of instruction in the different learning Areas? Briefly comment why?**

Perhaps this question was a bit unfair to the subjects since most of them do not deal directly with curriculum delivery in a classroom situation. However, the investigator thought the ITEM was key in the sense that SGB members are also assigned to monitor and report on the academic performance of the schools they govern. One of the SGB members' functions according to *Understanding School Governance* (2014:51) is to "promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for learners at the school." Unfortunately it was not the case among schools A to J subjects. They hid behind excuses like:

- *Hina a hi dyondzisi vana* (We are no teachers).
- *Hina a hi ngheni etiklilasini* (We do not enter into the classrooms during the periods).
- *Hina a hi dyondzelanga vuthicara* (We are not trained as teachers).
- *Hina ho sayina ticheke* (We sign the school cheques for purchase of school items).
- *Hina hi vitaniwa ku ta tenga milandzu* (we are occasionally called to come and settle disputes).

To say that the investigator was disappointed is an understatement. If this finding could be generalised, it implies that there is a great need of a relook into the parent component of the SGB members. They do not seem to perform key duties as expected by the South African Schools Act of 1996 at all. What compounds this challenge is that one just volunteers to be an SGB member in South Africa. No wonder you get irresponsible answers such as "Hina ho sayina ticheke na ku tenga milandzu ya vana va xikolo". The next ITEMS, (that is ITEMS 4-7) did not yield meaningful findings as compared to ITEMS 1-3 to write home about. A brief summary of the respondents' views under each item will justify the investigator's case.

**ITEM 4: Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction?  
If Yes or No, why?**

**5.3.35 Comments on ITEM 4**

The respondents' responses to the question were below standard indeed. Their answers to the question ranged from; "A va dyondze hi Xilungu va tshika le swa Switsonga swi ta va pfuna yini" (Let them learn through the English medium); "Xilungu xa basisa tindlela" (English is helpful); to "Loko u vulavula Xilungu swa twala" (You get recognition when you speak in English). With due respect to the respondents, unfortunately, their answers to the ITEM demonstrated ignorance, lack of objectivity, stereotype, and lack of language vision. Once more, there is a great need to overhaul the SGB parent component composition. One cannot help but to attribute their attitude to what Nkwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2014:1) observe as belief that; "African languages are mainly associated with backwardness, poverty and inferiority".

**ITEM 5: Which language do you prefer as a medium of instruction for  
the Intermediate Phase Band? Kindly advance reasons for your  
answer**

**5.3.36 Comments on ITEM 5**

The results of this ITEM were also far below the expected research standard. There was no objectivity and insight in their responses. These are some of the answers they gave and reasons. "A ku ve xo Xilungu" (Let it be English), "Xitsonga a xi pfuni nchumu" (Xitsonga language is useless), "U nga ya n'wetini hi Xitsonga we" (Can you fly to the moon through the use of Xitsonga?). This is a clear indication that the Mopani communities need to look into the SGB member composition carefully. This type of leadership appears to be products of anti –native language bias as recorded by Ngungi wa Thiogo (1986:11) thus: "...one of most humiliating experience was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment." The scholar goes on to elaborate how such a learner was punished and denigrated this way: "...three to five strokes of the cane on bare

buttocks – or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY”.

**ITEM 6: What can be done to improve Xitsonga HL speakers’ attitudes towards the use of Xitsonga as a medium of learning and teaching?**

### **5.3.37 Comments on ITEM 6**

The responses to this progressive question were mostly out of tune. No interviewee answered it directly and objectively. Here are some of the answers: “Ku lulamisa mhaka a ku tirhe nkhavi” (In order to improve this matter we need to re-introduce corporal punishment), “A ku tirhisiwe Xilungu ngopfu” (Let English be used more often), “Vatswari lava nga vulavuleki na vana va vona hi Xilungu a va yisiwe eka mukhulu” (Parents who do not communicate with their children in English should be taken to the chief for a reprimand). The Mopani schools will not benefit from this type of governance if serious remedial measures are not taken by the Provincial Government.

**ITEM 7: Are you involved in your school’s language policy implementation? If you are, what challenges have you encountered and how have you solved them?**

### **5.3.38 Comments on ITEM 7**

Again, the answers to this research ITEM missed the target sky high. All of them said “yes” to the question. They claim to be involved in the implementation of the “language policy”. Here are some of the ‘language implementation issues they cited’ as well as the relevant ‘remedial measures’ taken: “Loko n’wana wa xikolo a vulavula hi Xitsonga ejaratini ra xikolo ndzi n’wi yisa ehofisi” (If I hear school children chatting in Xitsonga I take them right away to the Principal’s office); “Loko thicara kumbe mabalana o ka a nga vuli ku ‘gudu morning’ hi Xilungu wa riha” (if teachers or a clerk on the school premises do not greet each other in English they are charged). The fundamental language policy issues were not addressed by

these types of answers at all. No wonder the SETA school development wing has assigned the LSEMS Department to come out with short courses for SGB members in the Province. If these short courses could be well structured they could go a long way in addressing the needs of the SGB parent component in particular. Although this initiative could help to an extent, but the investigator is of the view that a complete overhaul of the criteria for the community members who aspire to serve as SGB members country wide need to be done. Following are some of the key issues the investigator has identified as very urgent:

- (1) Reasonable academic and professional qualification requirements for better service (There are too many retired professionals who can render productive services as mentors and progressive SGB members).
- (2) The introduction of a reasonable stipend needs to be considered in order to attract credible candidates (You pay peanuts you get monkeys).
- (3) A credible service provider for the SGB members need to be considered rather than the current inadequate in-service rendered by some demotivated officials.
- (4) A supervision mechanism should be worked out in order to maintain quality service country wide.

The following ITEM seeks to interrogate the classroom observation tool administered in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

## **D. INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNER OBSERAVTION SCHEDULE**

### **D.1 OBSERVATION INSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

#### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

There are many methods of conducting observation research projects. Since this is a qualitative research study, the researcher will briefly remark on how the process of eliciting data at the 30 Mopani District schools was carried out. The investigator

would like to indicate from the onset that by this process, he wanted to observe what life was like from an inside while remaining inevitably an outsider. *Module 2 of Participant observation Guide* (downloaded on 2014-11-07) in page 13 correctly defines this method as:

Participant observation is a qualitative method with roots in traditional ethnographic research, whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations. As qualitative researchers, we presume that there will be multiple perspectives within any given community. We are interested both in knowing what those diverse perspectives are and in understanding the interplay among them.

The observation schedule administered in the Mopani District schools had six (6) items against which data was elicited by the investigator himself. The sampled classrooms were Intermediate Phase classrooms in which the following subjects were taught: Mathematics, English FAL, Science and Technology and Life Skills, CAPS (2011:4). The Xitsonga Home Language was not observed for obvious reasons. The Intermediate Phase Learner Observation Schedule focused mainly on the following aspects in the 30 classes; comprehension of language of instruction, preferred medium, choice between English and Xitsonga, teacher proficiency in the medium, Language medium model used, and the impact of the language medium on; written classroom exercises, homework and written tests. Following are the research ITEMS followed by the relevant comments on each.

**ITEM 1: Proficiency of learners in comprehending the language of instruction**

**5.3.39 Comments on ITEM 1**

100% of the 30 schools observed in the Mopani District experience common learner difficulties with the language of instruction. This finding confirms the majority of learners and their teachers' observation of Intermediate Phase's challenges with the comprehension of the medium. There was no flow of lessons, meaningful exchange of ideas, no creative interaction between the teachers and the learners, and the linguistic poor expression appeared to be experienced by both

stakeholders. The only way some of the poor teachers bailed themselves out of the embarrassing language situation was to switch over to the learners' Home Language. It was then that the learners started to open up and engage meaningfully on the content knowledge of the day. This applied across the four IP subjects except the Home Language. Unless a relevant a progressive medium is introduced for these learners, the end results will be counterproductive across the target District.

Two key things became clear on what transpired in the classrooms. They are presented hereunder in question forms:

- i. Are the Intermediate Phase learners prepared enough to receive tuition in English First Additional Language?
- ii. Are the very teachers who are supposed to mediate the lesson well equipped to handle the various content subjects through the English medium?

The investigator would find it extremely difficult to say “yes” to the two questions posed.

## **ITEM 2: Preference of Intermediate Phase learners between Xitsonga and English**

### **5.3.40 Comments on ITEM 2**

The classroom observation of all the target schools revealed that 80% of the learners preferred English though they could not use it to advantage. The 20% of their counterparts were consistent in their preference of Xitsonga in classroom activities. What betrayed the majority of the learners who preferred English was their failure to engage it well in group discussions. They often use their mother-tongue instead of the language of learning and teaching. What this implies is that preference and competence are poles apart. You may prefer a language but not competent in the very language. Now a hypothetical question arises; “What benefits the learners?”. The answer will be attempted in the investigator’s research findings and recommendations in the next CHAPTER.

**ITEM 3: Language preferred by learners between English and Xitsonga in:**

- (a) interacting with teachers, and
- (b) interacting with fellow learners in class.

**5.3.41 Comments on ITEM 3**

The general trend across the target research District is that the majority of the learners preferred English than Xitsonga but invariably found the very source language very difficult to utilise to advantage in:

- (a) interacting with their teachers and
- (b) completely interacted in Xitsonga with their fellow learners in class.

What this research study has discovered is that the English medium stalled the interaction process in all the subjects observed. This negative implication of the process is that the intended skills were not achieved at the end of the presented lessons. Who suffers in such a case? Obviously, the most hard hit is an African child who is manipulated to believe that the only desirable medium is English FAL. The role of meaningful interaction of one with one's educators and fellow learners goes down the drain. The current education philosophy encourages the classroom arena to be a platform of robust debates, exchange of ideas, expression of perspectives, ideas, and line of thinking. CAPS (2011:3) is very implicit about these fundamental aspects. They are outlined in bullet form as follows:

- identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- work efficiently as an individual and with others as a member of the team;
- organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;

- use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

These are the expectations and standards set by the current progressive government led by our President, Honourable Jacob uMsholozzi Zuma. The worrying factor is whether these objectives can be achieved through the use of the medium or whether they will just be national cherished educational ideals. According to the findings of thesis, the latter appears to be the true reflection of the state of affairs in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

#### **ITEM 4: Proficiency of teachers in using English as medium of instruction**

##### **5.3.42 Comments on ITEM 4**

The observation results of ITEM 4 are not encouraging either. 100% of all the educators whose 30 classes were sampled across the target District had language (English FAL) limitations in varying degrees. Their language limitations could be categorised as follows:

1. Poor sentence construction
2. Irregular verbs and tenses
3. Use of own words
4. Bantuism (Direct translation)
5. Distortion of meaning
6. Articulation or clear narration
7. Simplifying concepts and formulas
8. Forming images in the minds of the learners so as to achieve outcomes or intended skills
9. Inclusivity
10. Addressing barriers to learning through the use of the medium
11. Posing clear questions through the use of the medium (that is, English FAL)
12. Recapitulating on the presented lessons through the use of the medium, and

13. Presenting clear assessment questions in the language of instructions (some of the questions written on the chalkboards were ambiguous and meaningless).

The results of the mentioned teacher language limitations obviously do not augur well for the education of an African child in the Mopani District. As to how best this gloomy language situation could be solved, the researcher will endeavour to suggest some remedial measures in CHAPTER 5. The next ITEM focuses on the language of instruction model used by teachers.

**ITEM 5: The language of instruction model used by the teachers. For example: code switching, code mixing etc**

#### **5.3.43 Comments on ITEM 5**

The classroom observation results of this ITEM presented interesting “teaching model” which one could term not progressive. This is the picture painted by the classroom proceedings in the 30 classrooms observed:

1. The teachers who used the monolingual medium did not use it in a productive manner (about 10%).
2. The majority of the teachers who attempted the code switching model used it counter-productively (80% of them were not using the target language to explain key concepts but randomly in order to get out of the language expression situation - if they did not know what to say in English they randomly escaped to Xitsonga. That is not productive code switching at all). To me this practice is tantamount to a “thathalapha, wena beka lapha” mine language.
3. The 10% of the teachers that used Xitsonga did not express the gist of the content subjects. They distorted the content to such an extent that the outcomes were adversely compromised. Here are some of the linguistic excuses they gave:

- (1) “Loko munhu a dyondzisa hi Xinghezi a va twi nchumu” (when one teaches through the English medium the learners do not understand the content).
- (2) “Xitsonga xa va olovela ngopfu” (Xitsonga is a medium through which they understand the “content knowledge” with ease).

The findings of ITEM 5 present the following:

- (a) Almost 100% of the Intermediate Phase content subject teachers do not have a good command of the English FAL medium,
- (b) Almost 90% of the sampled 30 classes across the District are no Xitsonga Language specialists either,
- (c) Almost 90% of the sampled educators are unable to mediate content meaningfully and productively.

Unfortunately, all these impact negatively towards the education of an African child in many ways. The next ITEM focuses on the impact of the language medium on three forms of assessment.

#### **ITEM 6: The impact of the language of instruction on the quality of learning in:**

- (a) Written classroom exercises,
- (b) Homework, and
- (c) Written tests.

#### **5.3.44 Comments on ITEM 6**

The impact of the negative attitudes displayed by the learner, teacher, and SGB respondents also impacted negatively on the learner assessment tasks. From the sampled written class exercises, homework tasks and written tasks, the following shortcomings were identified: regurgitation of answers, reproduction, rigidity, absence of creativity, and common language errors. Unless something drastic is done by the powers that be, these limitations will recur even beyond the Intermediate Phase Band. As a result most of these learners may not comply with

the entry criteria for career oriented programmes in the country and outside the country. The next last ITEM interrogates the language attitudes displayed by the learners outside the formal schooling environment.

## **D.2 OBSERVATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

The observation of the subjects outside the classroom environment presents an extreme natural expression of language attitude tendencies as compared to the classroom environment. The inside the classroom environment was conservative, strict and formal in nature. Whereas the outside the classroom observation characterised itself by being casual, highly informal, cordial, free flowing and not strict. The latter was an interesting exercise in the sense that the investigator's presence was not felt by the research subjects. The plus about it was that he was not even noticed by the subjects since he pretended to be checking on the school premises not their attitudes. Valuable data was gleaned from this environment since there was no holding back on the required data by the subjects. The rich data was gathered during schools' long-break. The data was gathered through the following learners' actions:

- (1) When they were playing;
  - (2) When they were having their breakfast, mainly from the government feeding scheme;
  - (3) When they were casually chatting; and
  - (4) When they were rushing back to class after the long-break.
- The exercise yielded the outcomes as follows:
    - (a) 100% of the 30 schools' learners used Xitsonga when they were engaged in various sporting codes, "one could hear the boys saying: u nga phasi homu yoleyo chom' " Do not pass the ball to that donkey, friend"). The girls could be heard saying: "N'wi be hi xipayi thu khensi" (Sell her a dummy khensi).

- (b) The casual chatting among the target subject was in Xitsonga too. No one of both female and male research subjects chatted in English at all.
- (c) When the research subjects were having their breakfast, one expected them to chat in English because they were always monitored by their class teachers. But to my surprise, not a single learner uttered a word in English. One could hear them saying: “Ku dyiwa hlampfi namuntlha boy” (We are being served fish today friend).
- (d) After the bell had rung, one could hear them saying to one another, “Se vulombe byi herile maxaka” (Guys, the honeymoon is over). Again, in that casual environment, no one alerted one’s friend in English that they had to rush to their classes.

What the findings of this casual setting imply is that 100% of the learners observed in the Mopani District preferred Xitsonga than English outside the classroom environment. It would appear that they felt free to express their feelings, thoughts, joy, opinion and excitement in their mother-tongue than in English. This finding supports the bulk of research literature, and some of the study’s findings that there are more advantages than disadvantages in learning in one’s Home Language than in a foreign language as is the case with the target respondents.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

Though the learner-, teacher- and SGB-subjects displayed very strong positive attitudes towards an English medium, the findings so far outlined emphatically point to the Xitsonga medium as a better and productive option that could uplift the educational standard of an African child. Despite the glaring evidence in favour of mother-tongue instruction, the researcher has come to realise that it will take close to a miracle to reverse the mind-set of the stakeholders this study has sampled. The next chapter outlines the summary of the whole study, findings and recommendations.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The aim of this chapter is not to re-write a new thesis, but to concisely give a summary, explicitly outline the findings (niche areas) and clearly articulate some recommendations for urgent attention and for future research studies. Though this thesis through its clearly defined scope touched based on key stakeholders in education, however, the investigator feels obliged to mention a few guiding and useful principles on summarizing studies of this nature. <http://answer.yahoo.com> (downloaded on 2014/11/09) correctly remarks: “Take all research data you have used, and main points you have touched on in the study and retouch on them”. This quotation supports the summary part of the current study.

The function of a conclusion as well as the overview processes are articulated in <http://academia.edu> (down loaded on 2014/11/09) as follows:

- a. The function of a conclusion is to summarise:
  - What you have researched,
  - Nature of your main arguments,
  - How you researched it,
  - What you discovered,
  - What pre-existing views were challenged.
  
- b. To provide an overview of-
  - The new knowledge or information discovered,
  - The significance of your research (Where is it new?)
  - The limitations of the thesis (concepts data),
  - Speculation on the implications of these limitations,
  - Areas for further development and research (alternative datasets links with other fields; different methods applied to same data).

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The attitudes of Intermediate Phase learners, educators, and school governing bodies towards Xitsonga as medium of learning and teaching have been highlighted in the preceding chapters. However, a summary which indicates more general related issues is deemed necessary. In the **First Chapter**, the statement of the thesis` research problem was articulated in clearly defined contexts, which are: background to the problem, aim and objectives- the thesis resorted for aim and objectives instead of the common practice in research of hypothesizing in the sense that the former (that is aim and objectives) speak to the specific niche areas that the study wishes to articulate and address. The findings of this study clearly proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the general aim of the study was achieved. Thus distinct theories that characterise attitudes in language education were satisfactorily discussed. The significance of the study was also contextualised in that it spoke to the aim and objectives; and also it got justification in the actual findings that were appropriately outlined in the forth and fifth chapters. Without a well indicated scope of the thesis, the investigation would have been too general to address a specific niche. The theoretical framework of the study which is underpinned by the thesis that learning takes place best in one`s Home Language worldwide was discussed. The distinct niche of the thesis was further demonstrated by the analysis of literature review of various studies on language attitudes in the country as well as globally. The research design of the study was also a context that specified the qualitative approach as predominant method of research, data gathering instruments and the sampling process. Last but by no means least, the ethical considerations were clearly outlined and duly applied in the collection of data.

In order to contextualise the thrust of language attitudes among the target research subjects, **Chapter Two** provided a brief overview of historical data. The data was evaluated against language attitude theories, mother-tongue instruction imperatives, attitudes towards three dominant Limpopo Official Languages, completed studies that investigated language attitudes, policy issues and curricula implication from the first post-apartheid *Curriculum 2005* up to the current *Curriculum And Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*.

**Chapter Three** interrogated the practicality of the concept of multilingualism as a norm in the South African Government Schools against language attitudes, the impact of language policy of various periods on endoglossic medium, as well as the analysis of the language phenomenon vis-à-vis language attitudes.

**Chapter Four** described in some detail how the research data were collected, possible limitations to the research exercise together with counter-measures taken to ensure scientific reliability, validity and objectivity in the collection, description, analysis and interpretation of research data used.

**Chapter Five** covered the field-work per se. It described the manner in which the research sample and the physical environments in which the research sample were domiciled. The chapter also covered the analysis and interpretation of the data processed. The research instruments used were learner interview tool, teacher interview tool, SGB interview tool and the learner observation schedule. All the four tools used for data collection for the thesis yielded almost the same pattern of scores, analysis and interpretation research outcomes (almost the same results). It is perhaps vital to indicate that though the findings were overwhelmingly for the source language as a preferred medium of instruction as opposed to an average 20% target language preference as medium in the Mopani District, nonetheless, the respondents strongly indicated that they would like to see Xitsonga being maintained as a school subject across the phases. This strong feeling for Xitsonga as an important language for cultural expression was also observed under findings inside and outside the classroom environment in this study. 100% of the learner respondents expressed themselves freely in Xitsonga though they indicated that they would prefer to be taught in the medium of the source language. The observation made by Kembo (1998) summarises the two opposing views on the target language as follows:

The high value placed on the ex-colonial languages and the low status of indigenous languages have had at least three serious consequences for educational development:

- the indigenous languages have not been taken seriously as subjects study, which means that the cognitive, affective, and social development of young people, which must necessarily occur through language that is well known cannot take place effectively;
- proficiency in the ex-colonial languages is so highly sought after that parents and educational authorities argue that learners should be exposed to them at the very first opportunity (sometimes even from day one of the school programme), notwithstanding the fact that educational development cannot take place in a language one does not know; and
- proficiency in the ex-colonial languages remains inadequate, partly because the necessary cognitive skills needed for effective learning have not been developed.

The next section outlines the conclusion and findings of the study.

**The sixth** and last chapter of the study dealt with the summary of the study; concluding remarks and findings; recommendations to specific stakeholders and recommended areas/topics for further research in the field of language education and related disciplines.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The conclusion drawn from the thesis is that most of the Intermediate Phase learners, teachers and SGB members surveyed (on average, 80% of all the target respondents in the Mopani District) had a negative attitude towards Xitsonga as a medium of learning and teaching. Although their proficiency in English as an academic subject as well as its use as a medium of learning and teaching was reflected as inadequate, their choice of the language medium in education remains English First Additional Language. The study has also uncovered that this positive attitude towards English is not a South African problem only but a challenge experienced in many countries of the world .<http://answerbag.com> ( downloaded on 2014/11/09) quotes Kranoknows thus:

We do not hate our own languages. We love our mother-tongue but to be competitive in this world and become more progressive, Indians need to be very highly educated in English.

Most of the English medium schools are world class and their students are super intelligent. We lack in infrastructure and finance otherwise we would be outsourcing abroad rather than the other way round...

In support of the findings and the quotation cited is Alexander (PRAESA News, June 1998:6) who avers that:

English is not only an international language, but it is a language which for many, many decades still is going to open up job possibilities for anybody who wishes to get a good job in South Africa and would be disadvantaging our children and future generations if we are to move away from them having to learn or being encouraged to learn English.

Contrary to this positive attitude towards English are the findings that clearly indicated that both the majority of the learners and teachers are not altogether competent in the English medium. On average 80% of them across the target district indicated that the learners had English challenges. In all the target classrooms that the investigator observed, 80% of the teachers were found to be no English specialist either. This resulted in their failure to present the lessons in the source language nor to engage code switching to advantage.

What this study has discovered is that the very poor source language users were not good target language specialist or at least possessors of basic Xitsonga communicative skills either. Their use of the source language in teaching was not progressive nor productive, and equally their explanation of concept in the target language was ambiguous. The implication of these linguistic limitations is that an African child will not realise his/her educational goals at the end of the I.P. programme (See Chapter Four for details on the findings).

The school governance of the sampled Mopani District Schools did not help the situation either. The study has discovered that 100% of the SGB parent component does not meet the minimum functional requirements. The study uncovered that they were not performing the core duties of a functional school governing body, save to sign cheques and settling petty school stakeholders' disputes. For example, they clearly indicated that they had no idea of what was going on inside the classrooms. Their language policy knowledge is none-existent. One can ask the question: "What are they governing?" (See also Chapter Four, SGB results for details).

On the other hand, what this study has discovered was that the 20% teacher respondents who indicated that they were in favour of a Xitsonga medium were not saying this out of knowledge and principle, but were themselves not competent in engaging the English medium to advantage. There is still need for a research on the Intermediate Phases content subjects' teacher competence in the language media. The elementary finding on this issue is that most of them are incompetent. To what degree one cannot tell at this stage save to indicate that language education researchers would benefit the country by investigating this challenge further.

Though the majority of learners (80% of them) indicated that they were in favour of an English medium, they nullified their linguistic stance by discussing and interacting in their mother-tongue in class. The outside the classroom results showed an amazing 100% home language interaction among the learners. No single English word was uttered by all the respondents outside the classroom environment.

Of note once more, the assessment tasks of the learners across the District painted a pattern that defeats the intended national skills and the kind of learner that is envisaged. The Nation Curriculum Statement (2002:3) mirrors such a learner this way:

The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be inspired by these values, and who will act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, human dignity, life and social justice. The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

Their class activities, tests and home-work tasks revealed rote learning, reproduction with very little understanding of contents and display of originality, objectivity and creativity. The impact of the language attitude compounded the learning process to degenerate to this state of affairs. The next section articulates the recommendations of the thesis against two aspects, namely; to various key stakeholders and for further research.

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are based on the literature survey and empirical research findings.

- In order to change the negative attitudes of learners, teachers and SGB members, the Department of Education needs to revisit the language needs analysis of the Intermediate Phase Programme in general and the appropriate language of learning and teaching in particular. The study has glaringly uncovered that the current LiEP practice and application is counterproductive.
- The Education Department should restructure the training programmes meant for skilling Intermediate Phase teachers. The language attitudes could be remarkably reversed if content subject teachers were trained to be competent in both the source language and the target language. This would benefit the African learner a great deal. It is not enough to be a

subject specialist but fail to put across the valuable knowledge through the appropriate medium or media. According to this study, we have a sizable number of content subject teachers in the Mopani District who find it extremely difficult to engage the language of teaching and learning to advantage. You will hear the learners saying in some of the classrooms: “*Va ri mudyondzisi loyi u pasile MATHS evuthicareni kambe leswi a swi hlamuselaka a hi swi twi loko a dyondzisa eklilasini*”. No doubt that this state of affairs breeds attitudes in general and language attitudes in particular.

- The Department of Education should revisit the interpretation of multilingualism in our schools. It is the investigator's take that its full use and interpretation against the Bill of Rights would enrich the learners didactically in the classroom. The learners would understand content in a rich manner if its application were carried out the way it should. Professional code switching and code mixing do not sacrifice the knowledge of English or its didactic use but the opposite is true. If medical doctors are currently trying their best to learn the target languages of their patients in order to render a productive service country wide, what more the language medium in the classroom (see the study of Fawole A.A. entitled “*Communication Strategies of English-Speaking Foreign Doctors in the Limpopo Province of South Africa*”, 2014).
- The SGB parent component need serious and urgent attention by the powers that be. The volunteer system does not do any good to our rural and semi-urban schools. If these so called School Governing Body members have no idea about, the LiEP, the Bill of Rights, the vision and mission of their institutions, the Language Policy of the schools they are governing, the activities in the classrooms, etc., one does not think that they are assisting the Mopani District Schools to be functional institutions at all. The investigator strongly recommends the professionalization of school governance. There are many ways of improving it but a few could get it off the ground - none-formal and informal training, a complete overhaul,

recruitment of retired professionals to serve as mentors and active members, and the introduction of stipend for members.

- One cannot agree more with Babane's (2003:167) recommendations on the need of influencing positive language attitudes outlined as follows:
  - It is recommended that in order to change the negative attitude of learners towards Xitsonga, the target language should be used as a high function language. In fact, it should be used in politics, economy as well as in higher education.
  - It is recommended that Vatsonga writers should write more books in Xitsonga and promote reading among Xitsonga learners.
  - It is recommended that organisation such as Tinyungubuyiseni Vatsonga Cultural Group, Mi nge swi koti Magaza, etc which are geared towards the promotion of Xitsonga should be encouraged.
- Community leaders and celebrities should also come to the party. It is strongly recommended that they deliver their speeches and sermons in standard Xitsonga.
- Our community and National Radio Stations and TV stations should avoid using Xitsonga slang. The managers are strongly advised to engage the advisory services of retired Xitsonga experts like Prof N.C.P Golele, Prof C.T.D Marivate, Honourable, G.S Mayevu, and Dr A.K Msimeki. Even if they come at a price, nonetheless the nation will benefit linguistically and consequently improve the negative attitude against the source language.

## 6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The investigator is fully aware that this research endeavour is not an end but a means to an end. His passion for Intermediate Phase language attitudes and their impact on content delivery compelled him to focus on the topic. However, he is not oblivious of the fact that research studies on attitudes of foundation phase stakeholders are equally vital to be investigated.

The impact of the mentalists' theory on language attitudes has not been fully explored either. Language Education and applied linguistics researchers would benefit the country a great deal if they could scientifically investigate its impact on language attitudes. Equally vital is an investigation into the influence of language command of niche subjects' teachers towards enforcing language attitudes.

The impact of monolingual medium vis-a-vis multilingual media on the teaching of content subjects specifically at Intermediate Phase level in the country has not been adequately researched to date. It is one of the untapped models that could come in handy for solving the source language challenges encountered by the rural and semi-urban learners in the Mopani District.

The researcher also wishes to highly recommend a further empirical search on the same topic that would delve deeper in terms of scope (that is, including urban area respondents) , engagement of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches (mixed-mode) for improvement of content delivery at basic education level and positive attitudes in the country in general and Limpopo Province in particular.

The above recommendations are consistent with <http://thesisnotes.com> (downloaded in 2015/02/10) which characterises the aspects in this fashion:

- Recommendations should seek to solve or help to solve problems discovered in the investigation.
- Should be attainable, practical and feasible.

- Should be valid and rational.
- Should be addressed to persons, entities or agencies, or office who or which are ready to implement them.
- Can also be recommendation for the continuance of a system or recommendation for improvement.
- Can have recommendation for further research on the same topic but different places to verify the findings of the study, (Page 4 of 7).

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## ADDENDUM 1



**Turfloop Campus  
School of Education  
Department of Languages, Social & Educational Management Sciences  
Private Bag X 1106,  
Sovenga  
0727**

**Tel: (015) 268 2395  
Fax: (015) 268 2246  
Email: [monaj@ul.ac.za](mailto:monaj@ul.ac.za)  
25th June, 2014**

Head of Department  
Limpopo Provincial Government  
Department of Education  
Private Bag X9489  
Polokwane  
0700

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS IN MOPANI DISTRICT SCHOOLS:MYSELF

1. I am an enrolled PhD student in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo. My supervisors are Prof RN Maḁadzhe (015 2682613) and Prof LE Matsaung (0822005336).
2. Would you kindly allow me to administer research instruments to a sample of learners, educators, and SGB members around Mopani District schools as part of my study`s field work obligation.
3. The research tools seek to elicit row data on “**Attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and Teaching in Limpopo**”.
4. The data will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves and will be kept under lock and key throughout the process. I promise to make it a point that the administration of the research tools **DOES NOT COMPROMISE** the core business of the target institutions.

I hope my humble request will meet your most favourable consideration.

Yours Faithfully

MJ Mona ( UL student)

*Finding Solutions for Africa*



## ADDENDUM 2



**Turfloop Campus  
School of Education  
Department of Languages, Social & Educational Management Sciences  
Private Bag X1106  
Sovenga  
0727**

**Tel: (015) 268 2395  
Fax: (015) 268 2246  
Email: [monaj@ul.ac.za](mailto:monaj@ul.ac.za)  
25th June, 2014**

The Circuit Manager  
Limpopo Provincial Government  
Department of Education  
Private Bag  
Tzaneen  
0850

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AT YOUR CIRCUIT: MYSELF**

1. I am an enrolled PhD student in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo. My supervisors are Prof RN Madadzhe (015 2682613) and Prof LE Matsaung (0822005336).
2. Would you kindly allow me to administer research instruments to a sample of learners, educators, and SGB members around Mopani District schools as part of my study's field work obligation.
3. The research tools seek to elicit row data on **“Attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and Teaching in Limpopo”**.
4. The data will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves and will be kept under lock and key throughout the process. I promise to make it a point that the administration of the research tools does not compromise the core business of the target schools in your circuit.
5. The Provincial letter of permission is attached.

I hope my humble request will meet your most favourable consideration.

Yours Faithfully

MJ Mona ( UL student)

*Finding Solutions for Africa*



## ADDENDUM 3

Turfloop Campus  
School of Education  
Department of Languages, Social & Educational Management Sciences  
Private Bag X1106  
Sovenga  
0727



Tel: (015) 268 2395  
Fax: (015) 268 2246  
Email: [monaj@ul.ac.za](mailto:monaj@ul.ac.za)  
25th June, 2014

The School Manager/Principal  
Limpopo Provincial Government  
Department of Education  
Private Bag  
Tzaneen  
0850

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL: MYSELF

1. I am an enrolled PhD student in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo. My supervisors are Prof RN Maḡadzhe (015 2682613) and Prof LE Matsaung (0822005336).
2. Would you kindly allow me to administer research instruments to a sample of learners, educators, and SGB members around Mopani District schools as part of my study's field work obligation.
3. The research tools seek to elicit row data on **“Attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and Teaching in Limpopo”**.
4. The data will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves and will be kept under lock and key throughout the process. I promise to make it a point that the administration of the research tools does not compromise the core business of your school.
5. The Provincial/Circuit letter of permission is attached.

I hope my humble request will meet your most favourable consideration.

Yours Faithfully

MJ Mona (UL student)



## ADDENDUM 4

Turfloop Campus  
School of Education  
Department of Languages, Social & Educational Management  
Sciences  
Private Bag X 1106  
Sovenga  
0727



Tel: (015) 268 2395  
Fax: (015) 268 2246  
Email: [monaj@ul.ac.za](mailto:monaj@ul.ac.za)  
25th June, 2014

The Parent/Guardian  
Mopane District  
Limpopo Province  
South Africa  
0700

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST TO INTERVIEW YOUR CHILD DURING SCHOOL HOURS: MYSELF

1. I am an enrolled PhD student in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo. My supervisors are: Prof RN Maḡadzhe (015 2682613) and Prof LE Matsaung (0822005336).
2. Would you kindly allow me to interview your child on mother-tongue instruction at school on the date still to be confirmed by the Department of Education.
3. The research study seeks to elicit row data on “**Attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and Teaching in Limpopo**”.
4. The data will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves and will be kept under lock and key throughout the process. I promise not to violate the rights of the child during the interview exercise.

Your understanding in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

MJ Mona ( UL student)

.....

*Finding Solutions for Africa*





DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

Enquiries: Dr. Makola MC, Tel No: 015 290 9448. E-mail: [MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, SOCIAL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SCIENCE  
PRIVATE BAG X1106  
SOVENGA  
0001

MONA MJ

**RE: Request for permission to Conduct Research**

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved- **TOPIC: ATTITUDE OF INTERMEDIATE PHASE, LEARNERS, EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES TOWARDS XITSONGA AS MEDIUM OF LEARNER AND TEACHING IN LIMPOPO.**
3. **The following conditions should be considered**
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and the schools concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
  - 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

Page 1 of 2

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

*The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!*

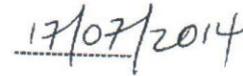
4. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
5. The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Dederen K.O

Acting Head of Department



Date



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDENDUM 6**

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

REF NO: 913155  
ENQ: SHIKWAMBANA NN  
DATE: 19 AUGUST 2014  
TO: MONA MJ  
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO  
PRIVATE BAG X1106  
SOVENGA  
0727

**PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: YOURSELF**

1. The above matter has reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a qualitative research instrument has been recommended. Topic: attitudes of Intermediate Phase Learners, Educators and School Governing Bodies towards Xitsonga as Medium of Learning and teaching in Limpopo
3. The condition given by the Department must be considered.
4. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

CIRCUIT MANAGER (S.D.MANZINI)  
/ns

Nkwanakwa Circuit, Private Bag X 1413, LETABA, 0870  
TEL. NO. 015 303 1719/1728/ 2398 FAX NO. 015 303 1539

ADDENDUM 7



LIMPOPO  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

REF. : 913154  
ENQ. : THOBELA M.T.  
DATE : 06 AUGUST 2014

TO : MONA M.J.  
UL STUDENT

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT/ADMINISTER QUALIFICATION RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: MAFARANA CIRCUIT

1. The matter above refers.
2. Approval is duly granted to administer the tool to the following primary schools depending on the number of your research directed to you.
  - 2.1 *Mbetana Primary School.*
  - 2.2 *Totwana Primary School.*
  - 2.3 *Mushoti Primary School.*
  - 2.4 *Gavaza Primary School.*
  - 2.5 *Mbangwa primary School*
  - 2.6 *Mlunglisi Primary School*
  - 2.7 *Rita Primary School*
  - 2.8 *Khopo Primary School*
  - 2.9 *Dr. Annecke Primary School*
  - 2.10 *Mhangweni Primary School*
3. Thanking you in anticipation.
4. Regard.

Circuit Manager  
/mrs

06/08/2014

Date

MAFARANA CIRCUIT

Private Bag x 1420, LETABA, 0870

TEL: 015 303 2336/ 2355 / 2387/2472. FAX: 015 303 2196

## ADDENDUM 8

### INTERMEDIATE PHASE SEMI-STRUCTURED TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PILOT)

1. What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga Home Language as medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?
2. What are the factors that impact on the implementation of the Language Policy in Education and why?
3. In your view, does Xitsonga possess the requisite capacity to function as medium of instruction in different learning areas? Briefly comment.
4. Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as medium of instruction? If **Yes** or **No**, kindly advance reasons.
5. What can be done to improve Xitsonga speakers' attitudes towards Xitsonga HL as medium of instruction?
6. Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for Intermediate Phase band? Advance reasons for your answer.
7. Between Xitsonga and English, which language makes the learners to express themselves better in the learning areas that you teach?

## ADDENDUM 9

### INTERMEDIATE PHASE SGB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PILOT)

1. What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga HL as medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?
2. What are the factors that impact on the implementation of the Language Policy in Education and why?
3. In your view, does Xitsonga HL possess the requisite capacity to function as medium of instruction in different learning areas? Briefly comment.
4. Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as medium of instruction? If **Yes** or **No**, why?
5. Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for the Intermediate Phase band? Kindly advance reasons for your answer.
6. What can be done to improve Xitsonga HL speakers' attitudes towards the use of Xitsonga as medium of learning and teaching?
7. Are you involved in your school's language policy implementation? If you are, what challenges have you encountered and how have you solved them?

## ADDENDUM 10

### INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNER OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: GRADES 4 – 6 (PILOT)

1. Proficiency of learners in comprehending the language of instruction.  
Learning Area observed.
2. Preference of Intermediate Phase learners between Xitsonga and English.  
Learning Area observed.
3. Language preferred by learners between English and Xitsonga HL in:
  - (a) interacting with teachers, and
  - (b) interacting with fellow learners in class.Learning Area observed.
4. Proficiency of teachers in using English as medium of instruction.  
  
Learning Area observed.
5. The language of instruction model used by the teacher(s) - For example:  
Code switching, code mixing, etc.  
  
Learning Area observed.
6. The impact of the language of instruction on the quality of learners:
  - (a) Written classroom exercises,
  - (b) Home-work, and
  - (c) Written tests.Learning Area observed.

**INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PILOT)**

1. What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?
2. Which language between English and Xitsonga do you understand better?
3. Which language between English and Xitsonga do you use most in:
  - (a) Interacting with your teachers?
  - (b) Interacting with your fellow learners in class?
  - (c) Interacting with your friends?
  - (d) Interacting with your parents?
  - (e) Interacting with strangers?
4. In your view, does Xitsonga possess the request capacity to function as medium of instruction in different Learning Areas?
5. Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as medium of instruction? Please, give reasons for your answer(s).
6. Between Xitsonga and English, which of the two do you find difficult to use in:
  - (a) answering questions posed by the teachers?
  - (b) answering Tests and Exam questions?
  - (c) class group discussions?
  - (d) making announcements in class?
  - (e) pass on messages to other learners in class?
7. Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for the Intermediate Phase Band?

**II. SWIVUTISO SWA MUDYONDZISI WA FEYISI YA LE XIKARHI**

**XITSONGA VERSION**

1. Xana mavonele ya wena hi wahi eka ku tirhisa Xitsonga xa Ririmi ra le kaya tanihi Ririmi ro dyondzisa eka Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke?
2. Xana hi swihi swirhalanganyi leswi endlaka leswaku Rimba ra Tindzimi ri nga tirhiseki hi ku hetiseka eka dyondzo naswona hikwalaho ka yini?
3. Hi ku vona ka wena, xana Xitsonga xi havaxerile hi ku hetiseka ku va Ririmi ro dyondzisa tidyondzonkulu to hambana-hambana ke? Koxometanyana.
4. Wa swi tsakela leswaku Xitsonga xi va Ririmi ro dyondzisa ke? Seketela nhlamulo ya wena.
5. Xana ku nga endliwa yini leswaku ku antswisiwa matekele ya vavulavuri va Xitsonga leswaku va xi tsakela ku va Ririmi ra le kaya ro dyondzisa hirona ke?
6. Xana u tsakela Ririmi rihi ku va ro dyondzisa hirona eka tidyondzo ta Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke? Andlala swivangelo swa mavonele ya wena.
7. Exikarhi ka Xitsonga na Xinghezi, hi rihi Ririmi leri endlaka vadyondzi va humesela ehandle hi ku antswa tinhlamulo ta vona eka tidyondzo leti u ti dyondzisaka ke?

**III. XEDULU YA SWIVUTISO SWA VUFAMBISI BYA XIKOLO EKA FEYISI YA LE XIKARHI**

**XITSONGA VERSION**

1. Xana hi wahi mavonele ya wena hi ku tirhisa Xitsonga xa Ririmi ra le kaya tanihi xitirhisiwa xo dyondzisa hixona eka Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke?
2. Xana hi swihi swirhalanganyi leswi endlaka leswaku Rimba ra Tindzimi ri nga tirhiseki hi ku hetiseka eka dyondzo naswona hikwalaho ka yini?
3. Hi ku von aka wena, xana Ririmi ra Xitsonga xa le kaya ri havaxerile hi ku hetiseka ku va ri tirhisiwa tanihi xitirhisiwa xo dyondzisa tidyondzo to hambana-hambana ke? Koxometanyana.
4. Xana wa swi tsakela leswaku Xitsonga xi tirhisiwa tanihi Ririmi ro dyondzisa eka Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke? Veka mavonele ya wena.
5. Hi rihi Ririmi leri u ri tsakelaka leswaku ri tirhisiwa tanihi Ririmi ro dyondzisa eka Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke? Veka mavonele ya wena.
6. Xana ku nga endliwa yini ku antswisa matekele ya vavulavuri va Xitsonga xa Ririmi ra le kaya ehenhla ka ku xi tirhisa tanihi Ririmi ro dyondza no dyondzisa ke?
7. Xana wa khumbheka eka matirhisele ya Rimba ra Ririmi eka xikolo lexi ke? Loko u khumbheka, hi yihi mintlhotlho leyi u nga hlangana na yona na ku u yi tshuxe hi ndlela yihi ke?

**IV. XEDULU YO LANGUTISA MADYONDZISELE EKA FEYISI YA LE  
XIKARHI: TIGIREDE TA 4 - 6**

**XITSONGA VERSION**

1. Vuswikoti bya vadyondzi bya ku twisisa Ririmi ro dyondzisa.
2. Mahlawulele ya vadyondzi va Feyisi ya le xikarhi exikarhi ka Xitsonga na Xinghezi. Dyondzo leyi nga languisiwa.
3. Ririmi leri tsakeriwaka hi vadyondzi exikarhi ka Xinghezi na Xitsonga eka:
  - (a) Ku burisana ni vadyondzisi, na
  - (b) Ku burisana ni vadyondzi-kulobye eklilasini.Dyondzo leyi nga langutisiwa.
4. Vuswikoti bya mudyondzisi byo dyondzisa hi ririmi ra Xinghezi. Dyondzo leyi nga langutisiwa.
5. Ririmi leri tirhisiwaka hi vadyondzisi. Xikombiso: Ririmi rin'we, tindziminyingi, tindzimi-mpfangano, sw.sw. Dyondzo leyi nga langutisiwa.
6. Switandzhaku swo tirhisa Ririmi leri ku dyondzisiwaka harona eka:
  - (a) Switoloveto swa le klilasini,
  - (b) Mintirho-kaya, na
  - (c) Swikambelwana leswi nga tsariwa Kunene.Dyondzo leyi nga langutisiwa.

**XINEMBELETANA I: SWIVUTISO NA XEDULU YA NKAMBISISO**  
MATIKO-XIKAYA/RURAL..... XILUNGU-XIKAYA/SEMI-URBAN

**I. SWIVUTISO SWA MUDYONDZI SWA FEYISI YA LE XIKARHI**

1. Xana mavonele ya wena hi wahi eka matirhisele ya Xitsonga tanihi Ririmi ro dyondza no dyondzisa eka Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke?
2. Exikarhi ka Xinghezi ni Xitsonga tanihi tindzimi u twisisa rihi ngopfu?
3. Exikarhi ka Xinghezi ni Xitsonga u tirhisa ririmi rihi hi ka nyingi eka:
  - (a) Ku burisana ni vadyondzisi?
  - (b) Ku burisana ni vadyondzi-kuloni eklilasini?
  - (c) Ku burisana ni vanghana va wena?
  - (d) Ku burisana ni vatswari va wena?
  - (e) Ku burisana ni vapfhumba?
4. Hi ku vona ka wena, xana Xitsonga xi havaxerile hi ku hetiseka ku va xi tirhisiwa tanihi Ririmi ro dyondzisa eka tidyondzonkulu ho hambana-hambana ke?
5. Xana wa tsakela leswaku Xitsonga xi tirhisiwa tanihi ririmi ro dyondzisa ke? Nyika swivangelo swa nhlamulo ya wena.
6. Exikarhi ka Xitsonga ni Xinghezi, u oloveriwa hi rihi ku ri tirhisa eka:
  - (a) ku hlamula swivutiso swa mathicara?
  - (b) ku hlamula swivutiso swa swikambelwana ni swikambelo?
  - (c) ku burisana eka mintlawana eklilasini?
  - (d) ku endla switiviso?
7. Hi rihi Ririmi leri u ri tsakelaka ku va ku dyondzisiwa hi rona eka Feyisi ya le xikarhi ke?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

RURAL ..... SEMI-URBAN.....

**I. INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?
2. Which language between English and Xitsonga do you understand better?
3. Which language between English and Xitsonga do you use most in:
  - (a) Interacting with your teachers?
  - (b) Interacting with your fellow learners in class?
  - (c) Interacting with your friends?
  - (d) Interacting with your parents?
  - (e) Interacting with strangers?
4. In your view, does Xitsonga possess the request capacity to function as medium of instruction in different Learning Areas?
5. Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as medium of instruction? Please, give reasons for your answer(s).
6. Between Xitsonga and English, which of the two do you find difficult to use in:
  - (a) answering questions posed by the teachers?
  - (b) answering Tests and Exam questions?
  - (c) class group discussions?
  - (d) making announcements in class?
  - (e) pass on messages to other learners in class?
7. Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for the Intermediate Phase Band?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

RURAL ..... SEMI-URBAN.....

**II. INTERMEDIATE PHASE SEMI-STRUCTURED TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga Home language as medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?
2. What are the factors that impact on the implementation of the Language Policy in Education and why?
3. In your view, does Xitsonga possess the requisite capacity to function as medium of instruction in different Learning Areas? Briefly comment.
4. Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as medium of instruction? If **“Yes”** or **“No”**, kindly advance reasons.
5. What can be done to improve Xitsonga speakers’ attitudes towards Xitsonga HL as medium of instruction?
6. Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for Intermediate Phase band? Advance reasons for your answer.
7. Between Xitsonga and English, which language makes the learners to express themselves better in the learning areas that you teach?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

RURAL ..... SEMI-URBAN.....

**III. INTERMEDIATE PHASE SGB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your opinion on the use of Xitsonga HL as medium of instruction at Intermediate Phase level?
2. What are the factors that impact on the implementation of the Language Policy in Education and why?
3. In your view, does Xitsonga HL possess the requisite capacity to function as medium of instruction in different learning areas? Briefly comment.
4. Do you favour the use of Xitsonga as medium of instruction? If **Yes** or **No**, why?
5. Which language do you prefer as medium of instruction for the Intermediate Phase band? Kindly advance reasons for your answer.
6. What can be done to improve Xitsonga HL speakers' attitudes towards the use of Xitsonga as medium of learning and teaching?
7. Are you involved in your school's language policy implementation? If you are, what challenges have you encountered and how have you solved them?

**INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNER OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

RURAL ..... SEMI-URBAN.....

**IV. GRADES 4 - 6**

1. Proficiency of learners in comprehending the language of instruction.  
Learning Area observed.
2. Preference of Intermediate Phase learners between Xitsonga and English.  
Learning Area observed.
3. Language preferred by learners between English and Xitsonga HL in:
  - (a) interacting with teachers, and
  - (b) interacting with fellow learners in class.Learning Area observed.
4. Proficiency of teachers in using English as medium of instruction.  
Learning Area observed.
5. The language of instruction model used by the teacher(s) – For example:  
Code switching, code mixing, etc.  
Learning Area observed.
6. The impact of the language of instruction on the quality of learning:
  - (a) Written classroom exercises,
  - (b) Home-work, and
  - (c) Written tests.Learning Area observed.

SOUTH AFRICAN MAP SHOWING MOPANI DISTRICT



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mopani\\_District\\_Municipality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mopani_District_Municipality) (2014/09/03)

LIMPOPO MAP SHOWING MOPANI DISTRICT



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mopani\\_District\\_Municipality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mopani_District_Municipality) (2014/09/03)