

**SUBTRACTIVE BILINGUALISM IN TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ENGLISH  
WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE MOTHER TONGUE**

by

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## DECLARATION

“I hereby declare that the views in this research topic ‘*Subtractive bilingualism in teaching and learning through the medium of English without the support of the mother tongue*’, submitted for the degree Master in Education (Language Education) at the University of Limpopo, is my original work and has not previously been submitted to any institution of higher education. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references”.

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**M.K. RAMOKGOPA**



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**Date**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research study investigated subtractive bilingualism in teaching and learning through the medium of English without the support of the mother tongue. The aim was to investigate if it is possible for learners to acquire a second language (English) without totally losing their home language. This was done through: probing the reasons why the language policy is difficult to implement in schools as outlined by the constitution of South Africa; determining the causes of subtractive bilingualism in the school settings and; an emphasis of the rights and responsibilities of educators and parents to make a positive difference in the lives of bilingual and bicultural learners.

This research was grounded on Cummins (1991) theory of second language acquisition. The literature review examined other theories of second language acquisition and learning (Krashen 1981). In particular, emphasis was placed on the following broad areas in the literature review: mother tongue development; language shift and language loss; language planning and language policy; language and culture; language and identity, attitudes and equity; language in education; the National Language Policy Framework; and multilingualism.

This research was conducted using the qualitative research methodology. A case study design was employed. Three instruments were used for collecting of the data. These were: questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. The data analysis strategy used in this research was interaction analysis which was done through transcriptions of observations and video and audio recordings of interviews and classroom observations.

The following were some of the findings from this research study: learners were not happy with their educators who unduly force them to communicate in English as the educators themselves are also not proficient in the language; learners are afraid to take risks of communicating in English for fear of other learners intimidating them; and many learners now communicate only in English and cannot understand the greater details of their mother tongue.

The recommendations of this study are: to reduce the extent of language loss, parents should establish a strong home language policy and provide ample opportunities for children to expand the functions for which they use the mother tongue; parents and care-givers should spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts so that children come to school prepared to learn the second language successfully without being distracted; funding and resources must be made available for additional language acquisition; well-trained and dedicated teachers with similar linguistic backgrounds to the learners should be hired; and the new language policy should be adopted.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ASR - Automatic Speech Recognition

DET - Department of Education

HLT - Human Language Technology

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

LANGED - Language Education

LANTAG – Language Plan Task Group

L1 - First Language Acquisition

L2 - Second Language Acquisition

NLPF- National Language Policy Framework

NLUMT - Natural Language Understanding and Machine Translations

OLSET - Open Learning System Education Trust

PANSALB - Pan South African Language Board

TSS - Text-to-Speech-Synthesis

UNESCO - United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Of all the elements which best characterize an individual, from physical appearance to clothing, language is the most obvious. It is through language that we convey our ideas. Language stands, indeed, as the key component and the barometer of our development. The primary intention in this study is to explore a problem in second language teaching and learning that has long been acknowledged by researchers such as Fillmore (1991), but has not received the attention it deserved. Specifically, this study concentrates on the phenomenon of subtractive bilingualism, a term coined by Lambert (1981), who first discussed it in relation to French-Canadian and Canadian immigrant learners whose acquisition of English in school resulted not in bilingualism, but in the erosion of their home languages.

Decades after political 'independence' in Africa, the situation of African languages keeps widening the inequalities in the fields of science, technique and technology. African languages have not been used for economic value or, at most times, in higher functions, namely in economic, cultural and practical situations. Today, this phenomenon has become very familiar in South Africa, as it has been in the United States. It is nearly fifteen years since the Republic of South Africa became a democratic country, decades after apartheid rule. This country is now faced with numerous challenges in all facets of life, that is, politically, economically, socially, and most importantly educationally. Few South African-born children become fully proficient in their home language, even if it means that this is the only language they speak when they first enter the school system. Once these learners are introduced to English, they begin to lose interest in their home language.

Parents in townships equate education with competency in English. The value of African languages has been diminished as many young educated black people view English as the

language of aspiration, while government and parents steer learners towards science and maths-oriented professions. Many children around the world are exposed to more than one language in early childhood. Children who hear more than one language virtually from birth are sometimes referred to as “simultaneous bilinguals”, whereas those who begin to learn a second language later are referred to as “sequential bilinguals” (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:3).

There may be reason to be concerned, however, about situations where children are virtually cut off from their home language when they are “submerged” in a second language for long periods in early schooling. In such cases, children may begin to lose their home language before they have developed an age-appropriate mastery of the new language (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:3).

## **1.2 Background and Rationale**

Language diversity is essential to human heritage. Every language embodies the unique cultural wisdom of people. The loss of any language is thus a loss for all humanity. The extinction of a language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical and ecological knowledge. Each language is a unique expression of the human experience of the world. Thus, the knowledge of any single language may be the key to answering fundamental questions of the future. Every time a language dies, we have less evidence for understanding patterns in the structure and function of human language, human prehistory and the maintenance of the world’s diverse ecosystems. Above all, confirms Swepu (2006:9), speakers of that particular language may experience the loss of their language as a loss of their original ethnic and cultural identity.

Nevertheless, there seems to be little support for the myth that learning more than one language in early childhood slows down the child’s linguistic or cognitive development. There may be many reasons to be concerned, however, about situations where children are virtually cut off from their family language when they are submerged in a second language for long periods in early schooling or day care. In such cases, children may begin to lose the home language before they have developed an age-appropriate mastery

of the new language. This is then referred to as subtractive bilingualism and it can have serious negative consequences for children from minority groups. In some cases, children seem to continue to be caught between two languages: not having mastered the second language, they have not continued to develop the first. Unfortunately the solution which educators often propose to parents is that they should stop speaking the home language at home and concentrate instead on speaking the second language with their children.

The evidence seems to suggest that the opposite would be more effective. That is parents who themselves are learners of the second language should continue to use the language which is most comfortable to them. The children may eventually prefer to answer in the second language, but at least they will maintain their comprehension of their home language. This also permits the parents to express their knowledge and ideas in ways that are likely to be richer and more elaborate than they can manage in their second language.

Quanta (2006:8) points out that, there is no evidence that a child's brain has a limited capacity for languages; that their knowledge of one language must shrink if their knowledge of the other one grows. Most minority children do eventually master the second language. Children who have the opportunity to learn multiple languages from early childhood and to maintain them throughout their lives are fortunate indeed and families that can offer this opportunity to their children are encouraged to do so.

It is very important that learners be encouraged to continue to develop their home languages. In this study, the researcher intended to bring in the use of the home language in the classroom. It addresses the problem of language barriers, which may be solved by using both and English and their home language. The researcher intended to show that if learners are able to explain in their home language what mathematics or geography lessons, for example, is all about; then it will be very easy for them to transfer the same knowledge and understanding to English. Children need to learn to think, read and write in their particular primary language before transferring these skills to an additional language (Carol Macdonald & Elizabeth Burrough, 1999). Thinking skills are developed by learning to read and write in one's own language.

Therefore, it is pointless insisting that learners use a particular language when they think and express themselves more competently in their mother tongue. When learners are involved in activities which require co-operation from and discussion with peers, then code switching should be permitted. If activities are carefully structured, learners use the target language in order to prepare for whatever report-back the facilitator requires. Code switching is one way to further the advancement of multilingualism as a major resource which affords learners the opportunity to develop and value home languages, additional languages, cultures and literacies.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

The main problem in this study relates to language loss. The researcher views the home language which is displaced by English as a negative change, especially in the homes where the adult speaks little or no English. The problem exists where learners are taught through the medium of English which is not their home language. The problem in this study revolves around subtractive bilingualism, which relates to language loss. Learners come across a situation where they are forced to learn in a language they do not understand. They are exposed to English terms and concepts which they struggle to understand. However, once they become familiar with the situation, they drop their home languages.

### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to investigate if it is possible for learners to acquire a second language (English) without totally losing their home language.

### **1.5 Objectives**

- To probe the reasons why the language policy is difficult to implement in schools as outlined by the constitution of South Africa.
- To determine the causes of subtractive bilingualism in the school settings.
- To emphasize the right and responsibility of educators and parents to make a positive difference in the lives of bilingual and bicultural learners.

## **1.6 The research questions**

In addressing the above problem, the researcher was guided by the following and similar questions, which are in line with the aim of the study:

- Is it possible for first language learners to learn a second language without completely losing their home language?
- Do we have sufficient capacity and literature for the learners to be taught in their indigenous languages?

## **1.7 Literature review**

There is a general agreement that home language loss by individual speakers has been an ignored research area with some rare exceptions. Theorists and researchers, like Hart (1980) and Lambert (1981) agree that the field of language loss as a research area had its formal beginnings at the 1980 Conference on the Language Loss Skills organized by Lambert and Freed. It is true that to a certain degree that different people experience language loss differently. Based on these differences, home language loss can therefore be seen as a continuum. Language loss is arguably an under-researched topic in South Africa until fairly recently, since the major emphasis in applied linguistics is on second language learning, acquisition and use.

Fillmore (1991) conducted one of the early studies by examining language shift among minority children. In her article, she focused on families who spoke minority languages and whose children had attended pre-school programmes in the United States. She found out that many children particularly those who started learning English before the age of five were already losing their home language. She discovered that many of the children had given up their home language before mastering the second language.

At the same time, it was found that many immigrant families arrive in countries where their home language is not the dominant language. Their children begin to learn their home language prior to starting school. As soon as they enter the school systems, however, they begin to learn the dominant language and their home language starts to

erode. As such, emphasis is placed on learning the new language as the primary one now only operates for social integration.

This in turn places strain on the learners, who at the beginning find themselves unable to communicate with second language speakers at school and elsewhere. Zulu, in the *Sunday Times*, (2009) says: “The *Sunday Times* has published several articles that give the impression that African pupils do not want to learn their home languages. That is not true”. The majority of former Model C schools still teach English and Afrikaans only, and very few schools offer selected African languages as additional subjects. These languages are often taught by teachers who are not qualified to teach them as a subject. Many teachers have a ‘kitchen competence’ that resembles ‘Fanagalo’. In this context, it is logical for African pupils to reject being taught their home languages by teachers who are unable to put one correct sentence together in that language.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded within Cummins theory (1991, 1994), that points out that when children are learning through their home language; they are not only learning this language in a narrow sense, they are learning concepts and intellectual skills that are equally relevant to their ability to function in the second language. Learners who know how to tell time in their mother tongue understand the concept of telling time. In order to tell time in the second language, they do not need to re-learn the concept of telling time, they simply need to acquire new labels or “surface structures” for an intellectual skill they have already learned.

It is necessary for learners to receive instruction through their mother tongue, as they frequently become alienated from the cultures of both home and school with predictable results. To reduce the extent of language loss, parents should establish a strong home language policy and provide ample opportunities for children to expand the functions for which they use the mother tongue and the context in which they can use it. Teachers can also help learners retain their mother tongue by communicating to them strong

affirmative messages about the value of knowing additional languages and the fact that bilingualism is an important linguistic and intellectual accomplishment.

### **1.9 Research Methodology**

The system of collecting data for research projects is known as research methodology. It is the approach, strategy and methods that are going to be used in the research. It is also the way in which data is collected for the research project. The data may be collected for either theoretical or practical research. Some important factors in research methodology include validity of research data, ethics and the reliability of measures. In simple terms, we can say it is where the researcher describes how he/she is going to gather information (methods). Then the researcher explains each method, and how it will be employed in the research. McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 9-10) says, “Methodology refers to the ways one collects and analyzes data. In a broader context, it refers to a design whereby the researcher selects data collection and analysis procedures to investigate a specific research problem”. With the data collected, the researcher addresses the problem as stated in the problem statement. The researcher is concerned that the children lose their primary languages as they learn English. The data is able to show the type of encouragement parents give to their children to speak the first language.

The commitment parents have is to maintain and promote a positive attitude in their children to speak their home language. Among other reasons taking into account that the educational changes required to reverse the pattern of language minority, group school failure is essentially changes that are very significant politically. The reason is that they involve changes in the power relations between dominant and dominated groups specifically in the ways that educators as representatives of dominant group institution relate to the language minority learners and their communities.

From a methodological point of view, there are two types of research approaches, namely, quantitative and qualitative. Of these two, this study will follow the qualitative. Qualitative research is a loosely defined category of research approach which elicits verbal, visual, tactile data in the form of descriptive narratives such as field notes

transcriptions of audio or video recordings and other written records. It is multi method in focus. Qualitative researchers study ‘things in natural settings’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:3).

This study provides a synopsis of the field of the first language loss. The study will use an emergent, inductive qualitative approach. According to De Vos, et al, (2002; 79), “the qualitative approach stems from an anti-positivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic and thus holistic in nature, and aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that the people attach to everyday life.” The reason why the present researcher chose a qualitative approach is because of its naturalness and that it is suitable for educational and social research. Since the basis of such approach is the one that does not predetermine or delimits the directions the investigations might take, it is especially important to detail the specific stages that whole research will follow in addressing the research questions.

### **1.9.1 Design of the study**

The researcher will follow a case study design. One school was selected and within this school, various forms of data collection was employed. This kind of an approach can provide detailed and reliable explanations for social as well as cultural events based on beliefs and experiences of people within that culture. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) have influenced the selection and presentation of data in this study. A broad ethnographic perspective will be adopted in order to provide a detailed description of the learning context.

### **1.9.2. Population**

The population in this study was sampled from learners in grades 3 and 4, attending school at Thuto ke Maatla Combined School in Tlamatlama Section, Tembisa, Ekurhuleni (East Rand). The two classes served as the right environment for conducting the study, because their learner population consists of different ethnic groups.

### **1.9.3. Sampling**

A sample is a group of subjects chosen from a larger group of population to which the findings are assumed to apply. Sampling enables one to study a portion of the population rather than the entire population. It therefore saves the researcher's time. Procedures of selecting the sample vary, and therefore it was important for the researcher to identify the population and focus of the study well beforehand by establishing and identifying boundaries of the said population.

Sampling is defined by Bless and Higrón-Smith (1995:85), as a technical accounting device to rationalize the collection of information and to choose in an appropriate way the restricted sets of objects, persons, objects, and so forth from which the actual information will be drawn. De Vos (2002) correctly calls it a small representation of a whole. The researcher employed a purposive sampling tool for capturing of data. Purposive sampling helped the researcher in managing and controlling the research process. A bigger sample is not manageable and as such will not yield satisfactory results to the researcher. Hence the researcher used only grades 3 and 4 classes which served as the appropriate environment for the study because of their population which consists of mixed learners from all languages. In these grades, English as a medium of learning is implemented. The learner's ages ranges from 7-10, with different genders and mixed ability groups. Some are gifted while some are less gifted. The issue of the medium of learning applies to them all.

The most important consideration in sampling is size and representativeness. Indeed the sample should be so carefully selected that through it, the research is able to see all the characteristics of the total population in the same relationship that they would be seen in were the researcher able to inspect the whole population (Leedy, 1997:204). The researcher first checked the dominant language used from reception classes, that is, from grades R and 1. The most recent statement published in the Government Gazette of May (1997) reads: "subject to any law dealing with language in education and the constitution rights of the learners, the governing body of the school must determine the language policy of the school by stipulating 4.3.1.1."

This applies whether the school will be single medium, parallel medium, dual or multilingual, by offering additional languages as fully fledged subjects or applying special immersions or language maintenance programmes or through using more than one language of teaching through other means approved by the heads of provincial education departments. The researcher's intention was to search for information that is likely to be knowledgeable and inform the phenomena the researcher is investigating.

#### **1.9.4 Instruments**

The quality of research depends to a large extent on the quality of the data collection tools. Interviewing and administering questionnaires are probably the most commonly used research techniques. Therefore, designing good 'questioning tools' forms and important and time-consuming phase in the development of most research proposals. In this study the researcher used three methods of collecting data. These are questionnaires, interviews and classroom observation. A separate questionnaire was developed for the teaching staff and parents. Separate interview schedules were developed for learners, teaching staff, parents and policy makers.

Data collected in this study should be able to support the notion that first language cultural identity is crucial to home language maintenance in the context of a dominant language

#### **1.9.5 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a practice in which raw data is ordered and organized so that useful information can be extracted from it. The process of organizing and thinking about data is a key to understanding what the data does and does not contain. There are a variety of ways in which people can approach data analysis, and it is notoriously easy to manipulate data during the analysis phase to push certain conclusions or agendas. For this reason, it is important to pay attention when data analysis is presented, and to think critically about the data and the conclusions which were drawn.

Furthermore, analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains. Data analysis is closely linked to data visualization and data dissemination.

In this study, data obtained was transcribed into organised units so that emerging themes could be identified. This also enabled triangulation to take place.

### **1.10 Delimitation of the study**

The proposed study is conducted in Gauteng Province. The district in which the study was conducted is Ekurhuleni (East Rand). This district consists of a mixed population which includes the BaPedi, BaTswana, BaSotho, BaVhenda, BaTsonga, MaZulu, MaNdebele, MaSwati and MaXhosa. The school chosen is Thuto ke Maatla. It is situated in Tembisa Area, Tlamatlama Section. The learners from this area of study are from different sections around Tembisa and consist of mixed tribes speaking all the eleven languages of South Africa. Majority of them are Sepedi speaking. All other languages are used interchangeably outside the school premises but in the classrooms this is different.

Due to their linguistic background, the learners in the study have a little proficiency in English. These learners are from a model of education which promoted the use of the home language as the language of learning (NEPI, 1992:10). The model then gradually transfers to the use of first additional language as the medium of instruction. Their level of proficiency in the first additional language may disadvantage them completely as they are now fully learning a new language in place of their mother tongue.

The majority of the teachers also in this area are Sepedi speaking. There are, however, some teachers who are from the neighbouring areas who speak other languages. Although these teachers are fluent in English, the child's first language is still the best instrument for learning especially in the early ages.

### **1.11 Ethical considerations**

It is important to consider all ethical issues affecting the subjects in a research study. The researcher obtained permission from the school principal and governing body of Thuto ke Maatla Primary School. There is a required approval process for any research involving humans. Requiring approval makes sense in view of the various types of questions people are interested in investigating and the potential for harming subjects. Permission was also sought from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research at the school.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) point out that, ethics in qualitative research is dominated by two concerns; informed consent and the protection of subjects from harm. Here it is clear that in fieldwork in education the emphasis is on the relationship between participant and researcher. The issues involved in establishing and maintaining the rapport in this relationship are essentially ethical ones. The research relationship is characterized as collaborative, implying a mutual engagement with the research process on the part of teachers, students and researchers. Patterson and Thomas (1993) go further and claim a special relationship between classroom teachers and university-based researchers where the research needs to be designed, paying particular attention to including the voice of classroom teachers.

The researcher's primary responsibility is to the teachers, students and parents. They respect those with whom they work, openly sharing information about their research; consult with teaching colleagues and supervisors to review the plans for their studies, explain research questions and methods of data collection and update their plans as the research progresses. Before publishing any data, written releases must be obtained from the individuals involved in the research including parental permission for those under 18. The confidentiality of the people involved in the research is protected. The researcher gained consent from individuals involved in the research and also assured them of the confidentiality.

A more general point is that the degree to which a study is ethical or unethical does not ultimately rest with the scientific research community, some abstract canon of ethics or

even an ethics checklist. Rather, it is the result of a process of continuous interaction between the researcher and participant. This process must be based on an element of trust which may be built up through the participant finding the researcher approachable, communication that is two-way, a sense that the researcher is 'human' and able to reveal personal aspects of him/herself and assurances of confidentiality. Trust is the foundation of an ethical study.

### **1.12 Research structure**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one of this study covered the background and orientation of the study. The following research questions were raised: How do learners respond when they realize that the only language they know which is their home language has no immediate function or value in the school? How do they react when they discover that their home language constitutes a barrier to the learning of English? This chapter also provided a theoretical framework of the study as well as a brief literature review. Definition of key concepts was also briefly discussed.

Chapter two provided a literature review on the researcher's field of study. Literature reviewed includes views of researchers amongst others, Kathleen view that is supported by academics and linguists. They have found out that it is impossible for learners to learn enough of a second language in three years and then to switch to a second language medium of instruction in grade 4. The reasons that put learners under pressure of not speaking their home language are also examined. Cummins (1991) refers to particular learners who come from minority languages who often find that they learn the second language at the expense of their home language, especially if the second language enjoys dominance and prestige. This chapter also dealt with the language planning and language policy in South Africa. The continuing use of English as a medium of instruction in schools is condemning most black pupils to an inferior education all over again. It is time the policies become practically applicable.

Chapter three dealt with the research methodology. It also provided analysis and interpretation of data. Research method instruments were carefully selected in this chapter and data analysis was presented.

Chapter four of this study covers the presentation and discussion of results. Limitations are also discussed.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter. A summary, conclusions and recommendations is presented and the reasons of the problem as explained in the problem statement are explored. The researcher also explains the importance of bilingual education.

### **1.13 Definitions of terms**

#### **1.13.1. Subtractive bilingualism**

Subtractive bilingualism characterizes the situation in which learners lose their home language in the process of acquiring the second language. That is, an incoming language displaces and replaces the home language. According to Lambert (1981), it is a situation in which learners lose their home language in the process of acquiring the second language. It prevails when the child's home language is totally replaced with English and it typically has a negative effect on learners' educational experience. A dominant majority language is learnt at the cost of a home language, which is displaced and sometimes replaced.

Learners who experience subtractive bilingualism typically have negative cognitive effects, and experience shows that learners who do not receive either first language (L1) or second language (L2) support, have a difficult time succeeding in school. Subtractive bilingualism occurs most often when the home language is denigrated in school. Normally what happens is the home language skills are replaced completely by second language skills. Teaching through the home language until learners are proficient enough in the majority language to cope with all English instruction, is key to learning L2.

Lambert (1981), points out that home language loss may refer to lack of home language development or delayed home language development. This study therefore tries to examine reasons why there is a decline or loss in the home language. The goal should be to encourage learners to develop skills in an additional language to deepen their understanding of how language works and their love of home language. Learners do better if they can develop their home language proficiency while becoming fluent in English. Cummins (1994) gives support to this idea, by pointing out that learners cannot learn in a language they do not understand and therefore some initial language instruction is necessary to overcome the effects of a home-school languages shift.

Intensive instruction in the majority language using second language methodology is important. The amount of time in home language instruction is determined by level of proficiency in the majority language until threshold level of proficiency is acquired which predicts success in English instruction. The aim is to increase the use of the majority language while proportionally decreasing the use of the home language. The ultimate goal is mono-lingualism, and then a process of subtractive bilingualism comes in.

### **1.13.2 Additive bilingualism**

There is remarkable unanimity among language-in-education experts about the best approach to education in multilingual environments. This approach is called additive bilingualism. It involves the gradual replacement of the home language as the medium of instruction by the target language - English in the South African case. Ideally, children entering school would be taught entirely in their home language for four to six years, while learning the target language as a subject. Incoming language is initially used for new functions but does not replace original languages. A new language is learned in addition to the mother tongue which continues to be used and developed. Teaching the curriculum through both majority and minority languages also occurs.

Additive bilingualism as described by Lambert (1981) is the acquisition of a second language without any loss or weakening of the first language. In other words, learners add a second language to their repertoire of skills at no loss to the development of the

first language. Consequently these learners attain a relatively high level of fluency and literacy in the two languages. This pattern suggests that the level of proficiency attained by bilingual students in their two languages may influence their academic and intellectual development. Specifically there may be a minimum level of proficiency in both languages, which students must attain in order to avoid any negative academic consequence. Griego-Jones & Mary Lou Fuller (2003), on the other hand, points out that an individual suffers no loss of the primary language and the associated culture. Current research shows that when student's first language is valued and recognized, the development of the second language is more effective.

Additive bilingualism occurs when intensive instruction in the majority language using second language methodology occurs, strengthening the home language through strong language arts instruction. Equal amounts of majority and home language continues throughout primary school years or longer. The aim is maintenance of high levels of language skills in both languages. Home language is equally protected and developed. The ultimate goal is bilingualism; it is a process of additive bilingualism. The primary language is used as the medium of instruction until such time as learners sufficiently master English.

### **1.13.3 Bilingualism and bilingual education**

A system which a minority language has a certain role alongside the majority language is generally called bilingual education (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973). This type of education exists at the primary school level. It would seem only natural that children in bilingual communities should have the opportunity to be educated in two languages, that is, the language of the home and the language of the other groups in the community. This is in most cases not genuine because there is often a home-school language mismatch or switch. That is the language used at school is not necessarily the language used at home. For instance, teaching Sepedi in foundation phase is a minority language and can be accepted. It is also important to teach the first language in order to ensure academic progress but not totally forget the home language on the other hand.

According to Cadiero –Kaplan et al (2004), bilingualism resulted from the addition of a perfectly foreign language to one's own undiminished native language. Programmes are offered to support and encourage learning in two languages and to develop proficiency in both languages. Bilingualism including, bi-literacy is the goal and both languages are valued. The programme is considered a maintenance programme if it affords full development of bilingual skills literacy in both languages at any reasonable point.

Dual language instruction that promotes bi-literacy by immersing second language learners into content instruction in the two languages, says Seliger is "Typically, a 50% of the school day is devoted to each of the two languages. For example, home language immersion occurs in the morning and English immersion in the afternoon". Alternatively, classes can have a mixed enrolment of native speakers and second language speakers. This design may call for learners to be language models for each other and engage them in helping the other master the language.

Bilingualism is just the use and knowledge of two languages by the same person. The paths towards achieving bilingualism are numerous and the balance between the two languages varies enormously. Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages with equal or nearly equal fluency. Such languages may be acquired by children whose parents or neighbours speak two languages or by learning such languages in two different settings. When children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary schools years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively, says Dlepu (2006).

They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop in both. They are also able to compare and contrast ways in which their two languages organize reality. According to the Webster's online dictionary, bilingual is defined as 'having or using two languages especially as spoken with the fluency characteristics of a native speaker'. A bilingual person can further be defined as a person using two languages especially habitually and with control like that of a native speaker. On the other hand, Baker and Jones (1998) explain bilingualism as "the constant oral use of two languages".

The popular view being: bilingual equals being able to speak two languages perfectly. This is also the approach of Genesee (1987), who defines bilingualism as "the native-like control of two languages".

All the above definitions, in short, means that bilingualism is the individual's capacity to speak a second language while following the concepts and structures of that language rather than paraphrasing his or her home language.

#### **1.13.4 Code switching and Code mixing**

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

There are two phenomena which occur regularly in multilingual communities. It is used for establishing and maintaining multiple identities as well as for the acquisition and retention of the status of information. For example, the Sepedi speaking people who know English and Sepedi as well, may, from time to time switch from Sepedi to English or vice versa in a conversation. This will depend, in most cases, who they are talking to or perhaps what the topic under discussion is.

Code switching or code mixing is potentially the most creative aspect of bilingual speech. The two has, however, also been considered as a sign of linguistic decoy, that is, evidence that bilinguals are not capable of acquiring two languages properly or keeping them apart. It is sometimes defined as the use of more than one language in the course of a single discourse. For instance, often a mother tongue speaker of Sepedi will code mix throwing in English words or phrases from time to time to show off the fact that he/she knows the language. It may be a way of communicating some form of identification with

the speaker of that particular language. It may also be a way of bargaining for more power in a situation where the majority of participants are from that particular group.

Also one may find that Sepedi speaking people code mix using English words to indicate that they are educated people who know their way around. This again may be a way of bargaining for power where ones hearers are not well educated or where they value knowledge of English highly. Hence, code switching is said to involve the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation. In the case of bilinguals speaking to each other, switching can consist of changing languages in that monolingual shifts of style. You may find two learners both speaking Sepedi as their mother tongue, communicate socially in Sepedi but they choose to switch to English when they enter the classroom.

Code switching is often indicative of a change in topic and it is also used as well to signal both multiple identities of the participants as well as to indicate their preferred code for specific topics, this includes a switch from the language that was in use prior to the new topic. Code-switching is a linguistics term denoting the concurrent use of more than one language or language variety in conversation. Multilingual people speak more than one language and sometimes use elements of multiple languages in conversing with each other. Thus, code-switching is the syntactically and phonologically appropriate use of more than one linguistic variety. Van Fallis (1978:65), also points out that code switching is the alternating use of two languages at the word, phrase or clause in a sentence level. This means that code switching can take place intra-sentential.

In the 1940s and the 1950s, many scholars called code-switching a sub-standard language usage. Since the 1980s, however, most scholars have recognized it is a normal, natural product of bilingual and multilingual language use. In popular usage outside the field of linguistics, the term *code-switching* is sometimes used to refer to relatively stable informal mixtures of two languages, such as Sepedi or English. The term is also sometimes used informally to refer to switching among dialects, styles or registers.

### **1.13.5 Second language learning and teaching**

The term second language learning is used by Cook (1996) in her study to refer to all learning of languages other than the home language in whatever situation or for whatever purpose. This is the sense of second language defined by UNESCO as "A language acquired by a person in addition to his home language". Language learning can be explained as a change in a performance that occurs under the conditions of practice. Van der Walt (1989) explains that learning a language implies knowledge of structures and rules governing the usage of that language. This does not necessarily mean that the speaker will be able to apply those rules consistently like a home language speaker in an everyday conversation situation. Learning can, up to a certain level, be said to be a prerequisite for acquisition, but without adequate opportunity for practice, learning will never automatically lead to acquisition (Brook, 1990). So the concept of introducing English as a medium of instruction early in the child's development means that we end up with children who struggle both in their home language as well as in English.

### **1.14 Conclusion**

Every educator has the right and responsibility to make a positive difference in every child's life. Children who come from minority languages often find that they learn the second language at the expense of the first language. Receiving no first language support in the school and sometimes little or none in the home environment, the skills in their first language are eroded while students seek to master competence in the second language. The theory of subtractive bilingualism says that if a child has a complete loss of a first language before a second language is properly or securely developed, then the loss negatively impacts the child's ability to acquire knowledge.

If, on the other hand, first language is retained when learning a second language, then the cognitive abilities progress at an age-appropriate pace while the new language is acquired. It is not hard for children to learn a second language but we are all familiar with instances of second language learning that fall short of the language being learned. It is imperative that learners be taught in two languages, so that they learn to read and write in

their mother tongue and the national language. It is essential that the home language and culture is valued.

If a learner has a complete loss of a home language before a second language is properly or securely developed, then the loss negatively impacts the learner's ability to acquire knowledge. The outcome of this scenario is that very often proficiency is not fully achieved in either language. This suggests that the level of proficiency attained by bilingual learners in their two languages may be important determinants of their academic and intellectual development (Cummins, 1999). Specifically, there may be a minimum level of proficiency in both languages, which learners must attain in order to avoid any negative consequences. If at the beginning, second language learners do not continue to develop both their languages, any initial positive effects are likely to be counteracted by the negative consequences of subtractive bilingualism.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

It is very important to consider what happens when young learners find themselves in the world of the school. What do they do when they discover that the only language that is spoken in the school environment is the one they do not know? How do they respond when they realize that the only language they know which is their home language has no immediate function or value in the school? How do they react when they discover that their home language constitutes a barrier to the learning of English? This is the phrasing from Article 23 of the International Labour Organization.

Probably what they do is that they learn the dominant language, which is English in this case, and too often they drop their home languages. It is true that English as a language, plays an exceptionally fundamental role in almost all spheres of life and that it is a functional language without which we could not enter the thoroughfares of learning. However, this statement does not at all imply that learners should be encouraged to replace their home languages with it.

Although the people's primary language was tolerated it was considered inferior. This tolerance orientated ideology was very common in which minority speakers have the right to cultivate their mother tongue. The ambiguities of policy can be seen in the variety of bilingual education programmes (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004:40). Pandor, the ex-education minister (2006) has made some progress in ensuring that pupils up to the age of six have access to teaching and literature in their home language. The battle to reposition and redefine South Africa's languages seems far from won 14 years into our democracy. Most black South Africans are still convinced that the best way to educate their children is to teach them in English and not their mother tongue.

Some members of the black elite consider African languages to be inferior to English. This has profound consequences in the school environment. In Limpopo, for example, some black parents whose children attend former model C schools are refusing to give permission for their children to be taught in African languages. This leads to a dangerous belief that African languages are inferior to English. Within a tolerance ideology, teaching in the mother tongue is promoted, but it is not valued. It does not see the mother tongue as an asset in a diverse society. Rather, the lack of the dominant language is seen as a deficit. Brisk, as cited in Cadiero-Kaplan (2004), views this as a compensatory education policy in which teaching through the primary language is acceptable. The dominant language replaces the mother tongue, thus creating a subtractive model.

The pupils, particularly in former model C schools, are also being ‘brain-washed’ to reject the introduction of indigenous languages into their schools. Some believe that “the only place to learn African languages is in the townships or the rural areas” says Pandor Sowetan (2006:6). The strong preference for English instead of African languages in the formal sectors of society, both private and public, continues unabated in general social practices. English is becoming the *de facto* lingua franca not only as the medium of television and education but also in other domains as well, such as parliament, the courts and the army. In the same year, 2006, Pandor reported 87% of the speeches made in parliament were in English, fewer than 5% were in Afrikaans and the remaining ones were in the nine African languages that are less than 1% in each of these languages.

It is often claimed that indigenous African languages do not possess the requisite register for (western) science and scholarship or other high-status functions. However, Gough (1999), points out the reverse is at least equally true. Indigenous African languages possess many specialized registers that are not available to speakers of English and other non-African languages. As examples, Gough mentions the rhetoric employed in various ceremonies like releasing the widow, opening a homestead, traditional legal course, in praise poetry or even a folk tale (Gough, 1991:17).

## **2.2 Theories of second language acquisition and learning**

The acquisition learning distinction is the most fundamental of the entire hypothesis in Krashen's (1981) theory. According to Krashen (1981) there are two independent systems of second language performance: the "acquired system" and the "learned system". The acquired system or acquisition is the product of a subconscious process undergone by children when they acquire their first language.

The learned system or learning, is the product of formal instruction and it comprises of a conscious process that results in conscious knowledge about the language, that is, grammar rules. The acquisition learning hypothesis states that the adult has two distinctive ways of developing competencies in second language: acquisition by using language for real communication and learning or knowing about language (Krashen & Terrell 1983). According to Krashen (1989), learning is less important than acquisition.

### **2.1.1 Description of Krashen's theory of second language acquisition**

Acquisition occurs when comprehensible input in the target language is available. This is similar to babies acquiring language from the surrounding environment without studying grammar books and dictionaries. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication, in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterance but with the message they are conveying and understanding. Second language learners acquire language from interacting with other language users. Acquisition then, according to Krashen (1981), may take place at any age, given appropriate conditions while learning depends on the isolation of linguistic rules.

Krashen (1981) argues that we acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyond our current level of competence through the help of context or extra - linguistic information. We acquire best by "going for meaning" first, and as a result we acquire structure. Krashen (1981) regards communication as the main function of language. The focus is on teaching communicative abilities. Krashen (1988) stress the importance of vocabulary and view language as a vehicle for communicating means and messages. Acquisition can take place only when people comprehend messages. Briefly,

the view of language that the natural approach presents consists of lexical items, structures and messages. Acquisition is therefore the natural assimilation.

A child is born with a schema of some sort as to what constitutes a possible natural language. Based on experience of a certain sort, the child then constructs a language by using a certain procedure. The construction takes place over a time. At any given time the child may have a grammar that is not the ultimate adult grammar. Ultimately (again in a sense that has to be specified), the child constructs the correct grammar of his language. We then say that the child has learned the language (Krashen, 1981).

### **2.2.2 Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)**

Cummins (1991) developed a theory, which consists of several interrelated principles. The first of these is the conversational academic language proficiency principle in which Cummins distinguishes between BICS and CALP. The acronyms BICS and CALP refer to a distinction introduced by Cummins, between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. The distinction was intended to draw attention to the very different times periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language.

Cummins (1994) argues that individuals develop two types of proficiency: Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins (1994) suggests that the two proficiencies vary according to the degree of context available to the learner, and the degree of cognitive challenge of the task. Social language is acquired in one or two years but the level of proficiency needed to read social studies or solve a particular academic problem can take between five to seven years to develop. CALP represents little more than “test witness” – it is an art craft of the inappropriate way in which it has been measured (Edelsky, Hudelson, Flores, Barkin, Altwerger & Jilbert, 1983). Cummins (1984, 1989), discusses content based

instruction being related to CAPS. He argues that many L2 students learn BICS skills within a relatively short period of time.

CALP deals with the skills learners should have in order for them to succeed in their academic studies. BICS is only used in every day communication. These (BICS) skills are not sufficient for student's academic success (Snow & Brinton, 1997:7). If learners are to succeed in academic studies in a second language context, they need help to develop CALP. The content based instruction supports the use of home language in language learning. Snow and Brinton (1997:31) put it this way: "the home language is used at least some of the time to support instruction in English".

The use of the learner's home language serves as a good tool towards learning a second language. All successful societies of Asia and Europe are societies which use their own languages. The fact that people use their own languages contributes immensely to their development in all endeavours in societies. The fact that English is a universal language does not mean that African people, use English or Afrikaans, even though these languages are more universal (Prah, 2001).

### **2.3 The natural approach and Krashen's theory**

The optimal use must be made of those communication skills that the learner has developed through the use of the native language and that are common to communication skills required in the second language. The basis of the natural approach is that learners should be able to listen to a language before they can speak it. This means language should be learned in a natural order. Language has to be acquired first and then the production can take place. Krashen (1988) see communication as the primary aim of language. Their approach focuses on teaching communicative abilities. They therefore, refer to the natural approach as an example of a communicative approach. The distinction between BICS and CALP has exerted a significant impact on educational policies and practices. Specific ways in which educators misunderstanding of the nature of language proficiency have contributed to the creation of academic difficulties among bilingual learners have been highlighted by the distinction.

### **2.3.1 Second language acquisition**

For Krashen (1981), second language acquisition is a natural unconscious process similar to home language acquisition. It depends upon trying to comprehend what other people are saying. Provided that the child hears meaningful speech and endeavours to understand it, acquisition will occur. L2 acquisition fails to occur when the child is deprived of meaningful language, say by classroom activities that concentrate on the forms of language rather than on meaning, or by psychological block that prevents otherwise useful language from gaining access to the learner's mind.

Acquiring a language is simply described as 'picking it up'. It is developing ability in a language by using it in a natural, communicative situation (Krashen and Terrell 1983:18). It is about acquiring it in its natural context. The only language which is acquired is the child's first language. The child acquires the first language from the parents by being exposed to it. According to Flynn (1987), the term acquisition is used to refer to the way language abilities are internalized naturally. Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process and is either the results of formal language learning situation or a self-study programme. It further refers to the process of natural assimilation, involving intuition and subconscious learning which is the product of real interactions between people, where the child is an active participant.

It is similar to the way children learn their home language. "Black pupils would benefit immensely if they were allowed to learn in their mother tongue," says Sentsho-Modise (Pretoria News 2009). Many black South Africans, especially the educated, are now beginning to question the logic of taking their children to so-called ex-Model C schools where they are being deprived of their mother tongue, while English and Afrikaans-speaking children are benefitting because they are taught in their home languages. The Chinese, Japanese, Germans, Portuguese, Spanish and others have learned through their mother tongue very successfully, with very little or no English at all but they managed to produce engineers, scientist, accountants etcetera. "Will somebody stand up and tell us

that they are not educated, because they cannot speak English?” questions Sentsho-Modise (Pretoria News 2009).

### **2.3.2 Language learning**

Learning a language is all about knowing the rules, having a conscious knowledge about grammar (Kashen & Terrell 1983:18). Language learning differs from language acquisition in that language learning involves the knowledge of grammar and of the rules governing language. Language learning has to deal with learning a second language. Language learning is the development of conscious knowledge about a language in isolation of linguistic rules.

The expression ‘language learning’ includes two clearly distinct, though rarely understood receiving information about the language; transforming it into knowledge through intellectual effort and storing it through memorization. The concept of language learning, according to Roberto (2003) focuses on the language in its written form and the objective is for the student to understand the structure and rules of the language through the application of intellect and logical deductive reasoning. The form is of greater importance than communication. Teaching and learning are technical and governed by a formal instructional plan with a predetermined syllabus. One studies the theory in the absence of the practical. One values the correct and represses the incorrect. There is little room for spontaneity. The teacher is an authority figure and the participation of the student is predominantly passive.

Learning is a progressive and cumulative process, normally tied to a present syllabus that includes memorization of vocabulary and seeks to transmit to the learner knowledge about the languages; its functioning and grammatical structure with its irregularities; its contacts with the children’s home language, knowledge that one hopes will become the practical skills of understanding and speaking the language. The effort of accumulating knowledge becomes frustrating because of the lack of familiarity with the language. The PANSA Language Board (PanSALB) also welcomed a decision by the University of Johannesburg to introduce Sepedi, English, Afrikaans, and isiZulu as its official

languages. “This transformation will definitely give meaning the constitution by promoting equitable use and enjoyment of all official languages” says PanSALB, (Sowetan 2009).

#### **2.4 Mother tongue development**

Mother tongue promotion in the school helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children’s abilities in the majority school language. This finding is not surprising in view of the previous findings by Sammy Mpatlanyane (Sowetan 2006), that (a) bilingualism confers linguistic advantages on children and (b) abilities in the two languages are significantly related or interdependent. Bilingual children perform better in school when the school effectively teaches the mother tongue and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language. By contrast, when children are encouraged to reject their mother tongue and consequently, its development stagnates, their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined.

“A man understands when spoken to in a language he understands. But he understands even better when spoken to in his own language.” Magabe Daily Sun (2009:2). Even though there are quite a number of African rural children that are taught in English or Afrikaans and who matriculate in good marks in many of their subjects, a lot of these children are failing to pass because they do not understand the language they are taught in. African children need to be introduced to subjects such as maths in their home languages. For instance, a child attending primary school in the Sepedi speaking community is introduced to maths as ‘Dipalo’ and does the subject in Sepedi. However, when they enter the intermediate phase, unlike their English and Afrikaans-speaking counterparts, they are faced with a new challenge - continuing their subjects in a language they do not fully understand.

The research is very clear about the importance of bilingual children’s mother tongue for their overall personal and educational development. More detail on the research findings summarized below can be found in Baker (2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000). “We need to understand that unless African languages are given market value, unless their

status is enhanced and unless African languages are learned in a multilingual context by all South African citizens we are not going to make the progress that we are potentially capable of making in the country” Neville( Sunday Times, 2007). This means progress in all dimensions of society economic, political, cultural and educational.

It is often said that English is the language of business. It is also claimed that is the main reason why people who speak African languages as their first language wish to learn English so that they can obtain jobs of higher remunerative value. This is probably the reason why many possibly even most people who have an African language as first language believe that there is no need to develop African languages.

If the status of the African languages is upgraded, the entire South African economy will improve. There are realistic proposals to improve the status of languages and these include:

- allowing children to learn languages in a form they understand
- using existing resources more efficiently
- improving the quality of African language teaching at university level
- offering bursaries and policies at university to encourage students to study African languages
- making African languages more visible, for example, on streets signs
- encouraging prominent people to speak in the vernacular even on English TV channels
- including the speaking of a local language among the criteria for employment and
- forming a pressure group to hasten the legislative process so that the South African Languages Bill is presented to Parliament. ( The Constitution of South Africa 1996).

Zulu Professor Sihawu Ngubane from University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, said tertiary students who speak English as a second language often fail because they cannot understand concepts in English (City Press, 2006). Under the new policy, he mentions that Zulu will become a language of communication and a medium of instruction.

Students will be able to write examinations, submit assignments and learn in Zulu. The nursing, social work, education, health commerce and law faculties will be particularly encouraged to provide students access to Zulu materials for research purposes. However English will continue to be the primary language of instruction. Public Affairs Director, Chetty, further comments that: “Every university has a constitutional right to use any of the eleven official languages as a means of communication” (City Press, 2009). All learners must be taught in a language in which they are fluent and those children learn best in their own language.

If Africans want to culturally and educationally empower the masses of Africa, they have to take knowledge to the masses in languages of their native historical experience and creativity. Unless this is done, there is no chance of advancement. Until this is done, Africans will be forever culturally tied to the linguistic and cultural apron strings of the former imperial masters of the world. Prah (2001:12) writes: “The moment our African languages become extinct, we cease culturally as Africans to exist. We vanish into history. We become culturally part of the world whose language we have adopted. Culturally we would be totally denationalised”. African languages spoken in South Africa continue to remain a largely untapped resource as far as contributing to societal development is concerned because of this factor.

According to the post-apartheid Constitution (1996) of South Africa, language policy must recognize the historically diminished status of the indigenous languages by the South African people, and the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages. It also states that all these official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably. “In theory, the post-apartheid Constitution commits the government to building on an underlying philosophy of pluralism and linguistic human rights by pursuing a policy of multilingualism” (Pretorius, 1999).

African leaders and educators could be more concerned about how to merge the use of African languages with the use of the European languages. Emphasis in the first instance,

however, must be on elevating the status of African languages. It is important to illustrate to Africans and others alike that African languages are capable of functioning in the production and reproduction of knowledge that can propel the development of the African continent. Already there are lexicographic units. Terminology development is taking place. Research in Human Language Technology in respect of African languages is also taking place.

### **2.5 Language shift and language loss**

Language shift and language loss are not an inevitable process. Language shift, sometimes referred to as language transfer or rate of assimilation, is the progressive process whereby a speech community of a language shifts to speaking another language. The assimilation is the percentage of individuals with a given mother tongue who speak another language more often in the home. Minority groups can experience that shift or loss towards the majority language. It does not always imply better chances for educational achievement and upward social mobility. A group may give way its language without getting social economic advantages in turn.

On the basis of such experiences, minority group members may develop strategies to foster use of minority language and to improve proficiency in minority language which is then revitalized. This idea is further supported by the Constitution of The Republic of South Africa (1996) which also clearly stipulates that all the eleven languages are official including the sign language (Chapter 1 section 6 (4) (2)). It further states that all languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably. It is important therefore that sufficient opportunities for all these official languages to be used regularly are made available.

When schools provide children with quality education in their home language, they give them two things: knowledge and literacy. The knowledge that children get through their home language helps make the English they hear and read more comprehensible. Literacy developed in the primary language transfers to the second language. The reason is simple: “Because we learn to read by reading – that is, by making sense of what is on the page –

it is easier to learn to read in a language we understand. Once we can read in one language, we can read in general” (Smith, 1994).

A municipality has been recognized for its effort to communicate to its citizens in Sepedi. The Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality in Groblersdal, Limpopo, has scooped the 2009 Multilingualism and Nation- Building Municipality of the year award. The Municipality was recognized for its ground breaking work in the area of advocacy for multilingualism, through initiatives such as developing a language policy. The municipality earned plaudits for using the Sepedi language in 15 000 copies of their external newsletter, Sekhukhune News.

## **2.6 Language planning and language policy**

It is important that educators recognize the forceful ways which both cultural differences and learning styles impact upon a child’s ability to learn and use language. It has always been clear that approaches to language learning which incorporate opportunities to use all learning modalities in cooperative contexts are optimal for all children. The most powerful language curricula are those which maximize opportunities for multiple channelling and cooperative learning. Culture issues pertaining to the subject matter, prior knowledge, and nonverbal language issues may also affect understanding. Diaz- and Weed (2002) suggest that teachers find out about the cultural background of students. The new approach encourages the mastery of the mother tongue as a gateway to multilingualism. The motive of the past was to divide and rule and to create contempt for speakers of languages other than mother tongue (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002).

“The new policy says master your mother tongue as an entry point to learning your neighbour’s language” (Heugh, 2001). Heugh (2001) strongly insists that no matter how many new curricula are introduced, African children will continue being at a disadvantage if they keep learning in a language they do not understand. “We are expecting the majority of children to go school and to do the same kind of thing in a language that is alien to them. We are dishing out an inferior education to African

children all over again and unintentionally reproducing the same inequities that existed in the past” (Heugh, 2001).

The new constitution makes provision for the establishment of the new Language Education Policy. The democratic constitution [Item 29 (2)] of South Africa states that 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 and community ties and enhances communication between generations.

Current research shows that when children’s first language is recognized and valued, the development of the second language becomes more effective (Lambert, 1980). The policy is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. The Language Education Policy (1997) aims to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and religion while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one’s own would be encouraged. This means that teaching of all languages in the classroom should be encouraged. Cummins (1986) gives support to this idea; he points out that children cannot learn in a language they do not understand and therefore some initial language instruction is necessary to overcome the effects of a home-school languages shift.

Maintenance of the home language strengthens family. In reality, however, it is the subtractive bilingualism that prevails when this language has been edged out of the classroom and school environment. In cases which a second language is used for instruction, the first language and culture need to be maintained strongly in the home and the community and need to be recognized and nurtured. In the general population, children learn at different rates and they go to school with diverse needs and varying levels of academic.

## **2.7 Language and culture**

Among the many factors which might influence a language learner's choice is the culture or ethnicity (Oxford, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Oxford and Nyikos, 1996; Reid, 1995). As defined by Brown (1981:123), "culture refers to ideas, skills, arts, and tools which characterizes people in a given period of time". In addition culture includes how one thinks, learns, worships, fights and relaxes. Language interacts closely with culture; one's native language in both a reflection of and an influence by assumptions shared by the unique social groups to which learners belong. The strong bond between culture and language must be maintained if learners are to have complete understanding of the meaning of the language that is used.

Language and culture are inseparable. Culture is expressed through language. Culture and language represent an identity, an identity that breeds an individual's pride which is the foundation of a national pride. Once a person's language is recognized and respected and the person is able to access services and his or her human rights in it, there is no reason to drift away from it. Language is the most important component of culture because much of the rest of it is normally transmitted orally. Language, of course, is determined by culture or vice versa. Cultural specific values may be significant to comprehension if the values expressed in the text differ from those held by the learner (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

There are ways in which culture determines language. For example, the Romans did not have words for radios, televisions, or computers because these items were simply not part of their cultural context. In the same vein, uncivilized tribes living in Europe in the time of the Romans did not have words for tribunes, praetors, or any other trapping of Roman government because Roman law was not part of their culture. In a multilingual society each language group represents a particular culture. Trotsky (1990) says: "the most precious part of culture is its deposit in the consciousness of man himself". What Trotsky is saying here is that culture represents a particular consciousness. The consciousness is externalized in the philosophy of life of a culture group, in their proverbs, in their art, in their rituals, in their stories. It is a requirement of any multilingual society that has

embraced the values of democracy, such as South Africa has done, that there is mutual respect among its diverse cultures.

## **2.8 Language and identity, attitudes and equity**

Language is only an instrument for communication of message. However, it is language that makes communication of messages possible. Language is a defining characteristic of mankind. More than anything else, language shows we belong, providing the most natural symbol of public and private identity. This becomes especially clear in multilingual communities where various groups have their own language. With its language, each particular group distinguishes itself. The cultural norms and values of a group are transmitted by its language. The immediate situation in which people communicate can affect the kind of language they use. Bloch (2006:13) further points out that, our perceptions of our own language and other languages can become in varying degrees a source of pleasure, pride, anxiety, offence and even violence. Group feelings are expressed through the group's language more intimately than through adopted languages comprising the multilingual community.

The concept of language attitudes includes attitudes towards speakers of a particular language. This refers to the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others. Attitudes to different languages are varied in our society. It is not unusual to hear languages which are foreign to people being referred to as nonsense. Talking about languages other than one's own still reveals perceived hierarchies in status, for example, when an Afrikaans teacher in a particular school yard went past a particular group of students who are Sepedi speaking, the teacher may comment negatively about the language being used. The avoidance of the word Pedi within that language had a distancing effect. The reason why the promotion of African languages seems to be discouraged is still a big question mark. Attitudes are learned predispositions not inherited and they are likely to be relatively stable. However, attitudes are affected by experience, thus attitude change is very important says Gerwel (2009:10).

When studying language attitudes, the concept of motives is important. Two basic motives are called instrumental and integrative motives. If L2 acquisition is considered as instrumental, the knowledge in a language is considered as a “passport to prestige and success”. The speaker /learner considers the speaking/learning of English as functional (Ellis, 1991:17). On the other hand, if a learner wishes to identify with the target community, to learn the language and the culture of the speakers of that language in order, perhaps to be able to become a member of that group, the motive is called integrative. In general, the integrative motivation is considered to have been more beneficial for the learning of another language.

In the past, it has become clear that there was a definite tendency towards proficiency in one language in South Africa. It has been argued that, although multilingualism is indeed a sociolinguistic reality in South Africa, it is invisible in the public service, in most public discourses and in the major mass media. It was also argued that the government has failed to secure a significant position for language matters within the national development plan.

Ngubane in 1995, whilst he was the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, emphasized that a National Language Plan would have to be a statement of South Africa’s language related needs and priorities, and that it should, therefore set out to achieve at least the following goals:

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

With regard to grassroots attitudes, the report states that while most people favour English because of its importance as an international language, “there is also a feeling

that the other languages of South Africa should be fostered, especially as a subject at school, and for expression in arts.” LANGTAG (1996:21).

Linguist Rafapha, of the Pan South African Language Board says most people are not aware that terminology has been recorded and does exist in African languages. He says the government has established national lexicography units whose duty it is to develop monolingual dictionaries for the nine indigenous South African languages. The previous government promoted bilingual dictionaries whose purpose was to strengthen the learning of English and Afrikaans by indigenous language speakers. Nowadays lexicographers have developed terminology for indigenous languages in various disciplines such as health, chemistry and algebra. “This means that a teacher who has to teach maths in Sesotho has a book to fall back on,” says Rafapha (City Press 2005).

## **2.9 Language in Education**

The Language in Education Policy (1997) states: “Our cultural diversity is a valuable national asset to promote multilingualism, the development of the official languages and respect for all the languages used in the country”. The new language in education policy is not received as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government’s strategy in building a non-racial South Africa.

The work of the Language in Education (LANGED) subcommittee was paradoxically complicated and facilitated by a parallel process of language policy formulation within the Department of Education. The report identifies the goals of Language in Education Policy, lists the most important ‘baseline information’ required for the planning process, and suggests possible targets and time-frames that have to be undertaken. It ends with a brief discussion of the possible relationship between the Department of Education and the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB).

One of the goals of Language in Education Policy identified in the report was to promote an additive multilingual approach in the South African schools and other educational institutions. The report regards the overall target as “a situation where it will be possible

to learn and teach any matriculation subjects offered in South African schools through the medium of the parents' or, where appropriate, the child's choice.”

After the adoption of the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1994 (Act 200 of 1993), it became clear that the implementation of several aspects of the language sections in the Constitution should be guided by a Language Plan for South Africa. The same applies to the language sections of the new Constitution (as adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996). A Language Plan is needed to support the principle of multilingualism and human dignity in opposition to the trend towards monolingualism, to secure a significant position for language matters within national development plans, and to maximize the utilization of our country's human resources.

## **2.10 National language policy framework**

According to the National Language Policy Framework: Final draft (2002:5), there was a strong awareness of the need to intensify efforts to develop the previously marginalized indigenous languages and to promote multilingualism if South Africans are to be liberated from undue reliance on the utilization of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state.

The policy framework not only initiates a fresh approach to multilingualism in South Africa, but strongly encourages the utilization of the indigenous languages as official languages in order to foster and promote national unity. It takes into account the broad acceptance of linguistic diversity, social justice, the principle of equal access to public services and programmes, and respect for language rights.

The Implementation Plan is part of the National Language Policy Framework that gives effect to the provisions on language as set out in Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). The Implementation Plan is presented as a flexible proposal to which further identified structures and mechanisms for promoting multilingualism may be added.

It is assumed that the learning of more than one language should be general practice and principle in South African society. It further supports that maintaining home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s) is very important. The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is invested in the individual to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism.

It recommends that the children should use and be taught in the language they understand best. In employing this language as a language of teaching and learning, the language requirements of the learners in the subsequent stages of their education should be borne in mind. All education, except in the case of a foreign language, should be through medium of mother tongue for the first four school years. PanSALB (2009), suitable terminology for primary and secondary schools should be compiled so that when learners are taught through the medium of vernacular, this can continue until they complete school.

The economic value of the official languages, even from the first educational stages, is so great that provision must be made for the teaching of these languages. Where secondary school subjects, for example history, do not require an extensive technical terminology, the teacher should be encouraged to start, as soon as possible, to teach these subjects through medium of the mother tongue. This further means that the question paper should also be available in the language concerned. The learner again will be encouraged to use that particular language in writing their examination papers. Where school subjects in the primary school are taught through the medium of mother tongue, teachers should also be trained to teach in the mother tongue.

### **2.11 Shaping a dynamic identity for the future**

The ANC proposal in its draft Policy Framework for Education and Training document (1994) states that individuals have:

- The right to choose a language(s) to study and to use as a language of learning.
- The right to develop the linguistic skills in the language(s) of their choice.

- The necessity to promote and develop South African languages that were previously disadvantaged and neglected.

The continual use of English as the language of teaching and learning in schools is condemning most black pupils to an inferior education all over again. This is the view of HSRC researcher Heugh, in Sunday Times (2007) which is supported by academics and linguists all around the country, like Nkosi, Gasa and Mtuze. In terms of the study, majority of school-going children are expected to learn through a second language (English) even before they have developed sufficient proficiency in that language. Researchers have established that it is impossible for learners to learn enough of a second language in three years to switch to a second medium of instruction in grade 4.

In countries where there are well trained teachers and sufficient classrooms and books, learners should ideally switch to a second language of learning and teaching in Grade 7. In South Africa children are taught in their mother tongue until the end of grade 4 when they make the switch to English. According to Heugh (2001), in South Africa where most teachers struggle with proficiency in English, mother tongue instruction should continue until at least the end of grade 9.

### **2.12 Multilingualism**

According to the Language in Education Policy, teaching in the classroom should focus on the locally viable approaches towards multilingual education. By embracing the policy of multilingualism as an integral aspect of the strategy of nation building, the new government can transform the African languages into one of the main thrusts in the struggle for democracy.

The most powerful language curricula are those which maximize opportunities for multiple channelling and cooperative learning. Culture issues pertaining to the subject matter, prior knowledge, and nonverbal language issues may also affect understanding. Diaz-Rico and Weed (2002) suggest that teachers need to find out about the cultural background of their students. They examine the characteristics and cultural and linguistic

factors relevant to instruction of students from language-minority backgrounds. Children's cultural and linguistic experience in the home is the foundation of their future learning and we must build on that foundation rather than undermine it. Every child has the right to have their talents recognized and promoted within the school. In short, the cultural, linguistic and intellectual capital of our societies will increase dramatically when we stop seeing culturally and linguistically diverse children as a problem to be solved, and instead open our eyes to the linguistic cultural and intellectual resources to bring from their homes to our school and societies.

The development of African languages is crucial in correcting the imbalances that exist in society. The legacy of the underdevelopment of the previously marginalized languages, with respect to standardization and orthography, technical terminology and dictionaries, is a major challenge for the effective implementation of the policy. In addition, the LANGTAG Report (1996) points to the fact that the underdevelopment of these languages has contributed to a negative attitude that even the speakers of these languages have towards their languages. For true multilingualism to prevail in our country, we should strive for a situation where every South African citizen has a useful knowledge of English, Afrikaans, and one or more African language. Such a genuinely multilingual citizenry has a multilingual repertoire, broadly representative of the composite linguistic communities of the South African population and would signify considerable progress toward the achievement of the linguistic equality envisaged in the Constitution (Orman 2008).

### **2.13 Conclusion**

When children are learning through a minority language, they are not only learning the language in a narrow sense. They are learning concepts and intellectual skills that are equally relevant to their ability to function in the majority language. Teachers can also help children retain and develop their mother tongue by communicating to them affirmative messages about the value of knowing additional languages and the fact that bilingualism is an important linguistic and intellectual accomplishment. For example, they can initiate classroom projects focused on (a) developing children's language

awareness (for example, surveying and celebrating the multilingualism of students in the class) and (b) the sharing of languages in the class (for example, every day a child brings one significant word from the home language into class and the entire class, including the teacher, learns and discusses this word).

The home language must always be established before instruction through another medium can begin, says Motswaledi (2006). Often children are caught in a vicious circle. Due to the fact that the school fails to support their home language, skills in it are very poor. When children's home language is valued and recognized, the development of the second language is more effective. In reality, however, it is subtractive bilingualism that prevails when the home language has been edged out of the classroom and school environment.

Children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. When parents and other care givers are able to spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts, children come to school well prepared to learn the school language and succeed educationally. Children's knowledge and skills transfer across language from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language. Bilingual children perform better in the classroom when the school effectively teaches the mother tongue and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language. By contrast, when children are encouraged to reject their mother tongue and consequently, its development stagnates, their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study aims to explore the loss of first language by first language speakers and the acquisition of the second language by these learners. Wong-Fillmore (1991) conducted one of the early studies by examining language shift among minority children. This study was a conducted a qualitative study that explored questions about how and why language loss occurs, what age are the most susceptible, the short and long term effects and the significance of loss to those who experience it.

This study provides a synopsis of the field of first language loss and permanent maintenance and reports on a qualitative study that was conducted within the school and families. According to Verhoeven and Beschoten (1986 cited in Kourituin 1999), first language loss may refer to the lack of first language development or delayed first language development. This study therefore examines reasons why there is a decline or total loss in the first language.

The selection style of presentation of data in this study is based on qualitative theory. The qualitative methodology is used because it is through this methodology that the researcher was able to conduct an in –depth extradition of data. The researcher followed an ethnographic approach. This kind of an approach provides detailed and reliable explanations for social as well as cultural events based on beliefs and experiences of people within that culture. By being involved in the study as a participant observer, the researcher was able to observe and record data. As MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:37) state that in an ethnographic study, the researcher relies on observation, interviewing, and document analysis, to provide an in-depth understanding of what is studied. The method uses an approach that focuses on discovering and understanding patterns, actions, language and explanations that are unique to the culture of particular

groups of people. In general, this method is concerned with the study of social groups and social systems within a culture.

This study provides a synopsis of the field of the first language loss. It will use an emergent, inductive qualitative approach. According to De Vos, et al, (2002; 79), “qualitative approach stems from an anti-positivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic and thus holistic in nature, and aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that the people attach to everyday life.” The reason why the researcher chose a qualitative approach is because of its naturalness and that it is suitable for educational and social research. Due to the basis of such an approach being one that does not predetermine or delimit the direction the investigations might take, it is especially important to detail the specific stages that the whole research will follow in addressing the research questions.

As already indicated, the researcher followed an ethnographic approach. This kind of an approach can provide detailed and reliable explanations for social as well as cultural events based on beliefs and experiences of people within that culture. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) have influenced the selection and presentation of data in this study. A broad ethnographic perspective was adopted in order to provide a detailed description of the learning context. The work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) has influenced the selection and presentation of data in this dissertation. It is important to ensure that both L1 and L2 learners have the opportunity to participate in the classroom on an equal footing.

### **3.2 Research design**

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

A case study design was used. This study has the characteristics of a case study in the sense that the researcher wanted to explore and shed light on a particular phenomenon, namely, “subtractive bilingualism in the teaching and learning and learning of English as a second language”. It is through a case study that the researcher can have an in depth study and understanding of the problem situation. It is through the use of the case study design that the researcher can extradite data from the participants themselves. A case study, therefore, is designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants bound by time and activity in a natural setting using multiple sources of evidence with data needing converge in a triangular fashion (Yin, 1994).

The qualitative methodology was used because it is through this methodology that the researcher will be able to conduct an in-depth extradition of data. It is based more on what is called naturalistic phenomenological philosophy, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of the situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

This research is interested in understanding how people make sense of their world as well as their experiences they have in the world. It begins with specific observations and moves towards the development of general patterns that emerge from cases under study. The researcher interacts with those in the study trying as much as possible to minimize the distance between herself and those being researched.

### **3.3 The Sample**

The sample consisted of three learners in each grade R class. A further three learners who are Sepedi, Tshivenda and isiZulu speaking were also chosen. They attend school at Thuto ke Maatla Combined School in Tlamatlama Section, Tembisa, Ekurhuleni (East Rand). The main reason why these classes were chosen for this study is because English as a medium of instruction is implemented in these grades only.

The learners in grades 1-3 from Thuto ke Maatla Combined School are taught in two languages, that is, the home language and English. The first language of the child (which

is Sepedi in this case) should be used as the initial language of teaching and learning to ensure that academic progress is not hindered. Educators agree that the child's first language is normally the best instrument for learning especially in the early stages of development.

This idea is supported by the Language Policy Statement (1997) which states that in the foundation phase (grades R to 3), “learners should be taught in their mother tongue”. The minority child's general cognitive development will be retarded if the child does not receive education in the home language and if home language is not further developed in the school. When the child's home language has low prestige as is generally the case with minority languages, language development is not stimulated outside the school. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the education system to ensure that this happens. In 2006, Limpopo Education MEC Aaron Motsoaledi, announced that his department would introduce African languages in former model C schools. Minority language teaching is a requirement for a healthy development of the child's personality and the development of a positive image.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

To do any job, one needs a tool or tools that are associated naturally with that task. In the same vein, a researcher uses tools or objects to realize his/her goal. As Leedy puts it,

“The tool is what the researcher employs to amass data or manipulate them to extract meaning from them” (Leedy 1992:26).

The researcher used three instruments for collecting data: questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is the most used survey method in research. The reason for this is because of some of the advantages it has. One major advantage is that it is designed to be self-explanatory so that they can be completed in privacy and without supervision (Fink & Kosecoff 1993). A questionnaire was prepared and administered to families and teachers who teach at public schools. There is sufficient empirical data which suggests

that language loss does not occur abruptly but over a period of time. So the questionnaire focused on foundation and intermediate phase learners, teachers and parents. All participants received instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Prior to completing it, they were informed that the study was not intended to intimidate anybody, and that they would be required to identify themselves in the questionnaire and of utmost importance, the obtained responses would be handled with absolute confidentiality.

A questionnaire was sent out to learners, parents and teachers asking them about their preference in language as used in the classroom. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on community expectations and experiences they encounter as they communicate with children on a daily basis. In the school environment, the purpose was to establish which language learners and teachers are comfortable with. Open-ended questions were used. From the questionnaire, the researcher was able to extract information about the subject's linguistic background.

According to Leedy (1997: 316), "a meeting of minds" of the researcher and the reader must be created for the success of a case study. Since this research is qualitative in nature and written in a narrative style, it makes for easy reading.

### **3.4.2 Interview**

Over and above a questionnaire, supplementary data was collected by means of interviews with the respondents. The purpose of using this instrument was to fill in whatever gaps the questionnaire might leave unfilled. The researcher is of the opinion that often much more data comes to hand when respondents express themselves freely and orally. Interviews are defined by Macmillan and Schumacher (1999), as encounters between a researcher and a respondent. Open-ended questions were used.

Seliger and Shohamy (1989:90) explain the purpose of an interview as: "to obtain information by actually talking to the subject". The interviewer asked questions and the subject responded in a face-to-face situation and by telephone. They further go on to say

that interviews are personalized and therefore permit a level of in-depth information gathering, free response and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures.

An interview was prepared and few families, teachers, and learners formed part of it. The selection criteria for the families who were interviewed was that they should be in the minority and have children attending an English medium school as opposed to those who are attending public schools. The researcher was interested in knowing what languages are spoken by the adults in these families and also what medium of instruction was used in the classroom by the teachers when they teach. The parents were also asked what they liked or did not like about the school programme. It was also important to establish whether or not there had been changes in the use of language at home as a result of the child being in a school that is not using the home language and if so, what were those changes. Furthermore, I requested that the parents check their children's proficiency in the home language. Finally, I questioned the parents about their concerns of their children losing their home language and it being completely replaced by English. I also questioned them on who they thought is responsible to help retain the home language. Finally, I questioned them about the kind of information they think should be conveyed to the policy makers, educators and politicians about their concerns.

### **3.4.3 Classroom observation**

There is general agreement about the value of direct observation of classrooms but less agreement about the methodology of such observation. The collection of data through classroom observation has formed a major element in several recent major research projects. The approaches adopted by researchers into what goes on in the classrooms lie in a continuum between what can be called the qualitative-quantitative dimension (Croll in Bailey, 1987:32).

In an attempt to complement the data gathered from the questionnaire and interview, further data was collected by visiting teachers in the classroom while lessons were going on. The collection of data through classroom observation is an important element in the data collection process. As stated in the Green Paper (1996:74), the education Ministry

supports the National Commission on Higher Education that “language of tuition and communication can become a barrier to access or a factor contributing to failure”. Investigation could possibly demarcate areas where English as a language of learning and teaching is a “barrier”. Learners should be able to contribute productively to the lesson. If they are able to do this, then the researcher can conclude that the learner’s participation is good.

To triangulate the findings from other instruments used, the researcher used observation as another tool for gathering data. The researcher’s role in the classroom was limited only to observing. The lesson observation will be used as a back-up to recorded ones. The researcher prepared an observation schedule which was used when observing these lessons. The main aim of the lesson observation was to observe whether using only English in the classroom benefited the learners.

#### **3.4.4 Audio recordings**

Audio recordings were also used in gathering data. All data collected was collected through recordings. The advantage of using audio–recording is that all the interaction that is audible can be recorded and analyzed later (Johnson 1995:86). Information gathered stemmed from the life-world of subjects. For accurate information, lessons were video or audio-recorded. The advantage of using audio recording is that the researcher can use this as back-up in the process of the write up. It also paints a clearer picture of the actual atmosphere in the lesson room. The main reason for this is that the researcher might not be able to capture all the information during lesson observation, so this will serve as back-up information.

#### **3.5 Data analysis**

The method used to analyze data is qualitative. When analyzing the data, the researcher made sure that the transcripts of data collected are kept, together with the recorded and written data. The reason for this is that over time, it will be difficult to remember everything said in an interview or in the classroom if records are not kept. Keeping records enables the researcher to refer back when the need arises. When the researcher

was collecting data, she ensured that she analyzed it simultaneously. This was done to avoid forgetting some of the important data collected and to avoid data overload.

The lessons observed were transcribed and analyzed manually. The transcription was done following the transcription convention outlined by authors such as Malamah and Thomas (1987). Interaction analysis was used to analyse the data. Interaction analysis was used to analyze the interaction between the teacher and the learners during lesson observation. The analysis focused on the functions of the interaction. The information from the lesson assessment helped in determining the problems that learner's experience when learning takes place in a language that they struggle to understand.

The researcher used triangulation as the method of data analysis. Triangulation is described by Johnson (1992:146) as bringing together all the information that pertains to a research question. It is through triangulation that the reliability of the data can be enhanced. Macmillan and Schumacher (1999:498) explain triangulation as the cross validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes. It is through triangulation that the researcher can check the recurring patterns of subtractive bilingualism.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Data collected in this study was able to depict the type of encouragement parents should give to their children in order to encourage them to speak their home language. This study therefore urges parents committed to first language maintenance to promote a positive attitude in their children and to address their effective needs accordingly.

In conclusion, the researcher hopes to address the problem as stated in the problem statement. The researcher is concerned that children lose their primary languages as they acquire English. The researcher wants the parents to encourage children to be proficient in their home language.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The data collection aims at both describing and understanding the problem solving process. When collecting data the researcher ensured that transcripts of data collected were kept, for example, recorders and written data. The reason for this is that it is difficult in future to remember everything said in interviews, questionnaires and also in the classroom if records are not kept. Keeping records enables the researcher to refer back when the need arises.

This chapter therefore focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data collected. Data was analyzed according to the questionnaires administered and interviews conducted. Questions were administered to educators and learners in Thuto ke Maatla Secondary School from East Rand district in Gauteng Province. Questionnaires were also administered to parents and language specialists from different government units and publishers of school books.

The researcher was allocated a classroom to administer questionnaires and conduct interviews in different classes. The researcher was mainly concerned with the findings based on the recorded data from the interviews conducted with the school educators and learners as well as those from the language specialists and parents. The findings were then compared to those obtained from the questionnaires administered.

The questionnaires distributed to learners were piloted to ensure that the instructions and questions will be easily understood. The pilot study was carried out in one of the classes that participated in the study. Learners who did not take part in the actual study were chosen and they indicated the following problems:

- If teaching of all the languages in the classrooms was implemented through the medium of the mother tongue, learners will be all be encouraged to take part actively in class.
- If all teachers would be encouraged to start in lower classes to teach subjects through the medium of the mother tongue, learners' progress would be excellent.
- When learners are encouraged to forget the language of their families and communities, they lose access to their heritage. As a result they fail to grow and respond creatively to the world around them.

The findings are analyzed using descriptive statistics. The responses of the questions are grouped into categories according to similarity of responses and the information was recorded.

#### **4.2 Interests and relevance**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa clearly stipulates that all the 11 languages are official including sign language [Chapter 1 section 6 (4) (2)]. It further states that all languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably. It is important therefore that sufficient opportunities for all these official languages are made available regularly.

It is further provided that conditions for the development and for the promotion of the equal use and enjoyment of all official languages must be created. There is the basic right to use the language and the right to develop and understand languages. The policy dictates that learners should take their home language as their first subject and then the institution's language of learning and teaching as a second subject. South African learners also have the right to learn in languages of their choice. The main concern of this study was to find out what is being done by educators, learners, language specialists, parents and the Department of Education as a whole.

### 4.3 Do learners always understand the content in English?

Educators daily face the problems of learners failing. The reason is that they do not understand the language that is being used. Learners also find themselves frustrated because of the situation. Table 1 indicates learners responses concerning the content taught in English.

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>LEARNERS AGREEING</b>	<b>LEARNERS DISAGREEING</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
1. Do you believe that it is important for your teacher to translate concepts for instance in teaching geography if you do not understand in English??	60	10	100%
2. Is your school dedicated to the teaching of your mother tongue?	20	50	100%
3. Do you think your teachers are well trained to teach only in English?	20	40	100%

**Table 1: Level of content understanding**

“Learners being taught in their mother tongue show an improvement in their academic performance. Eight of the 16 schools participated in a Western Cape education department language transformation pilot programme opted to test learner’s literacy and

numeracy skills in isiXhosa last year. The learner's scores were almost four times higher than they were previously", according to Gert Witbooi, spokesperson for the Western Cape Education Department (Gert Witbooi, City Press 4 May, 2008).

In responding to the questions asked to learners, all the participants agreed that language sections that deal with translation of documents are important. Five participants out of six were of the feeling that it was the responsibility of the Department of Education to ensure that language sections that deal with translation of documents are available for the benefit of all South African citizens, learners included. They further responded by saying that as educators, they would not have time to translate documents since they spend much time in classrooms.

The following responses summarize this position:

- Language sections that deal with language matters such as translation of documents are important; and
- It is the responsibility of the Department of Education to ensure that language sections are available and functional.

The participants' responses to these questions indicated that they believe that translation of documents as vital. They are of the feeling that the Department of Education should ensure that language sections that deal with translation of documents are functional, as a result, learning and teaching will be effective.

#### **4.4 Do learners experience problems in answering question papers prepared in English?**

The purpose of this question was to find out about the challenges that educators face when they mark their learners' scripts, especially when questions are asked in English since it is their second language. De Klerk (2002) highlights that the Constitution makes a commitment about the provision of the rights of children to be educated in their own languages.

All respondents to this question agreed that their learners experienced problems in answering English question papers. Learners are not proficient in English; therefore, it becomes a problem to them to understand the instructions on the question papers. They communicate in mother-tongue most of the time and as a result they lack English vocabulary. When they answer these question papers the results are poor.

The following responses summarize this position:

- Our learners experience a lot of problems when they answer English question papers; and
- It becomes clear that they lack English vocabulary; they do not even understand the instructions on the question papers.

The responses show that learners are not willing to take risks trying to communicate in English. Instead, they prefer to use mother tongue whenever they communicate inside and outside classroom.

Majority of teachers at both the grades across all content subjects use a combination of English and mother tongue. There is evidence from the interviews that majority of teachers felt compelled to use English only even where switching is the only option. It is always better if teachers couple the use of English with the home language when teaching so that they do not encounter any unnecessary challenges. Hence, there is significant tension between official policy and spoken practice.

	Teacher to students	Students to teacher	Students to students	Notes on board	Notes in exercise books	Tests and examination
Language used at grade 3 (Students = 86)	1 (21) 2 (63) 3 (2) 4 (0)	1 (15) 2 (60) 3 (11) 4 (0)	1 (6) 2 (45) 3 (20) 4 (2) NR (13)	1 (86)	1 (85) 2 (1)	1 (86)
Language used at grade 4 (Students = 91)	1 (37) 2 (54) 3 (0) 4 (0)	1 (26) 2 (60) 3 (5) 4 (0)	1 (12) 2 (57) 3 (12) 4 (2) NR (8)	1 (90) 2 (1)	1 (91)	1 (91)

**Table 2: Comparison of languages of instruction use at grade 3 and grade 4**

**Key:**

1. English only
2. Mainly English, but sometime mother tongue
3. Mainly mother tongue, but sometimes English
4. Mother tongue only
5. NR – No Response

Yule (1996:195) is of the opinion that the learner who is willing to guess, risks making mistakes and tries to communicate in the second language will tend, given the opportunity to be more successful. According to the responses given, it becomes clear that learners prefer learning through mother tongue.

Further responses to the question indicate that learners force their educators to code-switch when they offer lessons in the classroom. They are not even shy to tell the educators that they are using difficult words which they do not understand and this frustrates the educators. A Geography lesson is, therefore, according to the responses, not

different from a Sepedi lesson since mother-tongue is used most of the time to make learners understand better. Two out of six participants felt that the situation is frustrating them since they do not have enough resources to motivate their learners to learn English. The remaining four felt that they have no option but to teach in Sepedi so as to enable their learners to have a better understanding of the subject matter.

#### **4.5 Is it important to have question papers in both English and the home language?**

The purpose of this question was to find out about the opinion of teachers concerning having both English and Sepedi question papers.

Both the South African Languages Bill (Revised final draft 2003) and Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) recognize the principle of multilingualism. To this end, there are eleven official languages of South Africa and all official languages enjoy parity of esteem and are treated equitably. The state is directed to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of the historically marginalized languages of South Africa.

In response to this question, four participants out of six felt that all question papers should be set in English and Sepedi to enable first language speakers of Sepedi to understand the questions. They further pointed out that all the historically marginalized languages should enjoy parity of esteem. The participants indicated that, before the democratic dispensation in South Africa, question papers were set in English and Afrikaans to enable both first speakers of English and Afrikaans to understand the examination questions without problems. They were of the opinion that this should be done in favour of all South African learners who are first language speakers of the previously marginalized languages.

Two out of six participants were against this idea. Their reason was that although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) recognizes the rights of the learners to be educated in languages of their choice, English still occupies the centre in education

of African learners as it is a language of wider communication and is used as a language of teaching and learning.

#### **4.6 Literature translation from English and Afrikaans into the home languages**

In the past, languages did not enjoy the same status. Historically disadvantaged African languages have suffered. Afrikaans and English were given special privileges both in terms of language teaching and in terms of their traditions and cultures. These inequalities are addressed by new national language policies. Schools should not further entrench the inequalities of the past by, for example, only teaching African languages as second or third additional languages and giving more time and attention to English and Afrikaans. Sufficient literature is developed and educators should make use as much as possible.

The purpose for asking this question was to find out from educators if there is sufficient literature translated from English/Afrikaans into the indigenous languages. All participants agreed that there is insufficient literature translated from English or Afrikaans into the indigenous languages. They were of the opinion that more translators need to be trained since translations will require professional translators. They further responded by saying that the few translations available lack vocabulary in the previously marginalized languages.

“Most disadvantaged communities comprises of person who are not highly literate,” states Manamela in Mail and Guardian (2010). The use of English as the dominant language to access e-services prevents many of them from using modern information resources. The development of ASR and TSS baseline systems for some of the marginalized official African languages in our country has tremendous potential to leverage the use languages in business activities. Typical applications include access to information resources such as making online reservations and telephonically checking the weather forecast. In addition, the ability to compose documents through dictation and to read documents in support of hand-free environments in one’s first language is very empowering to less literate persons.

The availability of other products, such as the highly re-usable pronunciation dictionaries in these languages, provides an excellent foundation for further research activities in speech technology. Already the team at the University of Limpopo has created and improved the performance of the prototype baseline Tshivenda ASR system and the Sesotho sa Leboa ASR and TSS systems. “We have increased the amounts of telephone speech data required to train these systems and have improved and increased the sizes of pronunciation dictionaries they use”, says Manamela (2010) of the work completed in the past year. He adds that the impact of this research will be felt in a number of areas, namely:

- Leveraging the official use of some of the marginalized African languages in our modern information and knowledge intensive society.
- Providing an effective tool for preserving languages and other cultural and heritage issues that are facing extinction.
- Assisting physically challenged computer users who speak the target languages to participate in our Information and Communication Technology (ICT) oriented society.
- Contributing new knowledge to the field of HLT in general through on-going research activities.
- Using existing and new HLT to provide localized software solutions.

Elaborating on the systems, Manamela (2010) says the ASR and TTS components of the research project form the core elements of spoken language processing systems such as Natural Language Understanding and Machine Translations. “One of the ultimate aims of the HLT research is to develop automated computer systems that can be spoken to by users of any language and which can respond naturally and intelligibly to those users. This is still a tough and allusive goal for this research area, but progress is gradually being realized in all spoken languages worldwide” (Manamela, 2010).

To conclude on the responses to this question, the participants were of the opinion that translation should be introduced as a school subject and that it should also be taught in tertiary institutions to allow our country to have more professional translators.

#### 4.7 Learner questions

The following table represents participants according to their number and gender:

SCHOOLS	GENDER	NO	PERCENT (%)
A	Male	1	16.6%
	Female	1	16.6%
B	Male	1	16.6%
	Female	1	16.6%
C	Male	1	16.6%
	Female	1	16.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3: Learner questions**

According to Littlewood (1985:54), a person is likely to be drawn towards learning a second language if he or she perceives a clear communication need for that language and the extent of this communication need depends to a considerable extent on the nature of the community in which the learner lives.

All six participants agreed that they experience problems in learning through English or Afrikaans. They indicated that they are unable to communicate in English or Afrikaans and that they spend most of their time communicating in their mother tongue. They communicate in their mother-tongue at home and at school and, as such, they lack English vocabulary. They further responded by saying that they are often shy to take risks of communicating in English in the classroom for fear of other learners intimidating them. They felt that mother-tongue becomes their 'life saver' everywhere.

The next table indicates grade, sex and cultural background of learners.

Language	Grade							
	R		1		2		3	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sepedi	7	10	8	12	6	5	5	10
Sesotho	5	13	7	15	6	4	3	1
IsiZulu	6	14	2	10	3	3	4	2
IsiXhosa	5	4	3	2	4	4	2	4
Setswana	3	5	1	3	7	7	1	5
IsiNdebele	2	4	0	3	4	4	2	1
Xitsonga	4	4	2	1	3	3	2	0
Tshivenda	3	0	2	1	6	6	1	0
English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Afrikaans	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	100		100		100		100	

**Table 4: Percentage of sample in each grade by sex and language background**

According to the abovementioned responses, it is clear that learners have little or no understanding of English or Afrikaans because their parents also use mother-tongue when communicating with them. Learner respondents felt that it will be important for educators to use mother-tongue when learning and teaching take place. The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not learners are of the opinion of having more literature translated from English/Afrikaans into the indigenous languages.

Five out of six participants felt that more literature translated from English or Afrikaans into the historically marginalized languages will be of value to them and the South African citizens at large. They were of the opinion that mother-tongue should be

respected by all, including their educators. One participant pointed out that educators force them to use English in classrooms whereas they themselves are not proficient in the language.

The purpose of this question was to find out whether or not learners will be comfortable if examination question papers can be set in English and other previously marginalized languages.

#### 4.8 Language specialists' questions

The following table represents participants according to their number and gender.

<b>LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>PERCENT (%)</b>
A	Male	1	49.5%
B	Male	1	49.5%
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5: Gender composition and respondents**

The purpose of this question was to find out from the language practitioners as to whether they are satisfied with the amount of literature available.

The two participants indicated that translation of texts is still an uphill battle since there is a shortage of professional translators. They also pointed out that there are some translators who are doing the job of translating, but the job is not well done because of a shortage of terminology.

The following responses summarize this point:

- We do not have sufficient texts translated from English or Afrikaans into the indigenous languages.

- School textbooks are written in English or Afrikaans only regardless of stipulations in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa allowing learners to learn in languages of their choice.
- Some translators do not have language and grammar training.
- Translators produce documents under enormous time constraints or deadlines.
- Language units and services are understaffed.
- There is still lack of recognition of translation as a specialist field.
- Most translators have also studied English as a second language. As a result, their command of English is not very good and they are therefore not fully bilingual and fully competent in the source language.

Participants were of the opinion that more translators should be trained to do the job. They further said that professional translators should work in a professional and organized environment to enable them to translate texts in a professional way. The purpose of this question was to find out about the availability of the government policy on translation and interpretation.

According to the final draft of the National Language Policy Framework (2003:14), there seems to be inadequate infrastructure for interpreting, translation and editing. While language units will play a pivotal role in addressing this to some extent, the wide gap between the need and demand for language services and the capacity to provide such services will have to be examined. Matters that were to be addressed included, inter alia, training courses for translators, translation and interpreting resources, and a translation and editing policy.

In their responses to the question, the two participants indicated that “even today there is no exact policy on translation and interpretation”.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

The concept of introducing English as a language of learning and teaching early in the child's development is that we end up with children who struggle both in their home language as well as in English. Parents sometimes prove to be a stumbling block in the advancement of mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching in schools. Botha in (Sowetan 2006), says some parents believe their children will end up not being 'sophisticated' enough if they are taught in their mother tongue. "We can't blame parents alone when our politicians are at the core of this" said Botha (2006).

No person or language community should be compelled to receive education through a language of teaching and learning that they do not want. No language community will be used to suppress its mother tongue. Language restriction should not be used to exclude citizens from educational opportunities. The African National Congress proposes that the development of a language policy for a democratic education system should be based upon the right of the individual to choose which language or languages to study and use. In schools, they use different languages as languages of teaching and learning. In teaching, different languages should be considered. No learner should be refused admission to any educational institution in the early years of schooling on the grounds that she/he is not proficient in the language of learning that particular institution.

The learners' home language needs to be promoted, fostered and developed to provide a sound foundation for learning additional languages. If learners learn either first or second additional languages, it promotes multilingualism and intercultural communication. However, what is happening now is that learners completely lose their home language in the process of learning the additional language.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the study. Conclusions based on data collected and analysed as well as recommendations on the main problems identified by this study are discussed.

When children are encouraged to forget the language of their families and communities they risk losing access to their heritage. As a result, they fail to grow and respond creatively to the world around them. The communicative and critical thinking skills that will empower these children can best be developed in the case of dominated majorities through the utilization of the child's first language. The problem however, starts when learners are supposed to learn and be taught successfully in English which is their first additional language. They may lack necessary language skills that would enable them to learn effectively.

When the message, implicit or explicit, communicated to children in the school is 'leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door', children also leave a central part of their identities at the schoolhouse door. When they feel this rejection, they are much less likely to participate actively and confidently in classroom instruction.

Linguist Rafapha says he finds it annoying when radio announcers on African language stations justify their use of English words on air to a shortage of words in their own languages. "There are resources out there which can assist them to speak their languages better." says Rafapha, (City Press 2005). According to him, research has proven that if a learner is a very competent mother tongue speaker, it becomes easy for that learner to comprehend technical subjects such as chemistry and science. "A child that is exposed to the world first through the mother tongue will do better if that child continues learning in mother tongue. It also makes it easy for the child to learn English as a subject but not as a

discipline,” he adds. Former primary school teacher and now curriculum studies lecturer at Wits University School of Education, Botha says, (City Press 2005) agrees with this assessment.

The communicative and critical thinking skills that will empower these children can best be developed in the case of dominated majorities through the utilization of the child’s first language. The problem, however, starts when learners are supposed to learn and be taught successfully in English which is their first additional language. They may lack necessary language skills that would enable them to learn effectively.

Bringing marginalised African languages to the forefront, preserving the cultural heritage and bringing physically challenged individuals into the technological world are just some of the benefits of research into speech recognition and speech synthesis. Computers form an integral part of our daily lives, yet many marginalized and previously disadvantaged individuals have yet to access a starting point into the world of technology. The speech recognition and speech synthesis project, under the direction of Jonas Manamela , Head of the Telkom Centre of Excellence for Speech Technology at The University of Limpopo aims to give them just that.

Benefits of Human Language Technology (HLT) range from empowering illiterate farmers in remote villages who want to obtain relevant medical information over a cell phone, to scientists in state of the heart laboratories on want to focus on problem solving with computers. Forming part of the broader HLT research this particular project aims to develop baseline automatic speech synthesis system for the official languages of Limpopo- Sesotho sa Leboa, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

In practical terms, this involves the development of computer software that enables users who speak the target language to ‘talk’ to a computer ‘listening’ so well as to reproduce what has been spoken in to it. It uses the tools of automatic speech recognition (ASR), and text-to speech (TTS) synthesis.

“This can take the form of speech-to-text conversation, converting spoken messages in a given language into text, or user entering raw text written in any of the target languages in to the computer and having the computer read that input text aloud in the most human like manner”, explains Manamela (2010). “By developing these software tools we hope to contribute some localized and novel ways of expanding the man- machine interface horizons in the use of computers as an enabling communication technology”.

The aim is to provide additional opportunities for disadvantaged communities to participate actively in to the new information society using their mother tongue languages, without the need for any training or additional education.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

When children continue their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing the language, especially when they develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality. Goether, the German philosopher once said: the person who knows only one language does not truly know the language. Research suggests that bilingual children may also develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through two different languages and make sure that they do not replace one with the other.

No person or language community should be compelled to receive education through a language of learning that they do not want. Language restriction should not be used to exclude citizens from educational opportunities. The children’s home language needs to be promoted, fostered and developed to provide a sound foundation for learning additional languages. If learners learn either first or second additional languages it promotes multilingualism and intercultural communication, however, what is happening now is that learners completely lose their home languages. This study revealed that learners are not happy with their educators who unduly force them to communicate in English as the educators themselves are also not proficient in the language. Learners are

afraid to take risks of communicating in English for fear of other learners intimidating them.

Addressing a language colloquium at the University of South Africa (2006), Pandor announced that the education department was working on a plan to introduce a programme aimed at using learner's home language as a medium of instruction for the first six years. She also said her department was looking at a second language programme that recognizes English as a second language for the majority of learners. An indigenous language programme plan that will make it compulsory for all learners to have competence in one of the country's indigenous languages, and to make external assessment tools such as question papers available, is being worked out.

However, some black parents have in the past raised objections about their children being taught in the indigenous languages, fearing that this will affect their learning and comprehension of English. On the other hand, educators are often much less aware about how quickly children can lose their ability to use their home languages, even in the home context. The extent and rapidity of language loss will vary according to the concentration of families from a particular linguistic group in the school and neighbourhood. Where the home language is used extensively in the community outside the school, then language loss among young children will be less. However, where language communities are not concentrated, children can lose their ability to communicate in their mother tongue within 2-3 years of starting school.

Pandor (The Star, 2006), emphasized that the policy encouraged the use of the mother tongue as a preferred language of teaching. She said the language education policy was in the second place aimed at teaching young people a language other than their mother tongue. Learners should have the ability to communicate in a third indigenous language. The success of the policy depends on how well mother tongue was managed. The policy was not aimed at denying the learners the opportunity to learn English or any other second language. Rather, it is empowering through the assertion that language learning opportunities made available in all the official languages. The main obstacle to promoting

mother tongue learning is parents' resistance, as they prefer their children to be taught in English. They need to consider that all the teachers have been adequately prepared or trained to teach in English.

Children not taught in their mother often encounter learning difficulties. A constitutional court judge, Albie Sachs once said "the key to solving the language problem is moving away from the official languages to the constitutional protection of language rights" (City Press, 1999). This would create the basic right to use the language and the right to develop and understand languages. Equally passionate views relate to language rights, and note that as the Constitution does not endorse one religion; neither does it proclaim one language. In the same breath, it means for example, that in dealing with the government, one has the right despite practical difficulties, to use one owns language. Therefore Afrikaans and English ought not to be the only languages used in government. Dr Neville Alexandra supports this idea when he points out that "the best way for African language speakers to learn English is to learn through their own languages (City Press, 1999).

"... 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 effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium instructions, taking into account, equity, practicability and the need to redress the results of the past racially discriminatory laws and practices" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:13).

### **5.3 Recommendations**

To reduce the extent of language loss, parents should establish a strong home language policy and provide ample opportunities for children to expand the functions for which they use the mother tongue. Children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. When parents and care givers are able to spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues

with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts, children come to school prepared to learn the second language successfully without being distracted.

Transfer across languages can be two way: when mother tongue is promoted in school, the concept of language, and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority language can transfer to the home language. In short, both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages and does not encourage them to lose one language, especially the home language.

Language is a tool for thought and communication. It is through language that cultural diversity and social interaction are expressed and constructed. Learning to use language effectively enables learners to think and acquire knowledge to express their identity, feelings and ideas in order to interact with others and to manage their world. The Department of Education's Language in Education Policy promotes additive multilingualism and not subtractive bilingualism. This means that learners must learn additional languages at the same time as maintaining and developing their home languages level. Additive multilingualism makes it possible for learners to acquire skills such as reading writing and speaking in the language in which they are most proficient. They are then able to transfer these skills to their additional languages. Wherever possible, learner's home language(s) should be used for learning and teaching.

When students acquire a second language with no loss to their proficiency in their mother tongue, then bilingualism is described as additive. The learning experience enhances the student's knowledge and very often there are also positive spin-offs. However, for additive bilingualism to occur, the students either need to come from a majority language group whose status is assured, or they acquire considerable L1 support, either at home, at school or both. Furthermore, funding and resources must be made available. All attempts must be made to hire well-trained, dedicated educators with similar linguistic backgrounds. It is ideal that all teachers are bilingual in both the majority and minority languages. They need to understand the nature of the languages and how language is

acquired. They “must be skilled at assessing student’s needs, planning appropriate goals, objectives and provide activities to meet those needs” (Lessow-Hurley, 1990:18).

In the past, languages did not enjoy the same status. Learners and teachers need to be aware of the historical disadvantages African languages have suffered. Afrikaans and English were given special privileges both in terms of language teaching and in terms of their traditions and cultures. These inequalities are addressed by the new national language policy. Schools should not further entrench the inequalities of the past by, for example, only teaching African languages as second or third additional languages and giving more time and attention to English and Afrikaans. “It is thus shallow to state that learners reject African languages. Give the learners a choice to study one language and most of them will desert Afrikaans” (Ditsele, 2009). Let us change the system, mind-set and approach to teaching and learning in primary school, and the uptake will be substantial. Children’s mother tongue is fragile and easily lost in the early years of school.

Ex education minister, Naledi Pandor (2006) said, “despite adopting a policy to promote indigenous languages, not much progress had been made. But sufficient resources has been made available to make the policy effective” (Sowetan, 2006). The policy encouraged the use of mother tongue as a preferred language of teaching. It was also aimed at teaching young people a language other than their mother tongue. The policy was not aimed at denying the children to learn English, but rather to learn an additional language rather than to replace it.

We need to understand that, unless African languages are given market value, unless their status is enhanced, and unless African languages are learned in a multilingual context by all South African citizens, we are not going to make progress that we are potentially capable of making in the country.

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## ANNEXURE A

### Questionnaire for teaching staff

Understanding of language acquisition is vital for both teachers and learners. The learners may not perceive the underlying ideas in a lesson because they cannot quite follow what it is being said. They may miss implications because the connotation behind words may not be realized. So the following strategies are suggested to counteract the above mentioned difficulties.

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

GENDER	MALE
	FEMALE

**What is your current age? ----- years**

HOME LANGUAGE	Sesotho	
	Sepedi	
	Setswana	
	Tshivenda	
	isiZulu	
	isiXhosa	
	IsiNdebele	
	Xitsonga	
	English	
	Afrikaans	

**How long have you been employed by the Department ? .... Years ?**

## SECTION B: QUESTIONS

On a scale of 1-5 kindly answer the following questions placing a tick(x) in the appropriate box weather you agree or disagree depending on the most appropriate

1 not at all important

2 unimportant

3 neutral

4 important

5 very important

QUESTIONS	SCALE/ AGREE/DISAGREE
Are there similarities between first language learning and second language learning and if so what are they?	1 2 3 4 5
How strong does age on arrival influence the rate of acquisition of second language?	1 2 3 4 5
Slow down in order to give the students more time to process new information	1 2 3 4 5
Put key words on the board	1 2 3 4 5

Simplify and rephrase what you say if you see they look blank	1 2 3 4 5
Do not repeat the same phrase- if they didn't understand first time chances are they will not understand the second time	1 2 3 4 5
Do not ask them in front of the class if they understand. Most likely they will just nod and smile whether they understand or not	1 2 3 4 5
How many years of schooling are required for learners to reach national average scores of native English speakers at each grade level	1 2 3 4 5

## ANNEXURE B

### Questionnaires for parents

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

GENDER	MALE
	FEMALE

What is your current age? ----- years

HOME LANGUAGE	Sesotho	
	Sepedi	
	Setswana	
	Tshivenda	
	isiZulu	
	isiXhosa	
	IsiNdebele	
	Xitsonga	
	English	
	Afrikaans	

Where are you employed ?

	Finance	
	Human resources	
	Information technology	
	Legal	
	Policy	
	Education	
	Other (please specify)	

## SECTION B: QUESTIONS

On a scale of 1-5 kindly answer the following questions placing a tick(x) in the appropriate box or say weather you agree or disagree depending on the most appropriate

1 not at all important

2 unimportant

3 neutral

4 important

5 very important

QUESTIONS	SCALE/ AGREE/DISAGREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children</li></ul>	1 2 3 4 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Older children acquire faster than younger children</li></ul>	1 2 3 4 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second language during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults</li></ul>	1 2 3 4 5

## **ANNEXURE C**

### **Interview question/schedule for learners**

- How do they feel when being discouraged to develop their mother tongue?
- Do they feel that their rights are violated in a way?
- How do they feel when their home language is rejected in classroom?
- Does the school create a climate of two-way partnership with learners from varied backgrounds and values?

## **ANNEXURE D**

### **Interview question/schedule for teaching staff**

- How can school provide an appropriate education for culturally and linguistically diverse children?
- What is stated in the constitution practiced in a classroom situation?
- Are they suspicious of bilingual education or mother teaching programmes because they worry that these programmes take time away from the majority school language?
- How can teachers help the children retain and develop their mother tongue?

## **ANNEXURE E**

### **Interview questions/schedule for parents**

- Ask parents whether they planned for their kids to grow up bilingual?
- Whether they are using both Sepedi and English at home with their children?
- What difficulties they are encountering in maintaining the secondary language?
- How they estimate the children's proficiency in the secondary language?
- Are they suspicious of bilingual education or mother teaching programmes because they worry that these programmes take time away from the majority school language?

## **ANNEXURE F**

### **Interview questions/schedule for policy makers**

- Can they say that the right of the learners are respected?
- The cultural, linguistic and economic resources of the nation are maximized?
- Why are they not they rigid as Constitution stipulates rather they go against the official language policy and recommend a non-allowed variant?
- Do they work together with the language board if clarity is needed?



UMnyango WezeMfundo  
Department of Education

Reference No: D2011/62  
Lefapha la Thuto  
Departement van Onderwys

Enquiries: Diane Buntting (011) 843 6503

Date:	8 December 2011
Name of Researcher:	Ramphele M.
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Research Topic:	Subtractive bilingualism in the teaching and learning through the medium of English without the support of the mother tongue
Number and type of schools:	ONE Primary School
District/s/HO	Ekhuruleni North

### **Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

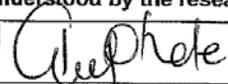
The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Shadrack Phela MIRMSA  
[Member of the Institute of Risk Management South Africa]  
CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST: RESEARCH COORDINATION

8 December 2010

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	09/12/2010