

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE USE OF ZULU AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND
TEACHING IN FOUNDATION PHASE OF SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG EAST DISTRICT

BY

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DECLARATIONS

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I hereby declare that AN INVESTIGATION OF THE USE OF ZULU AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN FOUNDATION PHASE OF SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG EAST DISTRICT is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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.....

DATE

DEDICATION

To my family, specifically my husband Esau and my four children Nompumelelo, Sandisile, Thandiwe and Nokuthula, for their unfailing support and encouragement.

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I give all the praise, honour and glory to God Almighty for giving me strength, wisdom and courage to complete this work.

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ABSTRACT

According to the South African Schools Act no 86 of 1994, school governing bodies determine the official language used as Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in public schools. Black community primary schools use home language in the Foundation Phase, and switch to English from the fourth grade. This study investigates Zulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase in selected township primary schools in Gauteng East District. A qualitative inquiry used semi-structured interviews to collect data from Grade Three teachers. Findings were that educators welcomed use of learner's Home Language as LoLT; due to diverse linguistic backgrounds of teachers and learners, Zulu was not used effectively in classrooms; code switching to English was prevalent; parent involvement was poor due to parents' lack of Zulu proficiency and learning and teaching materials were mainly in English. The review of school language policies and the provision of multiple medium classes to accommodate language diversity were recommended.

KEYWORDS:

1. Language of Learning and Teaching
2. Foundation Phase
3. Language diversity
4. Department of education
5. Home Language
6. Multicultural society
7. School Governing Body
8. Ethnic background
9. Learning and Teaching resources
10. Parent involvement
11. Language Policies

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CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

More than fifteen years have passed since the first democratic elections were held in South Africa; however, the country is still engaged in a transformation and transition process, especially in the education sector. Asmal and James (2002:113) maintain that education and democracy are both ideals that promise a better society. This implies that education and democracy have the potential to promote positive social values. In particular, the South African government has implemented curriculum change in the education system which did away with the former racially divided syllabi through the implementation of a new common curriculum. The latter has undergone three revisions since its introduction. The most recent revision, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is still in the process of implementation since January 2012 (DBE 2011). The aim of the major changes in the education system is to normalize and transform the previously divided and unequal system of education. This transformation is aimed at providing education that will develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa, irrespective of his/her background (DoE 2002: 1-12).

In 1996 a new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) was drafted, which led to the National Education Policy, Act 27 of 1996. Based on this education policy, other policies were drafted and implemented, such as the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) which governs all public schools in South Africa. According to this policy; the governance of every public school is vested in its own governing body. One of its functions is to determine the language policy of that particular public school. The determined language becomes the LoLT (LoLT) for that particular school. South Africa has eleven official languages: English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Ndebele, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Sotho, Pedi, Tsonga and siSwati. Any of these languages may be selected for use as the LoLT.

Primary schools for the black community may use any of the indigenous South African languages as LoLT in the Foundation Phase and switch to English as LoLT from the fourth Grade onwards. According to the National Curriculum Statements (DoE 2002:17), the learner's home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible. This is particularly important in the Foundation Phase where children learn to read and write. This recommendation has an advantage because the learners come to school proficient in the home language.

However, as parents may enroll their children in schools of their choice, many children from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds do not receive education in their home language. The selection of home language as LoLT is determined by the School Governing Body (SGB) of each particular school. Unfortunately, the home language chosen as LoLT does not accommodate every single learner.

In particular, choice of LoLT is controversial in the black community where learners have to transfer from the use of their home language to the use of English as LoLT. The learners have about three years to develop the vocabulary of the home language for use in school and are then expected to develop a similar vocabulary in the second language immediately after the Foundation Phase. If the home language is developed optimally in the Foundation Phase, learners are enabled to cope with the transition to an Additional Language.

Beeld (2004) cited by Wolhuter (2007:32) mentions that “although Grade 4 is the year in which the switch is made from mother tongue education to English as a medium of instruction in the majority of schools, it was reported that learners could not read and write in their mother tongue”. Although cognizance is taken of the problems associated with the transition to English as LoLT, this should not be isolated from other challenges that the learner faces in Grade 4. These challenges are discussed below. In the researcher’s experience as an educator for over twenty years, a child in Grade 4 faces the following:

- i. Adaptation from four subjects (e.g., IsiZulu as home language, English as Additional Language, Mathematics and Life skills) to more than four subjects as specified per particular school. Apart from the increased number of Learning Areas, all of them are taught and learn in a new language, which is English.
- ii. Adaptation from one educator to up to nine educators, depending on the school’s educator allocation. In most schools, Foundation Phase educators are classroom based, whereas from Grade 4 the educators or the learners rotate as per the time table. All the allocated educators are expected to teach the learners in this new language, which is English.
- iii. Adaptation from the use of home language as LoLT in the Foundation phase to the use of English as LoLT across all the nine Learning Areas. The successful acquisition of the new LoLT will depend on the proficiency of home language.
- iv. Adaptation from content-based terminology and vocabulary in home language to

terminology in English. The researcher recognizes that certain English terminology has already been introduced in the Foundation Phase due to the lack of appropriate terms in the indigenous languages (e.g., motor car = *imoto*). Mooko (2004:188) mentions that the direct use of English words may be motivated by the absence of the Setswana equivalent that could be used to express mathematical ideas.

The above-mentioned affect every individual learner who has to adapt to the new LoLT. According to Mestrie (2002:437), research carried out in the late 1980's as part of the Threshold Project indicated that neither African children nor their teachers could cope with the transition to English as LoLT in the fifth year of schooling. This suggests further problems that learners might face in Grade 6, where they are expected to participate for the second time in systemic evaluation (first time evaluation takes place in Grade 3). The National Policy on Assessment and Qualification for schools in the General Education and Training Band (DoE 2007:27) explains that systemic evaluation aims at assessing the effectiveness of the entire education system and the extent to which the vision and goals of the education transformation process are being achieved to ensure that all learners derive maximum benefit from the education system. Systematic evaluation is one of the mechanisms used to determine the quality of education in most countries, including South Africa. Learners in Grade 3 and 6 are assessed to evaluate the extent, to which the education systems achieve the set social, economic and transformational goals. The Department of Education (2005) highlights the overall goal of systemic evaluation studies and explains that the systematic evaluation studies are intended to provide regular information to policy makers about appropriate education interventions pertaining to:

- i. The context in which learning and teaching is taking place;
- ii. The performance of learners and their levels of achievements;
- iii. Factors that affect learner achievement.

The former Education Minister, Naledi Pandor, (The Sowetan, 1 October 2008:9) complained about the unacceptably low performance of Grade 3 learners in Numeracy and Literacy. She mentioned that black mother tongue speakers had lower average scores when compared to the higher scores of English and Afrikaans language speakers who use these languages as LoLT. She further indicated that language issues affected pupils' performance in Literacy and Numeracy. In the researcher's opinion, based on the former Education Minister's comments, the issue of African mother tongue speakers in the Foundation Phase and the enrichment of home

language as LoLT should be addressed. Learners are faced with a LoLT which might not be their home language; at the same time, there is a poor development of both languages (home language and English as the Additional Language that is normally used in black community schools). The results of Systemic Evaluation led to a serious appeal by Pandor who asked that the South African schools should not participate in any tests or evaluations for the period of four years (2008 to 2011). A plan called the Foundation for Learning was designed with a view to implementation during that particular period to improve achievement in Literacy and Maths (DoE 2008).

Petje (in DoE 2005) argues that formal preparation for success in Grade 12 starts in Grade 1. He mentions, "A good foundation in primary education is crucial for success in secondary education as well as for eventual entry into the global village and meaningful participation in a hi-tech environment, a vibrant economy, the challenging world of work and lifelong learning". Thus, the foundation of good learning starts in the Foundation Phase, which includes the first grades of formal education. African languages (i.e. Zulu, Ndebele, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Sotho, Pedi, Tsonga and siSwati) should be enriched in the Foundation Phase where they maybe be used as LoLT. This will eventually strengthen the development of the second language when these children change from home languages to the use of English. In this regard, Arthur, Grainger and Wray (2006:334) refer to Cummins' theory of interdependence. This theory indicates that second language acquisition is influenced by the extent to which the first language has developed and if the first language is strong, acquisition of the second language may be relatively easy. This theory indicates that a good foundation of a mother tongue, will eventually lead to the effective acquisition of a second language.

In 1993 the Botswana government introduced curriculum reform. Setswana was used as a medium of instruction for the first four years of primary education with a transition to English as a medium of instruction in Standard 5. However, the process of educational review in 1993 in Botswana suggested that the use of Setswana as a medium of instruction at primary school level disadvantaged students in the Primary School Leavers' Examination because students had not adequately mastered English, as the language used in the examinations (Mooko 2004: 182). Consequently, English became medium of instruction from the second year of primary school instead of the third year. This situation is similar to the situation pertaining to South African primary schools in the black community considering the results of the Systemic Evaluation of 2005. Thus, there is a need to explore the contribution of the use of home language as a LoLT in the Foundation Phase towards learner performance in primary schools.

Having laid the surface which indicates the expectations and some challenges in the education system in South Africa, especially when it comes to the Language of Learning and teaching, the researcher understands that every home language used as LoLT in schools can be individually addressed. This has led the researcher to decide and focus on one of the official languages in South Africa, which is isiZulu. The aim of this study is to investigate the use of home language, isiZulu, as LoLT in the Foundation Phase of schools in Gauteng. ~~East District.~~

1.1.1 Relevance of the study

While the post-1994 government focused on developing legislation aimed at ensuring that all South Africans have equal access to quality education, little change can be seen in black community schools that use isiZulu as LoLT. Primary schools in black communities have maintained the pre-1994 *status quo*: ~~isiZulu a home language~~ is used as LoLT in the Foundation Phase and then the shift is made to English in the fourth grade. Children learn in ~~isiZulu their mother tongue~~ for the first three years of schooling and shift to the use of English as LoLT from the fourth grade of school. In the researcher's opinion, in the South African context very little is known about the influence of home language as LoLT with regard to the performance of learners, particularly in the Foundation Phase where learners must develop basic skills of a language, learning how to read and write. It is generally assumed that learners come to school being able to understand and speak their mother tongue. These learners change from the home language, isiZulu, in its developmental stage to English, which becomes the new LoLT for all the Learning Areas. The researcher assumes that it is difficult for these learners to comprehend learning content if they have not yet mastered the LoLT. This observation is borne out by the results of the Systemic Evaluation (DoE 2005), black learners using African languages as LoLT in the Foundation Phase who transfer to English as LoLT from the fourth grade perform poorly.

Against ~~the above this~~ background, this study investigates the use of ~~isiZulu home language~~ as LoLT (~~isiZulu in this case~~) in the Foundation Phase, with a focus on ~~its the role of home language~~ for effective curriculum delivery. The results may contribute to the necessity for language policy review and amendment and inform school governing bodies which have the mandate from the Department of Education to determine the language policy of a public school (SASA 1996).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Meier and Marais (2007: 132) mention that language rights have brought about their own challenges. They add that desegregation of schools has resulted in schools with a linguistically diverse learner population whereby learners speak different home languages and have different levels of competence in the LoLT. This is evident in all schools within the South African societies. The successful use of a home language as the LoLT in schools poses a challenge because the LoLT used by a particular school might not be the home language of all the learners who are from diverse language backgrounds.

In some instances, educators teaching the Foundation Phase are not conversant with learners' home languages. In the case of the school where the researcher is teaching, the LoLT is isiZulu. However, the three educators who have been teaching the Foundation Phase for over a decade are neither competent in isiZulu nor speak isiZulu in their private conversations. One educator is Tsonga-speaking; the other two educators are Northern Sotho speakers. Based on the history of the school, the educators were offered teaching posts provided they were willing to teach in isiZulu. The researcher has observed that their daily teaching is still based on continuous research and consultations with other educators to enrich their understanding of isiZulu. This kind of experience may be found in many schools with similar circumstances.

This study investigates the use of isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase. Effective use of LoLT can contribute to better learner performance as early as in the Foundation Phase (basic education) and have a positive impact on further primary and secondary education and lifelong learning. The study is guided by the following research question: *How does the use of isiZulu as LoLT contribute to effective teaching and learning among Foundation Phase learners in selected primary schools in the Gauteng? East district?*

The main research question is sub-divided into sub-questions:

- How do educators experience the use of isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase?
- How effective is the use of isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase?

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is as follows:

To investigate the contribution of isiZulu as LoLT to effective teaching and learning among Foundation Phase learners in selected primary schools in the Gauteng. ~~East district.~~

The research objectives as informed by the research question are stated as follows:

- To describe the experiences of educators who are using isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase.
- To determine the effect of the use of isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted according to a qualitative paradigm. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche` and Delport (2005:262) all qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or world-view, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guides their inquiries. By following the qualitative mode of inquiry, the researcher collected rich, thick descriptions of experiences. In terms of the research focus, a qualitative approach afforded the researcher the opportunity of investigating and understanding of people's experiences and social behaviors emotions and feelings (De Vos et al 2005: 262). The detailed beliefs, perceptions or accounts received from a particular number of the educators informed the investigation. De Vos et al (2005:74) add that the qualitative paradigm aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. Within the qualitative research paradigm, the researcher's interest lay in hearing stories from the selected educators regarding the use of isiZulu as LoLT in the curriculum delivery. A qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to listen to how educators shared their experiences. This was not possible if the researcher had approached the investigation from a more traditional, positivist quantitative research perspective.

1.4.1 Research design

According to Mouton (2001:55), a research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. In this investigation the researcher chose the qualitative research design. De Vos et al (2005:269-272) explains different types of qualitative research designs:

biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. The researcher decided to use a phenomenological research design because it aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives. Interaction with participants assisted the researcher understand and interpret the meaning that participants experience in their daily lives in teaching and learning.

1.4.2 Sampling

According to De Vos et al (2005:193), sampling means taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population or universe. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:110) mention two different strategies of sampling: the probability sample (also known as a random sample) and the non-probability sample (also known as purposive sample). The researcher decided to use purposive sampling to select a particular section of the wider population to be included in the sample. From the Gauteng East District, the researcher selected a cluster of three primary schools from the Benoni Township. The researcher was confident that three schools from the same area would share similar experiences because of the common contextual factors. Cohen et al (2007:112) mention that cluster sampling allows the researcher to select a specific number of schools which are geographically close. The selected schools all offered isiZulu home language as LoLT in the Foundation Phase. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:123) add that once the units have been selected; individuals are then selected from each one. Thus, six Grade 3 educators were selected from the Foundation Phase as participants. Further, as indicated by Cohen et al (2007:100) factors such as expense, time, and accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population. Based on that reason this investigation was only conducted at selected schools in one district out of 15 districts of the Gauteng Province.

1.4.3 Data collection

According to de Vos, et al (2005:295), qualitative studies typically employ unstructured or semi-structured interviews. They further explain that semi-structured interviews are defined as those interviews that are organized around areas of a particular interest.

In this investigation, the researcher used semi-structured interviews as data collection techniques to allow the interaction between the researcher and the participants. This technique enabled the researcher to elaborate on questions and explain their meaning in case it was not clear to the participants. Cohen et al (2007:182) add that the popular use of the interview technique in qualitative research employs the semi-structured interview where a schedule is prepared that is sufficiently open-ended to enable the contents to be reordered, digressions and expansions made, new avenues to be included, and further probing to be undertaken.

1.4.4 Data analysis

Mouton (2001:108) explains that all fieldwork culminates in the analysis and interpretation of some set of data. He adds that analysis involves “breaking up” the data into manageable themes. In this investigation, the researcher analysed the data early during the data collection. The data analysis involved organizing, accounting for and explanation of the data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation. Cohen et al (2007:461) mention that there is no one single or correct way to analyze and present qualitative data, but it should abide by the issue of fitness for purpose. The researcher therefore was clear of what was expected and made sure that the data collected was detailed and rich. For data analysis the researcher used themes which were identified by means of qualitative narrative descriptions, which entailed describing the use of home language as LoLT in the Foundation Phase.

1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Gauteng Province has 15 districts which provide monitoring and support for effective curriculum delivery in schools. This study was limited to the selected primary schools in townships of the Gauteng East District that use the indigenous languages as the LoLT in the Foundation Phase and switch to English from the fourth grade. The study was limited to selected educators who are teaching Grade 3 learners, that is, where learners have completed two years of schooling in the home language and are in the final year of the use of their isiZulu home language as LoLT. No participants were identified by names; each participant was assigned a code name.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Foundation Phase - The first phase of the General Education and Training Band: Grade R, 1, 2, and 3 (DoE 2002:205).

LoLT - The language that is most used in a particular learning and teaching environment (DoE 2002:206).

Systemic Evaluation – It is the study that offers a powerful lens through which to view the performance and health of the education system (DoE 2005: i).

Home language _ It is the mother tongue that is used at home and is assumed that learners come to school able to understand and speak the language (DoE 2002:17).

Additional Language _ It is the additional language, and is assumed that it is not known to the learners when they arrive at school (DoE 2002:17).

African Languages used in South Africa - The nine official languages exclusive of Afrikaans and English.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF STUDY

- **Chapter one - Orientation of the study**

The researcher provides an introductory background of the investigation. This chapter indicates the researcher's point of departure of the investigation of a LoLT in the Foundation Phase. The problem statement and the aims of the study give the reader a clear orientation about the investigation.

- **Chapter two - Literature review**

In this chapter the researcher provides the theoretical background for the investigation of the home language, including the individual language background, as a LoLT in the Foundation Phase.

- **Chapter three - Research Methods**

The researcher describes in details the research design and methodology that implemented during the investigation.

- **Chapter four - Analysis of data and interpretation of results**

The researcher provides the detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

- **Chapter five - Summary, Findings and recommendations**

In this chapter the researcher provides the findings based on the analyzed data and concludes with the recommendations.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the ~~expectations and challenges experienced by problems faced when black~~ learners in South African schools. ~~The use of shift from isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase home language to English as LoLT during the Foundation Phase~~ in primary schooling ~~became the focus for this investigation~~. A detailed description of this situation formed the background of the investigation. The researcher's point of departure was described and justified by reference to theory and experience in other education systems. The problem statement and the aims of the study gave the reader a clear orientation about the investigation. A brief outline of the research design was also included.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the views of relevant scholars about the use of home languages as LoLT are investigated in international and local context from primary and the secondary sources. The literature is discussed according to themes deemed relevant to the aims of the study.

2.2 LANGUAGE THEORIES

It is imperative to highlight what other authors have to say about theories of language acquisition. According to Rubin and Babbie (2001) cited in de Vos, et al (2005:262), a theory is a systemic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspect of social life or enrich our sense of how people conduct and find meaning in their lives.

2.2.1 Theory of language interdependence

Cummins and Swain (1986) cited in Arthur et al (2006:334) mention a theory of **interdependence**. This theory says that: *second language acquisition is influenced by the extent to which the first language has developed, and that if the first language is strong, acquisition of the second may be relatively easy*. This theory explains that the extent to which a first language is mastered, it will positively influence the learning and mastering of an additional language that may be learnt at any stage. It means that when an individual has learned and mastered the first language, it will be easy to learn the additional language, transferring the skills that have been learned in the first language into the additional language.

In some South African schools, learners make a transition to the use English as LoLT in their further learning, starting from the Fourth Grade of school. In this case, English will be an additional language to learners who were learning in isiZulu **in the Foundation Phase. different languages either than English**. English acquisition will then be more effective if they have acquired proficiency in **isiZulu. their Home Languages**.

Vernon-Feagans (1996:1) points out that although there are many skills that young children acquire, the one that seems almost magical in its emergence is children's rapid acquisition of language. She adds that young children cope well with the acquisition of another language in addition to their mother tongue. It means that most learners are able to eventually learn another language with ease in addition to their mother tongue, more especially at a young age.

This theory of **interdependence** will mostly apply to most of the South African schools. It implies that ~~if isiZulu is well developed as LoLT at all times and at early age, even if learners use English as LoLT, their Home Language should also be promoted as much as possible because~~ it will strengthen the acquisition of ~~any the~~ particular second language that may ~~be is~~ used as LoLT. The National Languages Institute of Australia (1991:15) adds that a fundamental assumption which underlies bilingual education is that skills and knowledge acquired in one language are easily transferred to another. ~~Social life also plays a role in the language development. The following theory explains how an individual is affected by social life and identity.~~

2.2.2 Social Identity Theory

The National Languages Institute of Australia (1991: 57-64) explains a social identity theory, and that it is in a four-stage sequence which includes social categorization, search for positive psychological social identity, and the social comparison which leads to the formation of distinctiveness. The four stages are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.2.2.1 Social categorization

This stage of social identity theory has to do with the physical appearance and identification. In South Africa, the physical world is mostly categorized by different race groups' appearances which are mostly based on the skin colour, or any other physical attributes. People may use such appearance differences to categorize people and conclude the language background of an individual. Such categories are socially derived and are learned from the social environment. From such physical appearance, people tend to conclude and expect a specific language from a particular individual during communication. For example, if children are from the black community, it is assumed that they speak one or more of the African languages spoken in South

Africa, including isiZulu, which might not be the case when other factors like immigration are also considered. Whether the person decides to use, for example, English either than isiZulu for communication, it should not be based on degrading of own or other people's languages, but a promotion of bilingualism, as expected by the National Curriculum Statement that in a multicultural country like South Africa learners should reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages (DoE 2002:17).

2.2.2.2 Social identity

In this stage, people recognize themselves as belonging or not belonging to valued categories which are salient in a particular social environment. People become conscious of their social identity and the degree to which it is positively or negatively valued. The researcher observed two black sports champions (boxing and soccer respectively) interviewed on a television. They were interviewed in English. They had a right to respond in their mother tongues respectively if they could not cope with English. They responded confidently in English, but several comments were made in earshot of the researcher that the interviewees had spoken poor English. The possibility is they were already socially identified as poor English speakers because of their race and social identity before they spoke. This case would illustrate a negative value of social identity.

2.2.2.3 Social comparison and search for positive psychological social identity

These two stages refer to the competitive process of comparison among own membership groups with other groups. It further states that language may itself be a dimension of comparison between groups, especially the status of a particular group because of the group's language. In this stage, if people do not value the language of their groups, the option of language assimilation takes place, whereby the individuals decide to "pass" into a more valued group. An example would be when a Tsonga-speaker decides to assimilate to isiZulu English as a language of communication and eventually stop speaking own language because he/she has valued isiZulu English language status and has negatively perceived own social identity. As the group or the individual redefine their identity in a new context, their language attitudes and language behavior may be expected to change as a results.

In understanding of this social identity theory, it is of importance that any language must be valued positively, **irrespective of** whether parents **have chosen ~~choose~~** an additional language as LoLT or **isiZulu ~~their own home language~~** for their children at school. Looking at the society of South Africa, irrespective of all the eleven languages declared official, the researcher has noticed that when people meet from different races or ethnic groups, **other languages like isiZulu or English becomes** the common language of communication. Schools can also learn from the social identity theory in order to be able to assist the learners during their learning and meet challenges of the **use of isiZulu as LoLT. In addition to the social life, issues like thinking skills are also part of human communication. The following theory explains the relationship between a language and thoughts.**

2.2.3 Verbal learning theory

Thinking skills are important in learning. Language is used for thinking and therefore affects learning. Du Plessis, Conley and du Plessis (2007:8) refer to the verbal learning theory of Asubel, who argued that: *“Language and thought are inseparably interwoven. Language is the vehicle of thought. A deprivation or deficit of language experiences during the critical early years of life may have a lasting negative effect on the language and cognitive development”*.

According to du Plessis et al (2007:8-9) the parent and the educator have a responsibility to make the world meaningful to the child by giving meaningful information. Children may develop learning problems related to the language if the information is not presented in a language that the learner comprehends.

As the literature has indicated, the language which is used as LoLT should be well developed. When the child continues with learning, the vocabulary of the language will be developed to the maximum, and that will have a positive effect on the cognitive powers of that particular learner. Verbal learning theory indicates that children should not be deprived of an early exposure to a language as this will strengthen their cognitive powers. The researcher, based on the theory of verbal learning, is of the opinion that the home language should also be developed to the maximum, in order to use it and transfer the learned language skills to any second language that might be used as LoLT.

According to Richards (1994:3-4), a child's language learning does not take place in isolation from other aspects of the child's development, but is intimately linked with cognitive and social

development. He adds that language learning in schools is initially constrained by their cognitive abilities, but it ultimately advances those abilities. This indicates the interrelations between a language, social life and the cognitive development of an individual learner. By improving the language skills of an individual learner, his/her cognitive powers will also be improved with a view to continuous learning. **These theories lead to a question of defining an individual language as an aspect of belonging.**

2.3 LANGUAGES AS AN ASPECT OF BELONGING

According to Lindon (2006:62), everyone has a sense of personal and family identity arising from their own ethnic group, which may be viewed more as a cultural or national background. Therefore a community or society is occupied by people from different backgrounds and ethnicity, including a specific language of an individual. A language of an individual is important as it determines the individual's belonging. A language is one of the aspects that are used to filter the cultural belonging of an individual. Van der Westhuizen (2007:342) mentions dimensional divisions used to cluster or group various aspects of diversity according to certain associated characteristics and maintains that people view each other through the filter of these dimensions. One of the dimensions he mentions is the general dimension, which is formed by aspects such as language, religion, gender, age, marital status and physical ability. It then implies that a language, as an aspect of diversity, is the contextual factor in the education system of South Africa. **The researcher discusses few languages as examples in the next paragraphs.**

Out of the eleven official languages of South Africa, nine African languages are home languages to mainly the black communities. African home languages like isiZulu, are not catered for **as a language of instruction** in the higher education institutions. This leads to the English language appearing to be more valued by the societies in South Africa. Meier and Marais (2007:132) mention that the African languages are commonly viewed as unsuitable as media of instruction because they do not have the necessary scientific and technological vocabulary. The researcher's point of view is that the South African government has a responsibility to ensure that all official languages are given equal priority in all spheres.

The Norms and Standards regarding language policy published in terms of South African Schools Acts (1996), states that the right to choose the language of learning and teaching is

vested on an individual. It further states that: “*Subject to any law dealing with language in education and the constitutional rights of learners, in determining the language policy of the school, the governing body must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning and teaching, and/or by offering additional languages as fully-fledged subjects, and / or by applying special immersion or language maintenance programmes, or through other means approved by the head of the provincial education department.*”

This legislation does not impose any language over other languages to be used as LoLT, but that an individual can choose any language out of the eleven official languages, depending on the reasons for making such a choice. There are also many possibilities that any language used as LoLT may differ from other children's mother tongues. If parents, for example, choose **isiZulu English** to be used as LoLT on behalf of their children, they can maintain their own **mother tongues languages** as additional languages, or as a subject (Learning Area) and also for their own informal communication purposes. This means that **if isiZulu a language may be is** used as a LoLT, **but** that does not make it more important than any of the official languages in South Africa.

Afrikaans and English are also official languages in South Africa. Dekker and Lemmer (1996:481) mention that in South Africa, English was the language which ensured superiority of some groups in colonial times, whereas Afrikaans “came to power” under apartheid rule. They further say that the enforcement of Afrikaans as medium of instruction for some subjects in Bantu education schools was one of the major causes of the 1976 student revolts. Apart from this history, Afrikaans remains an official language of the country and is effectively used in other spheres such as the economic world and education. The choice to use Afrikaans as LoLT rests upon an individual, like with all the other official languages.

Ferguson (2006: iii) states that in Asia, Africa and Oceania the indigenous populations learnt English because they perceived its acquisition as socially and economically advantageous. He further states that although such populations have maintained the use of indigenous languages in informal domain, they have resorted to English for public inter-ethnic and for public, more formal communication. **Different ethnic background leads to the understanding that people have language diversity which is discussed in the next paragraphs.**

2.4 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Diversity is the term that is normally used to explain that people are different, and they have, for example, different social or religious backgrounds. Different social backgrounds include ethnicity, which also covers diverse languages and cultures. According to Lindon (2006:62), everyone has a sense of personal and family identity arising from their own ethnic group, which may be viewed more as a cultural or national background. Therefore, a community or society is occupied by people from different backgrounds and ethnicity, including a specific language of an individual.

As mentioned, according to Van der Westhuizen (2007:342), there are dimensional divisions which are used to cluster or group various aspects of diversity according to certain associated characteristics and people view each other through the filter of these dimensions. The general dimension is formed by aspects such as language, religion, gender, age, marital status and physical ability. This means that the education system of South Africa also has a responsibility of an inclusive approach to diversity (The White Paper 6, DoE 2005).

People are human beings, and human beings have to communicate with one another by means of a language. That is why there are languages, although different, for communication and socialization. Asmal and James (2002:144) comment that the value of linguistic diversity in a democratic society is widely acknowledged, notably in the context of the discussion about this which also includes the different languages spoken. For the human species to survive, a form of communication is required. This form of communication differs according to the individual's cultural background. **Example will be, an individual from isiZulu background normally speaks isiZulu.** Each child learns a language that he/she uses for communication from the parents and community. This implies that schools have a responsibility not to ignore the cultural background of an individual learner or take it for granted that ethnic diversity does not exist. Banks (1994:47&87) adds that when individuals are forced to reject parts of their ethnic cultures in order to experience success, problems are created for both individuals and society. He continues to say that how people view and interpret the world is reflected in their language. This implies that schools must acknowledge ethnic diversity of all the learners even if their language background is different from the LoLT of the school. It then points out the importance of diversity implementation in schools. Banks (1994:14) sees the importance of the implementation of diversity in schools and emphasizes that the behavior of the school staff must also be examined in order to determine the subtle messages it gives the students about racial, ethnic, and cultural

diversity. Diversity cannot be implemented by means of LoLT, but schools may organize activities like cultural concerts and celebrations to acknowledge ethnic diversity.

It cannot be denied that the language differences are carried over to the classroom environment in schools. Hennings (1996) cited in Jalongo (2000:9) mentions three responses to language differences; *to eradicate, to preserve, or to add*. These are discussed below.

2.4.1 Eradication

Hennings (1996) cited in Jalongo (2000:9) mentions that this embodies a deliberate effort to make the children conform and abandon their first language. Sometimes this is caused by the desperation of a minority group whereby it becomes so desperate to belong to the majority culture, upon which own culture is abandoned. This is more practical to the immigration groups or based on better career opportunities which cater a particular language. The home language that is used as LoLT at a particular school may be more acknowledged to an extent that there will be partial or complete eradication of the language of birth for a particular learner if such languages are totally different from each other. Mufwene (2002) cited in Ferguson (2002:14) adds: "Languages do not kill languages but their own speakers do by giving them up".

According to this theory, people become exposed to other languages, and for whatever reasons, they adopt the other languages, use them for cultural and communication purposes and give up their languages by no longer using them. In this case again, there is no way their mother tongues will survive, but will eventually die. **Other people preserve their own languages as discussed in the next paragraph.**

2.4.2 Preservation

This emphasizes the preservation of the child's first language during the process of learning. In most township schools, the LoLT in the Foundation Phase **will be isiZulu, and then is-any-of-the African-languages,** followed by a switch to English from the fourth grade of school. English becomes the new LoLT from the fourth grade and **isiZulu will the-mother-tongue** continues to be taught alongside English as a subject/Learning Area and is regarded as an additional language. **In this case isiZulu The-mother-tongue-in-this-case** is still preserved except that it is no longer

used as LoLT. Other languages are added into an individual's own language, and it is discussed in the next paragraph.

2.4.3 Adding

This response means making the most of the first language while simultaneously putting all of the supports in place for learning, for example, English. In most South African schools this happens from the fourth grade. Learners speak their mother tongue, like isiZulu at home, study it as primary language in the Foundation Phase and add another language, English, as LoLT throughout schooling. Schools in South Africa can promote diversity management, especially the acknowledgement and respect for the mother tongue of every individual. As parents also decide to enroll their children in public schools which do not use an African Language as LoLT, it is important that both parents and these schools should encourage the learners to acknowledge their mother tongue, while learning English. Arthur, Grainger and Wray (2006:339) encourage the schools that use English as LoLT to inform parents on how to help their children to speak read and write the home language. This will be a relief to those parents who think maintaining the home language may be disadvantageous to learning English. Parents should acknowledge and use their home language as far as possible, irrespective of the language that is used as LoLT by their children. In this case both languages are enriched to the maximum. Languages in South Africa are all equally categorized into different volumes, depending on the LoLT of the school. The following section explains the different volumes.

2.5 THE VOLUME OF LANGUAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (Grade R- 3, RNCS hence forth), policy document differentiates the languages' levels as volumes. A volume of Languages is the way languages are being categorized by the RNCS policy document (DoE 2002). A language may be categorized as Home Language, First Additional Language or Second Additional Language. These categories are referred to as the volumes. According to the RNCS (Grade R- 3) policy document all the eleven official languages of South Africa can be presented in these three different volumes as defined in the RNCS. The following paragraphs explain these different volumes in details.

2.5.1 Home language

If any of the official languages is used and categorized by a school as a Home Language, it is assumed that the learners come to school able to understand and speak the language. An example will be when a child is registered at the school where isiZulu is LoLT and that particular learner speaks isiZulu from home as his/her mother tongue.

2.5.2 First Additional Language

This term implies that the learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. An example will be in a case where a child is registered at the school where isiZulu is a Home Language and English language is then taught as an extra language, and that particular learner does not speak the language as his mother tongue. In this case, the English language is then referred to as First Additional Language.

2.5.3 Second Additional Language

This term refers to learners who wish to learn three languages for general communicative purposes. This is not restricted to the South African official languages only, but can be any language of preference. Any language that is learnt at school as a third language is then referred to as Second Additional Language.

The home language is normally regarded as the mother tongue of an individual. The following section explains in details the role of a mother tongue.

2.6 THE ROLE OF A MOTHER TONGUE

According to Aitchison (2003:133-134), *“Human infants pay attention to language from birth, and that these infants produce recognizable words at around 12-15 months, and start putting words together at around 18 months. He continues to emphasize that the urge for language to emerge at this stage is very strong and only very extraordinary circumstances will suppress it”.*

Commonly when children are born, they inherit from their parents a language that is used in their homes and community as early as the first months of birth. When they grow up, they are possibly exposed to different languages that they hear or learn from the other members of the society. Children enter school at the age of about six years (over four years more than the 18 months mentioned by Aitchison). They have already acquired their mother tongue to the fullest. Their mother tongue emerges and is developed strongly as early as the age of 18 months. This implies that the child will benefit if he/she is able to communicate well in school (i.e. if mother tongue is used for learning). Moyles (2007:42) adds that there is interconnectedness of language and culture. If home language and culture have been acknowledged, they become part of an individual's learning and development of thinking.

Vernon-Feagans (1996:1) points out that although there are many skills that young children acquire, the one that seems almost magical in its emergence is children's rapid acquisition of language. She adds that children from different background and with exposure to very different language environments acquire the rudiments of language in the first two or three years of life. This means that young children learn other languages easily apart from their mother tongue. It is therefore advantageous in a multicultural country like South Africa to introduce children to other languages at a very young age because it will be easier for them to learn it fast using the skills from the mother tongue to learn the new language. Children will be able to interact during communication in a multicultural and multilingual country.

All individuals have their own social identity which includes their ethnicity. Learners come to school with the basic skill of communication in their home language, with full understanding of their home environment. They are expected to have a certain level of proficiency in their home language when they enter school. Their home language is attached to their culture and traditions according to which they have been raised. When they enter the classroom, they have expectations of a new environment, but with a hope of communicating with such an environment through the environment of their home background. A school might have a different ethos and cultural environment to that of the learner; this means that the learner becomes exposed to a multicultural and multilingual environment. **The following section gives a detailed explanation of a multiculturalism and multilingualism in South Africa.**

2.7 MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a country with diversity, which includes different races, cultures, languages and religions. Meier and Marais (2007:119) mention that South Africa is often referred to as the 'rainbow nation' or a multicultural society with language diversity. Such diversity does not mean that the society lives in isolation. People meet in schools, workplaces, shops et cetera. **This also applies to children in schools.**

2.7.1 South African children and their home languages

Any Home Language may be used as LoLT in a school or become an additional language to many learners because of the different ethnic background. The RNCS (DoE 2002: 18) states that when learners enter a school where the LoLT is an additional language for the learner, teachers should make provision for special assistance and supplementary learning of the additional language until such time as the learner is able to learn effectively in the LoLT.

Most townships public schools in South Africa were demarcated according to a particular ethnic group before the democratic elections. For example, there was Zulu section in which only Zulu-speaking people lived, hence the schools in a particular section would offer **isiZulu as a** LoLT of that specific ethnic group. However, since 1994 most schools have **still** maintained the *status quo*, irrespective of the powers given to the SGB to determine the language policy of the school (South African Schools Acts 1996). Unfortunately, communities are no longer limited to a particular ethnic group because of factors like immigration or integration. Yet Van der Westhuizen (2007:221) argues that in view of the structured nature of the school as an organization, actions and reactions, the maintenance of the status quo, renewal, change and resistance can always be expected. He further indicates that technological change does not evoke the strong resistance that social change does, and that individuals who resist, see the change as a threat to their social role or relationships.

When looking at the schools as organizations, they are part of the education system which is continuously in the process of development, change and amendments. Many stakeholders of the school, such as SGB and educators, may find change difficult to accept. This is true of many township schools which are reluctant to alter the LoLT used at a particular school. Lindon (2006:63) adds that the present for any society is shaped in many ways by what has happened in the past.

Immigration is worldwide. Richards (1994:15) mentions that questions of language, culture, and schooling have existed as long as there have been immigrant children entering schools in their

new countries of residence. Bezuidenhout (2004: 198) mentions that since the 19th century people have migrated from neighbouring countries to South Africa. Since the inception of democracy, immigration and shifts in demography have increased. For example, people from the nearby countries like Zimbabwe and others, are moving into South Africa and the parents register their children in any of the schools in the areas they live in. Tieda and Findley (2006:57) mention that the collapse of apartheid brought about the forceful reintegration of South Africa into the global economy after years of exclusion, which was accompanied by an increase in trade, investment and immigration. They further outline that rather than the entry of European and Asian migrants, the resurgence of immigration in the late 1990s was led by Africans, mostly from surrounding nations in the southern part of the continent. This includes legal and illegal immigrants who do not speak any of the eleven official languages of South Africa. This means that any home language that is used as LoLT in South African schools, is a second or third language to the immigrants. This does not guarantee that all children will learn and be taught in their home language when they enter the first three grades at school. Igoa (1995: iii) explains that immigrant children form a large and growing segment of students in today's schools. The LoLT is not the mother tongue of these learners and it may be difficult for learners to cope with learning under these circumstances.

Moreover, South Africans now occupy areas of their choice, irrespective of the ethnic group they belong to. This cross-movement and relocation can mean that the LoLT of a particular school cannot be the home language of the child, but a second or third language. People may relocate because of new employment, matrimonial, occupation of new properties, or for any other reason. The issue of relocation will always remain practical and children have to attend school wherever their parents have enrolled them. In most cases, the LoLT of that particular school becomes the LoLT for every learner; each learner is affected by a particular language used as LoLT, which is not his/her home language.

Du Plessis et al (2007:150) indicate that associated with multicultural environments is the use of different languages in public places, in schools, in shops, restaurants and hospitals. The extent to which learners in multicultural environments should be encouraged to use their mother tongue languages has been the subject of much debate. One of the goals of the Norms and Standards regarding language policy in section 6 (1) of South African Schools Acts (1996) is the facilitation of national and international communication through the promotion of bi- or multilingualism through cost efficient and effective mechanisms. This means that the education system does not promote a specific language, but values all languages and expects all the

schools to implement bilingualism, at a minimum.

2.7.2 Advantage of bilingualism

Children become bilingual as they use a home language to communicate at home and then use another language at school for learning, if the language used as LoLT is different from their mother tongue. Bilingualism has both advantages and disadvantages.

Carringer (1974) cited in National Languages Institute of Australia (1991:103) found bilingual children to be superior at creative thinking. He adds that bilingualism promotes creative thinking abilities and serves to free the mind from tyranny of words. He concludes that since bilinguals have two terms for one referent, their attention is focused on ideas and not words, on content rather than form, on meaning rather than symbol, and this is very important in the intellectual process since it permits greater cognitive flexibility. The National Languages Institute of Australia (1991:105) values the balance between the two languages of a bilingual learner, by indicating that if bilingual children have a reasonable degree of balance between their two languages, their overall intellectual development is not hindered and is, in fact, in many ways enhanced.

2.7.3 Disadvantage of bilingualism

However, the National Languages Institute of Australia (1991:105) mentions that if it happens that the bilingual children's weaker language is the language of the school and the native language of their monolingual classmates and teachers, these children are in a "sink-or-swim" situation because the children's home language skills are being replaced, or "subtracted" in the process of acquiring the language of the school. It further indicates that these children's proficiency in the school language may appear quite good on the surface and indeed be adequate for everyday face-to-face communication and, as a consequence, their teachers may assume that if they cannot keep up academically with their monolingual peers the reason is not based on linguistic but lack of intelligence.

Bilingualism is practical in most countries throughout the world, in all classes of society and in all age groups. It means that even schools cannot ignore the practicality of bilingualism. National Languages Institute of Australia (1991:28-29) indicates that it has been found that

bilingual children, who usually speak in a linguistically mixed code, are quite capable of separating their languages when faced with monolingual speakers of either language, but they continue to mix the two languages when talking to bilingual speakers. It further explains that borrowing takes place when the bilingual speaker lacks or does not recall a particular word in the language he/she is using at the moment, when a semantic concept can be expressed easily in the other language, or when the word from the other language fits better into the structure of the sentence as it has developed up to the particular point at which code switching takes place.

In the researcher's experience and observation, it is common for black children to use English or English words when they are with their peers or younger groups. They speak their home language/s when they communicate with elderly people or with people who are not English proficient.

2.8 ENGLISH AS LoLT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is exposed to the challenge of social and economical exposure which leads to inter-ethnic formal demands for communication. Wu and Cao (2007:92) add that the last few decades have seen a rapid growth in the role of the English language around the world, especially as the *lingua franca* for economic and scientific exchange.

Wolhuter, Lemmer and De Wet (2007:32) say that although English is recognized as the language of commerce and science, it is spoken by only 8.2 percent of South Africans as their home language. This means that the remaining majority of 91.8 percent of the South African population speaks one of the remaining ten official languages plus the other languages declared official by the Language Board of South Africa, for example, sign language. People who are from different ethnic background will mostly use English in South Africa for communication purposes in order to accommodate each other, but English is not as widely spoken as Zulu. Poulos (2006:1) mentions that, as a mother tongue, Zulu is spoken by more people than any other language in South Africa. He further mentions that there are an estimated 10 million mother tongue speakers of Zulu; countless others speak it as a second language. Therefore, English should not be seen as the dominant language of particular race or ethnic group; its perceived advantage is its exposure to the world socially and economically.

Mercer and Swann (1996:141) mention that all the indications are that the worldwide use of English as a classroom language is likely to increase during the twenty-first century. They

further point out that given the key role that language plays in the process of classroom education, it is likely that policy decisions regarding that choice of English or another language as the medium of education will continue to be controversial. According to Wolfendale and Bastiani (2000:14) it has become a universally accepted credo that learning extends beyond school and is for life. This means that achievement of knowledge and skills by an individual does not end or restricted at school level, but it extends even outside the classroom. It is of importance that an individual child is able to use the outside world to enrich his/her learning. Ferguson (2006:185) indicates that English is attractive because it is a language that is perceived to be, and manifestly functions as a gate keeper to educational and employment opportunities and to social advancement. He further agrees that competence in English and English medium education is highly valued by parents, students and the wider public, all of whom see it in a form of “linguistic capital”. Incompetence and non proficiency in English sometimes creates inferiority complex to an individual. Aitchison (2003:4) adds that an inability to use language adequately can affect someone’s status in society and may even alter their personality. If English is perceived as a language of advancement, people who are not able to speak or use English fluently, may develop the inferiority complex when they are exposed to a situation that compels them to use English.

There is a p certain power that English has other than just as a language of communication. Mestrie (2002:440) is of the opinion that English is the language of power and therefore of choice. He further says that if there is insufficient access to it, the necessary compensatory strategy of code switching has predictable consequences. This latter statement applies to black community schools, where learners learn in their mother tongue in the Foundation Phase and then switch over to English from Grade 4.

According to (The Sowetan, 1 October 2008:9), In South Africa, children from English and Afrikaans homes perform better academically in comparison to African language speakers. (~~The Sowetan, 1 October 2008:9~~). The researcher assumes that a possibility may be possibly due to the availability of resources in these two languages, especially in English. These children are able to explore the world and do research for their effective learning by using the available resources. However, the switch to English as a language for inter-ethnic communication has created an increase of resources like books, pamphlets, discs and software being published in English. Ferguson (2006:112) agrees that the more the switch to English, the more the incentive for publishing in English. He further states that the government has a strong motive of retaining a prominent place for English in school and university curricula because economic prosperity

requires a strong research infrastructure, and this means a significant cadre of persons with the language skills to access English language scientific publications. He therefore sees the above as one of the reasons for the entrenchment of English in so many education systems nationwide.

There is also a need for improved technological literacy in every country. Whitebread and Coltman (2008:18) argue that computer literacy is important even among pre-school children and mention that computers have been widely employed in schools and industry. It is therefore important for children to begin to develop the computer keyboard and mouse skills that will increasingly determine their future success in this new technological environment. Vivier and Van Schalkwyk (2002:180) add that computer is able to perform calculations at a millionth of a second, enabling people to manipulate data and have vast amounts of information available to them. Most people prefer to use technology for the information they need, especially the computer, by which they are able access the resources available, for example, internet and software programmes, to strengthen their knowledge, communication and skills. Wu and Cao (2007:98) add, *“With the rapid changes brought about by contemporary transitions in globalization, especially transnational developments in information and communication technology, teachers of ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages), are coming to understand that they are on the brink of a major revolution in the English language curriculum. Many teachers and students have learned to meet the demands of the new Internet situations, such as e-mails, chat groups, Web pages”*.

Thus, the education system of South Africa has recognised the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT); hence it has developed a policy on e-Education which outlines the plans to provide ICT in all schools (Bowes & Pennington 2003:124). There is also a new education policy called e-Learning which vision and mission indicates that every South African learner in the General Education and Training Bands, (Grades R-9), will be ICT capable by 2013 (DoE 2008: 9). Presently, the vocabulary in the computer software is in English. This means that the learners who are competent in English terminology will benefit more than others. This poses a challenge to learners, parents and educators because English advantages English proficient learners through the access to most available resources, including computer access.

Dalvit and De Klerk (2005:6 &9) mention that students value the resources English gives access to and they acknowledge the dominant role of English in education in South Africa. Most students subscribe to the belief that English-medium schooling was of a better quality, and that

English should be introduced as medium of instruction in pre-school or lower primary school. They acknowledged the role of English as the dominant language of South Africa, both in education and in other higher-status domains, the role of English as a lingua franca and its importance for communication with speakers of other languages both nationally and internationally. Because of its communicative power, English was considered a “must have” in order to find a job.

As such, learning in English is gradually becoming a desire among most individuals in the society, as they believe that exposing their children to English at an early age will improve skills and competency and minimize inferiority. Most parents show more interest in the English language for their children in comparison to their own home languages. Parents justify the use of a commonly preferred language and do not regard it as a threat to their children’s home language. Mestrie (2002:438) says, *“Many parents believe that the home language is learnt quite adequately at home; it is the job of the school to teach the language of wider communication”*. Parents prioritize the use of English for the broader communication over making their children’s home language enriched. Such parents believe that at the time their children enter school, in Grade 1, they have efficiently learnt their respective home language during their six years of development. They then prefer English as the language of wider communication as a LoLT for their children’s learning.

“English is generally understood across the country, being the language of business, politics and the media, and the country’s lingua franca. But it only ranks joint fifth out of 11 as a home language” (<http://www.google.com>). Today in South Africa, English is the country’s lingua franca and the primary language of government, business, and commerce. Estimates based on the 1991 census (Schuring 1993) indicates that approximately 45% of the South African population has a speaking knowledge of English (the majority of the population speaking an African language such as Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana or Venda as home language). English language is the medium of instruction in most schools and tertiary institutions. In addition, according to Census 2001, isiZulu is the mother tongue of 23.8% of South Africa’s population, followed by isiXhosa at 17.6%, Afrikaans at 13.3%, Sesotho sa Leboa at 9.4% and Setswana and English each at 8.2% (spoken as home language). English is ranked less than 10% as a home language for the South African population, but its economic status channel people to use it as LoLT.

2.8.1 Literature on English and some official languages

Research was conducted by the South African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies on Xhosa and Zulu students' views on LoLT (Dalvit & De Klerk 2005). The following points are salient.

Dalvit and De Klerk (2005:2-3) mention that in the ongoing debate about which LoLT is more appropriate for speakers of an African language, arguments have been put forward to support both an English-mainly or English-only policy and a bilingual (English and mother tongue) approach. Most African parents prefer English as a medium of instruction for their children in primary school, especially for instrumental reasons. A study on Xhosa-speaking parents, who have chosen to send their children to English-medium schools in the Eastern Cape, indicates that this option was also based on the poor conditions of Xhosa schools and the lack of real support for the Xhosa language in education (Webb in Dalvit and De Klerk 2005:2). Xhosa schools were not receiving enough support for the Xhosa language. This implied that the parents did not have a problem with Xhosa as LoLT, but they had a problem with the poor delivery of the curriculum in Xhosa schools due to the poor support of the Xhosa language and lack of materials. Dalvit and De Klerk (2005:33) found that Zulu students mention that becoming "educated", clearly necessitates a much higher proficiency in English. For the Zulu students, it appeared that they were in preference of English language than the Zulu language based on the reason that proficiency in English means one is more educated.

2.9 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND LoLT

After 1994 the education system went through transformation and democratization. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:123) explain that transformation of education in the South African context involves changing education for better. They further explain that democratization of education includes the idea of partnership in which stakeholders such as parents, learners, educators and community members can play an active role in school activities. The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) gives mandates to schools to establish SGB's which will ensure the involvement of parents in the school governance. The SGB is therefore the legislative governing structure of the school, which comprises of parents (in the majority), teachers, learners and community members as per requirement by the institution.

Sections 20 and 21 of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) provide the powers, functions and duties of school governing bodies. One of the functions of the SGB is to choose the language policy Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:125-133) mention that what is of importance is

the fact that all stakeholders, including learners and their parents, should be part of the development of all the policies which are then adopted by the SGB. They further add that the SGB should display a leading role in and become the driving force behind the organization of parent involvement. The SGB therefore adopt the language policy which they deem it will benefit all the learners registered in that particular public school. The most important thing is that the parents should be more involved in the development of the language policy before the SGB finalize by adopting the policy. The LoLT of the school then becomes part of the language policy. When parents are involved in the development of the language policy of the school, it will improve the parental involvement in their children's education, and it will improve the learners' performance because of the extra help that they will get from their parents. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:18) mention that parents, for whom the language of teaching and learning is a second language, find it difficult to communicate effectively with teachers. If parents avoid parent-teacher communication, the parental involvement will be poor, and the learners will only depend on the educators' help only. It is therefore important that these issues that can limit parental involvement because of a language barrier should be considered when the language policy is developed and adopted.

Norms and Standards for language policy in public schools, in the South African Schools Acts (No. 84 of 1996) state that the parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the learner. The policy gives a right to a learner to choose the language of teaching upon application for admission to a particular school. This means that the parent shall decide on behalf of the learner, who is still referred to as a minor, which language he/she will use as the LoLT. In this case the parents are to be aware of the learner's needs as much as possible. If the parents decide that they prefer that their children learn in home language that might not even be the language of birth for the learner, such decision should be comfortable for the learners. This means that the learners will need all the support they can get from both the parents and the school. Briggs and Potter (1990:323) add that the acquisition of children's language presents a major task for teachers, and depends on the help of parents and other adults. Arthur et al (2006:339) mention that partnership between home and school is crucial to ensure bilingual learners and their families get the best support they can for academic success. Yet, some problems are difficult for educators to deal with and resolve (Arthur et al 2006:309) and in America, there have been a number of explanations for group underachievement, from "blaming the victim", considering the curriculum, to accusations of institutional racism and personal racism in teachers. They add that strategies to deal with the situation have also shifted,

recognizing that schools cannot cure the ills of society, but they can at least be part of the solution. South Africa is not different. Whatever the blame the schools may face, they eventually have to play the role in assisting the society in eradicating the differences, if experienced.

Young et al (1995) cited in Mestrie R. (2002:438) indicates, *"However, African students and their parents do not seem to favor a move away from English language of learning and teaching, while maintaining a strong allegiance to their home languages"*. As the researcher has previously indicated, there is an increase of parents from black community enrolling their children in the former ex-model C schools, where English is frequently used as a LoLT. Heugh (2000) cited in Dalvit and De Klerk (2005:3) agrees that little has changed in the classroom practice since the end of apartheid and parents appear to demand increased access to English rather than substitution of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

Whatever the decision the parents may make, the consequences are experienced by the children in their continuous learning, achievement and development. Learners are caught between the maintenance of the ethos of their home languages and that of the English language. The realities of some kind of adaptation by black children from their own ethos to the ethos of the English-speaking world cannot be avoided as ethos is part of language learning. Richards (1994:5) says that the social environment of the school is important for second language students because it provides an interpersonal context for learning language that goes beyond language itself and beyond the academic curriculum. He adds that second language students must learn the sociolinguistic norms of the school because their academic success depends on their acquisition of both the social and linguistic codes which constitute language.

In the end, the effectiveness of learning and teaching of each and every individual child cannot be treated in isolation with what the parents decide with regard to the LoLT of the child.

The priority for every country's education system should eventually contribute positively to the life-long learning of every citizen, hence countries usually review their education systems. The following section provides an experience of changes in the education system of Botswana.

2.10 THE EXPERIENCE OF BOTSWANA

Botswana experienced different changes which were based on analysis of the positive contribution of each change towards the life-long learning of the individual citizen. Such

experiences can be analyzed and considered as a learning example when changes are made in the education system of South Africa.

According to Mooko (2004:181-182), the Botswana education system underwent several changes with respect to the language of instruction used in the schools, particularly at primary school level. He mentions about three changes that took place. The first change was effected in 1966, in which Setswana was the language of instruction for the first two years of school, with English, as an official language, the medium of instruction from the third year of primary schooling. After another review of the education system in 1976, it was recommended that Setswana should be used as a medium of instruction for the first four years of primary education, with transition to English from the fifth year. The reason was that the few years given to Setswana as a medium of instruction tend to undermine the status of Setswana, hence the years were increased to four years, with English starting the fifth year of primary education. Another change was undertaken in 1993. It was felt that the use of Setswana as medium of instruction at primary school level was disadvantaging the students because they were not doing well in their Primary School Leavers' Examination as they had not adequately mastered English which is used in the examinations. It was then recommended that English should be used as medium of instruction as early as possible, that is, from the second year of primary education, from the year 2002. But the government implemented this change as early as 2001. This case study echoes the challenge faced by many African countries which must decide about the LoLT in schools, while promoting competency in the economic world and at the same time protecting and developing the home languages of all learners from all different ethnic background.

2.11 THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN A MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

As human beings, we cannot afford to ignore the social foundation of any language and separate it from the classroom environment. A language is as much the property of the community as it is of the individuals who function in that community. This can be a challenge to educators as they have the responsibility of improving the proficiency of the languages of these learners, teach them the social behavior, so that they will fit well when among such communities. The educators should be competent in that specific home language which is used as LoLT in that particular school. If the educators are not competent, there will be a poor

delivery for both the vocabulary development of learners and the language itself as the property of such community. Rhodes et al (2005) cited in du Plessis (2007:152) states, "Every educator and learner is a unique individual and cultural being who brings into the classroom a distinct set of beliefs, values, and attitudes to form a complex and unique classroom culture. As classroom is a place in which cultural transmission take place, the educator has an important role to play in bridging cultural gaps that may exist in the classroom. Research has shown that serious cultural alienation and cultural discontinuity experienced by learners could lead to failing in school. The educator, must therefore, acknowledge and respect the different cultures". In spite of the home language that is used as LoLT in schools, an individual learner who comes from a different background should not be forced to discontinue his culture, but should be supported for such by the educators. According to Baker (1995:23) many teachers have simply never heard of the languages which their children speak. He further says that when no attempt is made to find out about the children's backgrounds, it is natural for children to assume that their languages are of little interest to their teachers. Hall (1997:89) says that teachers must come to "know" the "cultures" from which their students emerge The students' cultural characteristics, including their language and literacy experiences, must be treated as resources, not as impediments to their schooling. These are some of the challenges that educators face in a classroom environment, apart from the responsibility to make effective curriculum delivery.

Another practical daily experience by educators is the correct pronunciation of the learners' names, especially if different from the educator's ethnic background. Lindon (2006: 234) mentions that for everyone, a name is part of your personal identity. She further says that it can feel anything from mildly discourteous to downright offensive if people make little effort to say your name properly, or persist in versions that you do not want to be called, and that children deserve full attention and effort to say their names correctly.

Regarding the role of educators in the multicultural schools, Wolhuter et al (2007:165) say, "In the multi-ethnic schools of today, the professional staff should demonstrate positive attitudes towards the linguistic characteristics of ethnic children. Their language should be viewed as valid communication systems with no attempt to replace them with standard English. ... minority learners in English medium schools should be helped to master English, but not as a replacement of their own languages". This example applies to any language used as LoLT in schools not only to English. As long as the LoLT is different from the learner's home language, no attempt should be made to replace the learner's own language with the LoLT, but the children should be helped to master the LoLT for the purpose of learning and teaching.

The researcher argues that educators have a responsibility of not only teaching, but also acknowledging and respecting different cultures with planned and implemented programmes to ensure the appreciation of cultural diversity. Richards (1994:8) adds that second language students' backgrounds are so diverse and probably unfamiliar to educators who are not members of these groups, educators who work with second language students must actively seek to know better the backgrounds of these students in order to plan effective instructions for them. Hall (1997:32) mentions that multicultural education has increasingly been about more than the social psychological consequences of curricular content, whether for majority or minority children, and that there are important benefits if majority children gain understanding of other cultures and become sensitive to the consequences of power and that there is a strong need for incorporating practices that produce equity for all children. These are some of the responsibilities that make a teacher a unique service provider in the society.

2.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the factors ~~which contribute to teaching and learning for an individual learner in South Africa with regard to the use of isiZulu and some of the other languages language of learning and teaching. as described in the literature, which influence the life of a learner in the world and affect his/her learning capabilities.~~ The LoLT is an important factor in the child's learning life because the content of a curriculum is conveyed to the learner through the LoLT. In South Africa, like every country, legislation governs the education system and its implementation. The Language Policy in public schools is stated in the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) schools. The governing structure, the SGB, is also an important education structure which has an influence on the LoLT in schools because of its powers and the responsibilities to adopt a school language policy.

Multiculturalism is a reality in South Africa and this will always be a controversial issue when it comes to LoLT versus the social background of learners in schools. The theories discussed suggest guidelines on how social issues that affect the LoLT in schools can be accommodated. The chapter also explains the effects of ethnic background of an individual, like language diversity, role of the mother tongue, language as an aspect of belonging and multiculturalism and bilingualism in South Africa.

Every child has a social life and lives in an economic world. Economic factors influence the

parents' decision to choose the LoLT for their children's learning to the extent that English becomes the most preferred language over other official languages. Moloji (2005:5) mentions that education is not only pivotal to economic prosperity, but it also plays a crucial role in enabling people (learners and parents) to improve the quality of their lives. It is therefore of importance that both economic prosperity and quality of life be improved on an equal basis. The purpose of education in a country is therefore to provide every individual citizen with knowledge, skills and values that will make him a better and successful citizen. Every South African citizen has a right to education and to choose the LoLT to develop into a successful citizen.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

After the theoretical framework which has been discussed in the previous chapter, chapter three provides a detailed description of the research design and methodology that was used during the investigation of the LoLT in the Foundation Phase. Sampling and the steps of data gathering and analysis are described. In addition to the steps that were implemented, chapter three also outlines the validity and reliability of the tool that was used in the investigation.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

As defined by Mouton (2001) cited in de Vos et al (2005:132), a research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. He further explains that research design focuses on the end of product, formulating a research problem as a point of departure, and focuses on the logic of research. In this investigation, the researcher chose the qualitative research design, and the choice was justified by the reasons discussed in the following paragraphs.

De Vos et al (2005:269) describe that qualitative design differs inherently from quantitative research design in that it does not usually provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan or a fixed recipe to follow. The researcher therefore preferred a qualitative design as research strategy best suited to the research during the research process.

Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher had direct interaction with the participants, sharing their personal experiences with regard to teaching and learning. Merriam (1994:7) states that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in qualitative studies. The researcher was personally responsible for collecting data and also for the data analysis.

De Vos et al (2005:269-272) describe different types of qualitative research designs. One of the designs they describe is the phenomenological design which aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives. The researcher decided to use the phenomenological design. This type of approach allowed the researcher to have interaction with

the participants. Interaction with participants assisted the researcher to understand and interpret the meaning that the participants are experiencing in their daily lives while teaching and learning.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

In this investigation, the researcher intended to focus on direct quotations of participants who would explain their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The researcher then decided to use the qualitative method because it enabled the researcher to interact with the participants, describing their experiences and the understanding of their daily lives in teaching and learning. De Vos et al (2005:74) state that the qualitative research paradigm in its broadcast sense refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions, and that it produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. The researcher was more concerned with understanding the participant's beliefs and values rather than explanations

3.4 POPULATION

The investigation was conducted in Gauteng Province, in one district out of a possible fifteen districts. The researcher's reason for choosing only one district was because all these fifteen Districts equally provide education delivery as per the Gauteng Department of Education's vision and mission: *"Ensuring every learner does well at school and leaves our institutions with values, knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success in life"* (DoE 2010). This means that none of these districts operate in isolation and outside this vision and mission of the Gauteng Department of Education. They are all equally responsible to deliver as per this vision and mission of Gauteng Department of Education, which finally account to the whole of South Africa. Cohen et al (2007:100) explain that a sample is a smaller group or subset of the total population that is needed to obtain data and the knowledge that will be gained is representative of the total population. One district was therefore deemed enough to obtain the data that the researcher required for the representation of the other fifteen districts.

The participants were selected from the Grade 3 educators. Grade 3 educators teach learners in their third year of learning, using home language as LoLT. After Grade 3 these learners move

to the new phase and grade where they will then use English as LoLT. Based on the researcher's understanding, Grade 3 educators were in a position of understanding and teaching the learners in their third year of the use of home language as LoLT, the exit grade of the Foundation Phase. Furthermore, Grade 3 is the only grade in the Foundation Phase in which Systemic Evaluation is conducted nationally.

3.5 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

In Gauteng province, each district has a demarcated number of schools that it monitors and supports. The investigation was conducted in the Gauteng East District. Gauteng East District is a district monitoring and supporting schools in five towns within Ekurhuleni Metropolitan, viz. Benoni, Brakpan, Springs and Devon. These towns have suburban and township schools, excluding farm schools. Benoni was selected for the investigation. Apart from researcher's familiarity with the geographic area, no other particular reason compelled the researcher for selecting Benoni because any school, irrespective of location, has a similar goal which is curriculum delivery.

According to DoE (2010), Benoni Township has about 23 primary schools, inclusive of the township extensions. According to the researcher's experience, township schools use the African home languages for LoLT in the Foundation Phase and transfer to English as LoLT in the fourth grade. The researcher selected three primary schools from the Benoni Township, which share similar experiences due to common contextual factors. Cohen et al (2007:112) add that cluster sampling allows the researcher to select a specific number of schools which are geographically close. The three selected schools offered isiZulu home language as LoLT. Cohen et al (2007:100) state that factors such as expense, time, and accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population. Thus, the investigation was administered in a particular district and in one specific township.

The researcher used both cluster and nonprobability samplings. The researcher decided on the two samplings based on the reasons explained in the next two paragraphs.

3.5.1 Cluster sampling

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:123) define cluster sampling as a sampling by which the

researcher identifies convenient, naturally occurring groups such as neighborhoods, schools, districts and regions, not individual subjects, and then randomly selects some of these units for the study. They further explain that once the units have been selected; individuals are selected from each one. Based on the definition, the researcher selected Benoni from all the other towns, and then selected three schools from the Benoni Township, prompted, among others, by convenience and time saving considerations.

3.5.2 Non-probability sampling

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:125-126) explain that non probability sampling is the most common type in educational research, and that it has three types, viz., convenience sampling, purposeful sampling (which is sometimes called purposive, judgment, or judgmental sampling), and quota sampling. They add that in purposeful sampling the researcher selects particular elements from the population, and that, on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgment is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. They further add that in nonprobability sampling, the researcher uses subjects who happen to be accessible or who may represent certain types of characteristics. Two Grade 3 educators were selected from each of the three selected schools in the Benoni Township as participants, totaling six educators. The selected schools use isiZulu home language as LoLT in the Foundation Phase. The researcher was aware that other schools which are using other African languages might share similar experiences as the schools in the sample. For the researcher to obtain rich information, one language as LoLT, the researcher's choice, was appropriate for the investigation.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:125), the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. They add that on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgment is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. As an experienced educator, the researcher was aware that schools may have as many as five or more classes per grade. Thus, the researcher used two educators per school from the three identified schools as participants. This made a total of six educators teaching six respective Grade 3 classes.

According to Cohen et al (2007:102), in qualitative research it is more likely that the sample size

will be small. For example, in a qualitative study of thirty girls of similar socio-economic background following an A level Biology course, a sample of five or six may suffice the researcher. As there is no heterogeneity in the population, six educators, with experience of teaching Grade 3 were sufficient to inform this investigation. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:319) add that with purposive sampling, the researcher searches for information-rich key informants, groups, places, or events to study. They further add that these samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating. Welman and Kruger (2001:63) indicate that with purposive sampling, the researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and /or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain maybe regarded as being representative of the relevant population. The researcher therefore regarded the above sample as appropriate and used it as representative of the population.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

A qualitative research method was used for the investigation. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:315) explain that qualitative research is inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. They further add that qualitative studies are important for theory generation, policy development, improvement of educational practice, illumination of social issues, and action stimulus. The researcher believed that this method was going to inform the investigation positively.

Agar (1993) cited in Cohen et al (2007:134) adds that in qualitative data collection, the intensive personal involvement and in-depth responses of individuals secure a sufficient level of validity and reliability. Interviews were therefore the relevant data collection method that was used by the researcher in this investigation. Cohen et al (2007:137) add that the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover.

3.6.1 Interviews

Babbie and Mouton (2001:289) mention that a qualitative interview is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent. They further add that ideally, the respondent does

most of the talking, and the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry. During the interview, the participants were providing most of the information, with guidance and probes by the interviewer. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:289), probes are more frequently required in eliciting responses to open-ended questions. This then directed the researcher into the use of the open-ended questions which allowed each participant to share own views and opinions, and some probes questions also done by the interviewer where it was necessary as per the interviewer's judgment of the participant's response.

3.6.2 Advantages and strengths of interviews

De Vos et al (2005:299) mention the following as the strengths of the interviews.

- Interviews are the best techniques to be used in trying to find out more about individual lives, as the only way to find out is to ask the individuals themselves.
- Interviews are a useful way of getting large amounts of data quickly.
- They are an especially effective way of obtaining depth in data.

Cohen et al (2007:109) differentiate between the structured and the unstructured interview as follows:

- An unstructured interview is an open situation, having greater flexibility and freedom. Kerlinger (1970) cited in de Vos (2005:355) explains that although the research purposes govern the questions asked, their content, sequence and wording are entirely in the hands of the interviewer.
- A structured interview is one in which the content and procedures are organized in advance, and that the sequence and wording of questions are determined by means of a schedule and that the interviewer is left little freedom to make modification.

De Vos et al (2005:293) mention that qualitative studies typically employ unstructured or semi-structured interviews. He adds that semi-structured interviews are defined as those organized around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth.

3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

For the main purpose of gaining a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of this investigation, the researcher decided to use the semi-structured interview so as to allow the maximum opportunity for the participants to share their views, experiences and opinions, with more guidance from the researcher. According to De Vos et al (2005:296), a questionnaire written to guide interviews is called an interview schedule or guide. The researcher therefore planned a set of predetermined questions that were used to engage the participants as a guide during the interview. The participants were allowed time to read through the set of questions before the interview began. Those set of questions were used more of a guide, as the researcher was continuously using frequent probes based on the participant's responses. The researcher had pre-planned open-ended questions on hand during the interview. De Vos et al (2005:296) mention that with semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule to guide the interviews, but the participants, perceived as an expert on the subject, should therefore be allowed maximum opportunity to tell his/her story.

3.6.4 Interview administration

Cohen et al (2007:109) mention that access might also be denied by the potential sample participants themselves for very practical reason. They further give an example that a doctor or a teacher simply might not have the time to spend with the researcher. The practical part of the access was based on the use of time which was supposed to be outside the teaching and learning time, or contact time. This means that all the interviews were conducted after learning and teaching time, depending on the daily time table of each school, or per participant's choice of venue which was not limited to schools only. The days were as permitted by the schools and the individual participant. Participants had a choice if they wanted to be interviewed within the school premises, their homes or any place they deemed comfortable. The participants were interviewed during their convenient time and place that has been prior arranged.

The researcher ensured that the participant was interviewed at own convenient choice of place and time because the researcher believed that it was going to convince the participant that the interviewer is pleasant, relaxed and friendly. Babbie and Mouton (2001:252-253) suggest that an interviewer should be pleasant, at the very least, as well as relaxed and friendly without

being too casual. They further add that it is very important for the interviewer to record that answer exactly as given, and that no attempt should be made to summarize, paraphrase, or correct bad grammar. For the reason of making sure that the researcher did not miss any information shared, and that the researcher was able to concentrate fully to the interview and the interviewee, the researcher received prior consent to record the interview, after explaining to the participants that the recording is done for the study purpose only and that there would be no one who will have an access to the recorded conversation except the researcher and the supervisor. During the conversation between the participant and the interviewer, the interviewer, who was the researcher, recorded the conversation as it was, without any changes or editing. Recording was done immediately from the exchange of the greetings between the participant and the researcher. The researcher also wrote down field notes as an alternative if there might be any technical problems with the tape recorder during the process.

3.6.5 Pilot testing question schedule

Seidman (1998) cited in de Vos et al (2005:294) mentions that by pilot interviewing a small number of participants, the researcher will hereby come to grips with some of the practical aspects of establishing access, making contact and conducting the interview, as well as becoming alert to their own level of interviewing skills. It is based on these reasons that the researcher conducted pilot interviews before the actual interviews.

The researcher interviewed two educators as participants on a voluntary basis for pilot testing; the number was not based on any other reason except the researcher's choice. Tape recording was done and field notes were compiled during and also after each interview, jotting down the impressions made and any error for improvement before conducting the actual interviews. De Vos et al (2005:298) suggest that researchers always sit down after an interview and jot down his/her impressions. They add that these notes will help the researcher to remember and explore the process of the interviews.

3.7 ENSURING VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:324) add that validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher.

They further add that the researcher and the participants agree on the description or composition of events, and especially the meaning of these events. The event that took place during the investigation was the use of a tape recorder and writing down field notes during the interviews, and that there was a description of such events, with mutual agreement between the researcher and each participant.

For the purpose of trustworthiness, Cohen et al (2007:150) mention that the most practical way of achieving greater validity is to minimize the amount of bias by means of allowing only discussions that are relevant to the study, excluding the greeting exchanges. The guide questions were structured openly to allow participants to share own views, experiences and opinion as much as possible. The researcher was not biased during the interview process, but allowed and was open to the respondents' opinions and views as much as possible.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:364) explain that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns among categories. The researcher used both field notes and recordings during all six data collection sessions. Field notes were used as a backup mechanism in case there was a technical problem with the recorder. At the end of each interview, the tape recordings, with reference to the field notes, were then transcribed into narrative data. The transcribed narrative data was then analyzed, using predetermined categories for a code-category-theme process. The researcher used the narrative analysis approach which presented data in the form of words. Tutty, Rothery and Grinnell (1996:89) mention that words contain rich descriptions of situations and an understanding of their underlying meaning.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cohen et al (2007:382) indicate that there are ethical issues that are to be considered during the process of the interviews. The main considerations are discussed below.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Cohen et al (2007:109) advise that researchers will need to ensure that access is not only permitted but also practical. A letter of request was submitted to the Gauteng East District first, requesting a permission to conduct the investigation in the District. Letters of request were then submitted to the principals of the identified schools, explaining the intentions of the researcher to conduct the investigation at the school. The letters to schools were personally submitted after a telephonic appointment with the principals of the schools had been made. During this meeting with the principal of each school, two educators in Grade 3 were identified on voluntary basis. Each educator was then provided with a consent letter which provided the details, purpose and the benefit of the investigation. The educators then provided the researcher with a telephone contact number to arrange a time and venue for the interview. The principal of each school was also informed that they would receive a copy of the final product of the investigation. On the same day, after signing the consent form, which was few days before the actual interview, the participants were then in return issued with the interview schedule to guide them on the expected types of questions for the planned interviews.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

All the participants signed the consent form that they were willingly and voluntarily participating in the research project based on the conditions stated in the consent form, which included a statement of anonymity and confidentiality

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research design and the data collection methods that the researcher embarked on, inclusive of all the steps that were used to successfully conduct the investigation. The researcher used a qualitative research design, method, whereby interviews were used as a data collection technique.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three the research design, data collection and analysis were outlined. In this chapter, the researcher presents and interprets the responses of the interview participants by presenting the participants' responses according to the questions on the interview schedule followed by the analysis of the responses. The first question was used to compile the demographic profile of the participants. The researcher used the predetermined categories based on the interview schedule, followed by coding based on the participants' comments. The researcher used the participants' recurring ideas to develop the themes and formulate categories for the study. In order to protect the participants' identities, real names are not used, instead, each participant was a number preceded by the letter P for participant.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This section presents the demographic profiles of the participants.

Table 4.1 Summary of demographic profiles

Participants	Home Language	Teaching Qualifications:(qualified=Yes, not qualified=No)	Teaching experience	Experience in teaching in Zulu as LoLT
P1	Pedi	Yes. JPTD(Junior Primary Teachers Diploma)	16 years	16 years
P2	Zulu	Yes. PTD (Primary Teachers Diploma)	10 years	10 years
P3	Pedi	Yes. PTD (Primary Teachers Diploma)	15 years	15 years
P4	Zulu	Yes. PTD (Primary Teachers Diploma)	8 years	8 years

P5	Swazi	Yes. PTD (Primary Teachers Diploma)	5 years	5 years
P6	Zulu	Yes. HED (Higher Education Diploma)	18 years	18 years

4.3 SUMMARY OF THEMES

Data collected was analyzed and categorized into themes, categories and sub-categories. Table 4.2 provides the themes that emerged from this investigation.

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
1	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextual factors (Language of birth, Parental support and Accessibility to schools) Language in Teaching and Learning Learner performance
2	Learning and Teaching Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English as a language in most resources
3	Home Language as LoLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum delivery in the classroom Code switching
4	Challenges of LoLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental involvement Educators as teaching resources Language policy

4.4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The researcher analyzed and interpreted the responses for each theme. The participants' responses are first indicated, followed by the interpretation.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Language

The results show that educators are teaching learners who come from different ethnic background. The participants were asked: *“How do you deal with learners from different ethnic background in your school?”* Their responses follow:

Interviewee 1: *“It becomes a problem for them to understand the language because they do not have the understanding. At home they speak different languages... sometimes Tsonga, Pedi, and so on. So it becomes a problem for the learner to understand isiZulu, especially in reading”.*

Interviewee 2: *“If you give them the homework to do at home; the homework does not come back written because the mother will say she does not understand isiZulu in order to help the child..., so to me that is more difficult”.*

Interviewee 3: *“The problem is that the spoken (pause), language which is Zulu, and the teaching language, Zulu is not the same. Learners can speak the language eh, Zulu verbally, but they may find it hard to use it for learning and teaching..., so it becomes difficult for them to understand it”.*

Interviewee 5: *“It is affecting them a lot because their spelling is not good. They find difficulty in expressing themselves in poems, when they write poems, or letters, short spelling, definitions and describing other things and in understanding the language they also find it difficult. Eh, when they are supposed to answer the questions, they find it difficult to communicate with the educators through eh, isiZulu. Most of the learners, isiZulu is not their Home Language”.*

Interviewee 6: *“The learners that are in our school are staying nearer, so may be the schools which offer their languages are far from their homes. So that is why parents just register their children in our school, and ignore that it is isiZulu, and think that their children will make it”*

4.4.1.1 Contextual factors (Language of birth, Parental support and Accessibility to schools)

Based on the data, there is integration (i.e. the mixed ethnic groups living in the same area) in the communities which extends to the schools. Thus, several different African languages are

spoken in a single community. In a particular school, different home languages are spoken by the learners which do not concur with the LoLT (i.e. isiZulu). Learners often speak isiZulu only during the school day; when they return home or to the community, they switch to mother tongue which is another African language. Educators also find it difficult to use the LoLT effectively for the same reason. Further, learners do not get extra help from parents. When they are given homework, they do not get help because the parents are frequently not sufficiently proficient in isiZulu to be able to help their children. Most learners in the selected schools are from ethnic backgrounds other than isiZulu. Parents usually register their children in the nearest schools, irrespective of that particular school's LoLT. Thus, a particular school will have learners from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Learners tend to speak several different languages, depending on the situation they find themselves in, such as home or school. However, their language abilities are not developed and they cannot express themselves adequately in isiZulu during class times.

4.4.1.2 Language in Teaching and Learning

Learners who are not native Zulu-speakers find it difficult to cope with learning because they cannot express themselves well during reading, writing and speaking classroom activities. Moreover, they struggle to understand classroom instructions. When they leave school at the end of the school day, they switch to mother-tongue outside of school.

4.4.1.3 Learner performance

Reading, speaking, writing and understanding of instructions is a challenge for the learners. Learners from ethnic backgrounds other than isiZulu are affected negatively because their spelling is not good and they find it difficult to communicate. They do not cope well with the instructions from the educators. The results further indicated that the learners have basic communication skills in isiZulu, but struggle to use isiZulu for writing or more complex learning tasks.

4.4.2 Theme 2: learning and teaching materials

Learning and teaching materials assist the educators and learners for learning content and research purposes. The participants were all asked, “*What is your experience with regard to the learning and teaching materials in relation to the use of isiZulu as LoLT?*” The following were their responses.

Interviewee 2: *“If it was for me doing those learning materials; I would suggest that maybe they do them in different languages to accommodate all our learners because really this is very tough when it comes to their language. It is worse that they do not know that language which is taught in the school”.*

Interviewee 3: *“When you start by teaching children, you need to (Pause), get different materials from different authors that are using isiZulu, so that you can give learners more information and more understanding of the language that you are supposed to teach the children.”*

Interviewee 4: *“We find that sometimes the materials that we have, it might come maybe from the District, or from the training that we come from, and is for isiZulu as the Learning Programme, but when you look at the materials, it is written in English, then you as the teacher you have to interpret it into isiZulu language”.*

Interviewee 6: *“As I have said that we are using isiZulu, so the learning materials that we are having; when its period of isiZulu, we are using isiZulu, but when we are doing Numeracy, Life Skills, we are using English. So I can say that it helps in isiZulu, but in other languages it does not help. ...even the things that come from the Government, may be for example, even the policies they come in English. So maybe that is why we are using English in other Learning Areas”.*

4.4.2.1 English as language used in most resources

The results showed that most of the learning and teaching materials for Numeracy and Life-Skills are in English. Educators translate the materials from English to isiZulu during teaching and learning and often use both isiZulu and English during lessons. Educators are not proficient

in isiZulu and switch between the two languages. Learning and teaching support materials are not freely available in isiZulu in all the Learning Programmes in the Foundation Phase. Thus, educators rely on English materials and interpret the contents in isiZulu, which they often find difficult to do.

Based on the data, the learning and teaching materials are not available in all official languages; English is used in available materials. Thus educators use English to teach some of the Learning Programmes in the Foundation Phase. Educators feel that that the learning and teaching materials should be available in all languages to accommodate all learners. This would also facilitate the learners' research for projects. Further, government publications are mostly in English. Government structures therefore are not promoting isiZulu as Home Language since their materials are in English, instead of isiZulu. The results also indicated a lack of resources, to support the educators own development of and research on isiZulu as LoLT.

4.4.3 Theme 3: home language as LoLT

The participants were *to share their experiences in relation to the use of LoLT in their schools*. The following were their responses:

Interviewee 1: *“When we teach in isiZulu, learners do not understand, especially in Numeracy where concept in isiZulu are more difficult than in English. All the educators here in Foundation phase are using English in Numeracy”.*

Interviewee 2: *“Like for instance Numeracy is English, but I read to learners first and then translate so that they can understand... I also do the same in Life- Skills; I translate to isiZulu so that I can explain each and every detail so that learners can know what is being wanted from them”.*

Interviewee 3: *“ Sometimes I may explain so that learners can understand, sometimes it is difficult for me because sometimes when you talk, you remember something in your Home language and you talk about it, and you try again to explain to them in Zulu, so it is difficult for these children when you teach them. But almost every day I am speaking Zulu so that even the*

children, they can understand...When we teach eh, Numeracy which is Maths, we use numbers of English, not isiZulu....”

Interviewee 4: *“Eh! We use isiZulu. We also use English. So I can say we do not use Home Language for all the Learning Programmes or the Learning Areas, but..., we also use English. You will find that almost all the materials we use are written in English. We do not have the materials in the Home Language or the Language of Learning and Teaching”.*

Interviewee 5: *“ As I have said that the materials for Numeracy and Life Skills, they come in English, so I have only used isiZulu in isiZulu, but when it comes to Numeracy and the Life Skills, we do it in English”. I try my best to translate the learning materials, though other words are not easily translated”.*

4.4.3.1 Curriculum delivery in the classroom

Educators sometimes find it difficult to explain concepts to the learners, especially difficult concepts. They also mentioned that concepts such as numbers are explained in English because educators find it easier in English and learners do not understand them when they are in isiZulu.

4.4.3.2 Code switching

Educators use more than one language in their classrooms, switching between English and isiZulu. In some Learning Programmes like Numeracy and Life-skills, learners do not understand the content terminology if it is taught in isiZulu. Educators therefore use English when they teach Numeracy and Life-skills. Moreover, most of the teaching and learning materials for Numeracy and Life-Skills are written in English. Based on the data, code switching is common in the Foundation Phase classrooms in these schools.

4.4.4 Theme 4: challenges of LoLT

Participants were asked, “What do you think are the challenges in the use of isiZulu as the LoLT in the Foundation Phase?” These are some of their narratives:

Interviewee 1: *“The most challenging issue is that our parents cannot assist our learners with homework... Even some of us as educators, we are having a challenge because we are not Zulu speaking educators... I think if there will be an opportunity whereby the SGB of the school may... make arrangement for those learners, so that they can create classes... and have educators for the different languages...”*

Interviewee 3: *“Other challenges is that, we need to help the children to understand the language, even to talk to the parents, to give them more clarity what we need the children to know especially in Zulu language..., but it is difficult sometimes to express yourself in a language that is not yours”.*

Interviewee 4: *“Some of the responses that are applicable to learners, they are also applicable to teachers, because you find that the teacher is supposed to teach in the Language of Learning and Teaching, may be isiZulu, for example, and the teacher herself or himself is not from that language background or ethnic background. So it is also a challenge for a teacher, especially in the Foundation Phase, where the teacher may be Northern Sotho, speaking Northern Sotho, knowing to read and write Northern Sotho, and the teacher is teaching where the Language of Learning and Teaching is isiZulu In the Foundation Phase,*

Interviewee 5: *“I think our school should take note about those learners who are not eh, Zulus. Our school should start introducing other languages like Tsonga, isiXhosa so that they can accommodate all other people”.*

4.4.4.1 Parental involvement

Parents face challenges with regard to their involvement in their children's education because they cannot help their children with homework. If their ethnic background is not isiZulu, parents cannot understand homework tasks and thus cannot help their children.

Educators thought that schools should introduce other languages to accommodate all learners and allocate different classes to the different ethnic backgrounds. This would allow the parents to register their children in a specific class according to home language. Parents would also be able to participate in their children's education because they would be able to understand learning content and homework tasks.

4.4.4.2 Educators as teaching resources

Based on the data, the educators observed lack of language proficiency among those who are not native Zulu-speakers. Children taught by educators who are not isiZulu proficient struggle to understand them.

4.4.4.3 Language policy

Educators felt that the SGB should arrange alternatives to accommodate all learners in a particular school so that they may be taught by educators from the same linguistic background, who are competent in that particular language. For example, Xhosa-speaking learners should be taught by a Xhosa-speaking educator.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher provided a brief biographical profile of the participants, followed by the findings of the investigation of the use of isiZulu as LoLT in the Foundation Phase in selected schools in the Gauteng East District. The researcher has described educators' views according to themes and substantiated them with direct quotations from the interviews.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the researcher's findings and conclusions based on the analyzed data. The chapter concludes by making recommendations and suggestions for future study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the following paragraphs, the researcher indicates the findings based on the participant's views in a summary form.

5.2.1 Research Question: *How do educators experience the use isiZulu language as LoLT in the Foundation Phase?*

5.2.1.1 Language

According to Lindon (2006:62), everyone has a sense of personal and family identity arising from their own ethnic group, which may be viewed as more than cultural or national belonging. Based on the findings, it is always possible that in a school there will be stakeholders, that is, educators, learners or parents, who do not belong to the same ethnic group. Educators, as members of the school as organisation, may not be from the same linguistic background even if

they are teaching in a school that uses isiZulu as LoLT. Therefore, the LoLT of the school may not be the home language of every educator and learner.

The findings indicated that learners in the selected schools came from different ethnic backgrounds. They are taught in a LoLT decided by the school's language policy which may differ from their own. An example is when English is used as LoLT of a particular school. According to Wolhuter et al (2007:32), English is spoken by only 8.2 percent of South Africans as their home language. In addition, Poulos (2006:1) mentions that, as a mother-tongue, isiZulu is more widely spoken than any other language in South Africa. Thus, many schools are using isiZulu but it is not the Home Language to every learner, but an Additional language. Further, many schools offer isiZulu as LoLT which increases jobs for educators; hence many educators who are not Zulu-speakers end up securing teaching posts at schools that offer isiZulu as LoLT.

The findings further indicate that children, whose mother-tongue is not isiZulu, learn in isiZulu at school, but switch to their respective mother-tongues at homes. It is difficult for these children to attach the meaning of what they have learned at school to their world around them since the interpretation of content in mother-tongue is difficult for them. This affects lifelong learning. According to Wolfendale and Bastiani (2000:14), it has become a universally accepted credo that learning extends beyond school and is for life. This means that the lifelong learning of an individual learner may be negatively affected.

Based on the findings, it is clear that in every community in South Africa, several languages will be spoken. Meier and Marais (2007:119) mention that South Africa is often referred to as the 'rainbow nation' or a multicultural society. This should always be considered when a Language Policy is adopted in schools.

According to RNCS (DoE 2002: 18), the learner's Home Language is recommended for learning and teaching wherever possible, particularly in the Foundation Phase. The findings indicated that contextual factors like integration in the community leads to schools accommodating learners from different ethnic backgrounds, who may not be proficient in the LoLT, in this case, isiZulu.

According to the RNCS (DoE 2002: 50), many children will eventually study some of their other learning areas through their additional language. Therefore, children must be able to conceptualize and ask and answer challenging questions in their additional language. The findings indicate that the learners find it challenging to cope with isiZulu language as the LoLT if

they come from a different linguistic background. Parents are less involved in helping with homework because they do not understand the language themselves.

Asmal and James (2002:197) mention *that nurturing a culture of communication and participation will have the effect of enabling young South Africans to become open, curious and empowered citizens*. Since South Africa is a multicultural society, an individual should be able to express him/herself freely without low self-esteem or being intimidated by the language of the majority. An early development of a mother-tongue is therefore of vital importance. When Home Language is used for learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase, early development of such a language is of vital importance because learners learn additional languages, using the skills based on their Home Language.

According to Moyles (2007:42), language and culture are interconnected and if home language and culture is acknowledged, they become part of an individual's learning and cognitive development. It is important to acknowledge the different ethnic backgrounds of all the learners. If the LoLT is different from their mother-tongue, they need more support in preserving their own ethnicity in order to perform well. The findings indicate that parents cannot help their children because they are not proficient in the LoLT used by the school. If the parents' languages are acknowledged, it will motivate them to participate in their children's daily learning.

5.2.1.2 Limited resources

English is the dominant language in most resources and learning and teaching materials. The development of resources for learning and teaching in all official languages will make it easier for parents and their children to decide about the LoLT for their children's continuous learning.

According to the findings, learning and teaching materials are available, but do not represent all the eleven official languages equally. The African languages, including isiZulu, lack learning and teaching materials. Findings indicate that educators translate from English to isiZulu during their teaching in the classrooms. According to Ferguson (2006:112), the more the switch to English occurs, the more the incentive to read and publish in English. Switching leads thus to even more resources in English. Other languages are difficult to develop and enrich, which affects their development. Frequent use of English jeopardizes the chances of the development of other languages. The study indicated that most learning and teaching materials are written in English. Educators are sometimes expected to translate English content to the isiZulu Home Language.

If there are more resources available in English, the tendency is to use English for research and translate content into isiZulu during learning and teaching, thus losing relevant content and the originality of isiZulu.

5.2.1.3 isiZulu as Home Language

The LoLT of the school in the Foundation Phase is categorized as the Home Language, whereas other languages are regarded as First Additional or Second Additional languages, where applicable. Most Black community schools use a home language in the Foundation phase and English as First Additional language. But in many schools which use isiZulu as LoLT, learners are not isiZulu by birth and thus are unable to learn in home language. The findings indicate that based on the convenience of the locality of some schools, parents may register their children at the nearest school, irrespective of the LoLT of the particular school. Moreover, some schools have not changed the language used as LoLT in the pre-democratic era, irrespective of the integration that has taken place in the community. Lindon (2006:63) mentions that the present for any society is shaped in many ways by what has happened in the past. This has an effect on the learning of the learners; integration in the community means that learners speak different languages, which might negatively affect their performance because they might fail to cope with the LoLT of the particular school.

According to du Plessis et al (2007:8), Ausbel's theory of verbal learning mentions: "Language and thought are inseparably interwoven. Language is the vehicle of thought. Deprivation or deficit of language experiences during the critical early years of life may have a lasting negative effect on the language and cognitive development". Accordingly, if the language of learning is different from the mother-tongue of a learner, the learner faces the problem that he/she cannot use own language to think. He/she has to use the LoLT for learning, which might affect his/her cognitive development and the development of LoLT. If the learners do not get early exposure to the LoLT and proper support, especially if the LoLT is not their mother-tongue, their learning and subsequent performance is affected negatively.

Findings indicate that sometimes it is difficult to find all resources in isiZulu. Sometimes the content has to be presented in another language, which in most cases it is English. There are more resources in English than in isiZulu and this reinforces the use of English. Some of the Learning Programmes in the Foundation phase are presented in English, for example,

Numeracy, because the educators find the vocabulary in Numeracy simpler in English than in isiZulu. According to these findings, more than one language is used as LoLT in the Foundation Phase of schools; code switching between English and isiZulu occurs in the classroom. Thus, learners may rote learn information in English which they have not fully understood in isiZulu, for example, in Life-Skills and Numeracy. The findings indicate that isiZulu is not used effectively as LoLT in schools, especially in the Foundation phase. It is used for communication, but when it comes to content in other Learning Programmes like Numeracy and Life-Skills, English is used.

The findings indicate that the use of isiZulu as the LoLT in schools is challenged by code switching. Therefore, the Home Language, in this case, isiZulu, is not well developed in the Foundation Phase. Neither the educators nor the learners use Zulu effectively in learning and teaching. Cummins and Swann (1986) cited in Arthur et al (2006:334) argue: “Second language acquisition is influenced by the extent to which the first language has developed, and that if the first language is strong, acquisition of the second language may be relatively easy.” Due to contextual factors whereby educators and learners come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, isiZulu as LoLT is not developed effectively. Instead English is mostly used as LoLT from the Intermediate Phase onwards.

Participants indicated a lack of parental involvement in the learners’ learning. Apart from the issue of ethnicity, there is also a high rate of migration to South Africa. Parents who have migrated to South Africa do not speak any of the eleven official languages due to the fact that they speak their own languages from their own countries. They are inclined to enrol their children at schools with a common language, like isiZulu, used by many. Poulos (2006:1) indicates that isiZulu is spoken by more people than any other language in South Africa.

The study indicates that the SGB has a responsibility to take into account the contextual factors of the communities. They should also aim to for the best performance by learners at school and the sound development of a Home Language when they design the language policy of a school.

5.2.2 Research Question: *How effective is the use of isiZulu language as a Language of Learning and Teaching in the Foundation Phase?*

According to Meier and Marais (2007:119), South Africa is often referred to as the 'rainbow nation' or a multicultural society. The issue of multiculturalism and multilingualism will always be the real factor in South Africa. Tieda et al (2006:57) mention that the resurgence of immigration in the late 1990s was led by Africans, mostly from surrounding nations in the Southern part of the continent. Because of the increasing rate of legal and illegal immigration, other languages exist in South Africa, apart from the eleven official languages. When communicating, people in each community are multilingual in at least two languages, including the educators and learners. The only difference is that when a language is used for verbal communication, it cannot be assumed that it will be the same as when it is used for learning and teaching. Schools in South Africa are thus not able to accommodate all official languages in each community by offering learning and teaching in a LoLT that is the mother-tongue for every learner.

Learners registered in the schools are from different ethnic backgrounds and are not always proficient in the LoLT used at schools. This is a challenge to learning and parental support. Educators also find it hard to teach the children because they cannot cope in a language that is neither their mother-tongue nor the learners' mother-tongue. Pressure to find teachers means that many educators in schools with isiZulu as LoLT are not competent in the language.

The recommendation by the RNCS (DoE 2002:18) that learner's Home Language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible, particularly in the Foundation Phase, is challenged by the shortage and insufficient resources in the African languages. This leads educators to resort to both English and isiZulu when teaching. English is perceived to have more than enough resources for reference purposes. Code switching learning and teaching affects the development of the isiZulu language as a Home Language that is used as LoLT. Further, parents enrol their children in the nearest schools based on locality and the good performance by the school. Thus, children may not be proficient in the LoLT. A LoLT is ideally supposed to be the Home Language of learners. But there is also an assumption by parents that English is the best language for the LoLT because it is perceived as the language that opens economic doors in future.

Learners do not performing well as expected because they fail to understand the content taught, and the instructions because the isiZulu language used for learning and teaching is either a second or a third language to them. These can lead to poor performance and poor reading and writing skills. The dropout ratio can eventually increase if the learners fail to cope at school.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, there has been an increase of integration (mixed ethnic groups) in all communities. More than one mother-tongue is spoken by the community members in one particular community. When the isiZulu language is used as LoLT in schools, it often not the home language for all the learners at a particular school. The findings indicate that the learners and, in some cases, educators struggle to use isiZulu effectively as LoLT due to lack of language proficiency and lack of resources. The purpose of this section is to make recommendations based on findings.

The study findings therefore provide two areas as recommendations. The areas are:

- (a) The language policy in schools;
- (b) The teaching and learning resources.

5.4.1 Language policy in schools

In order to improve the performance by learners, the language policy of the school should be reviewed so that it considers ethnicity in relation to a Home Language. This will guide parents to choose to enrol children at a school in which their own mother-tongue is accommodated and used as the LoLT.

The study indicates that the number of primary schools in a community may not be enough to accommodate all the eleven official languages. Therefore, the SGB in each school should develop a language policy which allows more than one Home Languages as a LoLT; separate the learners in different classes according to their Home Languages; and make arrangements for these learners to be taught in their mother-tongues by educators who are also from the same

ethnic background and competent in the particular mother-tongue. For example, Xhosa speakers will be in one separate class and will be taught by a Xhosa speaking educator. In this way the parental involvement will also be improved because the parents will understand the language and be able to help their children in their daily school work. The learners' performance will improve because the learners will have a choice to learn in the language that they understand and comprehend best.

5.4.2 Learning and teaching resources

Teaching and learning is supplemented by extra resources that are used by both educators and learners for research and reference purposes in order to enrich the curriculum delivery in the classroom. Findings have shown that a lack of resources in isiZulu in comparison to English, which eventually leads to the poor use of isiZulu as LoLT by the learners and educators.

To improve the learning and teaching, authors of learning and teaching materials should accommodate and equally develop learning and teaching materials in all the official languages and present them to such that they help and support the educators and the children in their daily learning and teaching.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

The researcher suggests the following points for future study:

- The use of a Home Language as a Language of Learning and Teaching extended beyond the Foundation Phase.
- The more effective use of English as a Language of Learning and Teaching in the former Model C schools.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings, the Department of Education should develop and support the SGBs in the review of language policy for public schools. A review can support the effective use and

development of LoLT in a level of Home Language in schools. In this case an effective development of the isiZulu language will enhance learner performance. The SGBs also have the responsibility to consider the ethnic background of the community when reviewing the language policy so that all the learners can equally benefit from the LoLT of the school.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

A letter of permission by the Department of Education

APPENDIX B

A letter to request schools to conduct investigation

APPENDIX C

A voluntary consent form

APPENDIX D

Interview schedule

APPENDIX E

Transcription of the Interview



UMnyango WezeiVfurado Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto Departement van Onderwys

Enquiries: NoravulaUfoisi (011)3550488

Date:	07 October 2009 .,
Name of Researcher:	Zikalala Ntombintombi Alice
Address of Researcher:	14 Elizabeth Eybers Street
	DalparkExtH
	Brakpan 1552
Telephone Number:	01 1 91 §3479/0823826205
Fax Number:	0119626775
Research Topic:	•
Number and type of schools:	16 Primary Schools
District/s/HO ••	Gauteng East

Re: Approval an 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 th& 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 Msnager/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 thai the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

Office of the Chief Director: Information and Knowledge Management Room 501,
 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2000 P.O.Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel:
 (Oil) 355-0809 Fax: (Oil) 355-0734

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 one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the school manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.
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

Pp Nomvua Ubisi

Martha Mashego

ACTING DIRECTOR: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH

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

Date;	i	i ,...y /it /y^&G,
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P.O.Box 15044

Dalpark 11

1552

25 April 2011

The Principal

.....Primary School

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request to conduct a research at your school

I hereby request your permission to conduct a research at your school. I am a M. Ed student at the University of South Africa, specialising in Early Childhood Development.

The research will involve the participation of the Foundation Phase educators and its management by means of interviews. Any information received from the school shall be treated confidentially, and that no school's or person's name or identity shall be published in the research project.

Attached to this letter is a notice of permission that has been granted by the Department of Education Authorities.

Your understanding and support in this regard will be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Zikalala N. A.

Tel: 0823825205

Individual's letter of concern

As the Foundation Phase educator/manager, I give my concern that I am willing to participate voluntarily in the research project. I am aware that I have a right to withdraw should the need arise, and that my name or identity will not be used in any part of the research project.

Surname and Initials:

Signature:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- **How do you deal with learners from different ethnic background in your school?**
- **What is your experience with regard to the Learning and Teaching Materials in relation to the use of Zulu as the Language of learning and teaching?**
- **What is your experience in relation to teaching a language that is not your mother-tongue?**
- **What do you think are the challenges in the use of Zulu as the Language of Learning and Teaching in the Foundation Phase?**